



THOUGH IT OCCASIONALLY APPEARED THAT EXUBERANCE FAR OUT WEIGHED EXPERIENCED, the canoe races during orientation produced a trophy for Ann Woodson's SAS group, and a lot of after dinner entertainment for everybody else. (Photo by Rooney Coffman)

Orientation: A Memory

Orientation left me exhausted and feeling my age (and I only had to deal with the nightly events!). I extend my congratulations to those freshmen who were able to survive the rugged test we put to the St. Andrews social life

scene. I would like to thank Clif Fitzgerald, Craig Withrow, Anne Hinnant, Steve Newton, the CUB reps, and the numerous others that helped make my Orientation programs a big success. Be assured that I'll be looking for new blood next year!

Review of Review (continued)

... (And, later) Iron . . . by going through the storm of three thousand degree flames, iron ore turns into pig iron, etc.

The rhetoric plainly states not that iron must be put to a practical use (that ideals must give way to material considerations) and that this is the way of things (one of the "messages" of the rhetoric of "Julius Caesar") but that this unavoidable process is bad, bad, bad.

In this Mishima was never more plainly a romantic — both works and life indicate a very real unwillingness to consider the world as it happens to be, and on this anecdotal level (the pure rebel, the idealistic example) his legend is going to live. Whether his work, particularly the later work, is going to live is more problematical.

On one level, it was dead the minute it was written. Unless we interest ourselves in Mishima's psyche we cannot interest ourselves in this play. The characters are (by nonpsychodrama standards) lifeless, their conversations are ploys, they are moved about like puppets, they spout rather than speak and since they are all one-sided and obviously constructed for a purpose, they quite fail to gain our sympathy. Which is perhaps what Mishima intended. He did not want them to gain our sympathy; he wanted his great idea to gain our sympathy.

Didactic, he is laying down the law — and so, on this level, the play offers no interpretation of the world as it is, but rather a condemnation of this world. We are not given the world; we are given Mishima's opinion of the world. The play is propaganda.

As indeed, on some level, are most plays, are most works of art. The difference, however, is that the unavoidable "message" is usually not all of the play — something timeless and hence true, and hence (and here is the leap into faith which art requires) good, is also visible and sometimes (as also visible and sometimes (as in Shakespeare) becomes the true theme of play.

For a closer parallel to Mishima one must turn to an entirely different playwright—someone like Gabriele D'Annunzio (a writer Mishima admired enough to translate — that long psychodrama on St. Sebastian). The Italian symbolist loved the active life, adored "spiritual purity," got involved in the military, was quite quixotically implicated in politics. His "II Fuoco" (Fame of Life) and "Francesca da Rimini" are now, I should guess, quite unreadable, and yet D'Annunzio remains unforgettable. The anecdote of his life has superseded all and as a flamboyant romantic hero — Byron without the talent, Baudelaire without the doubts — he continues to live.

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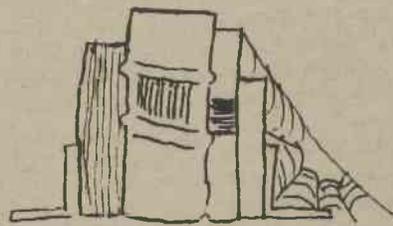
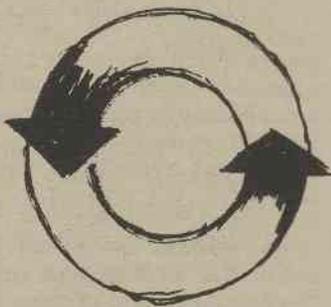
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