

Student Forum

'Outsider' Has Good Points

(This is the first student written article to be published in this column established for students to write on contemporary literary, political, social or intellectual topics. Writings should be less than 700 words, and submitted to the Editor. Selection for publication will be at the discretion of the Editor.)

In Colin Wilson's THE OUTSIDER (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1956) I found many things that, usually, I expect only in a work of fiction.

The feeling of "The Outsider," though complex and erudite, does not seem, to me, to be so demanding that I might not attempt to convey part of its message—for I think that this book has a message that is important.

Granted, the work is that of a young pedant. It is also riddled with quotations from the Rhineland Mystics to some contemporary thinkers such as Sartre, Whitehead, and Albert Camus. Wilson does, however, sustain several worthwhile points through this maze of quotations.

Wilson starts the reader by identifying just who and what the Outsider is. Taken as a social problem the Outsider is he who says (and here Wilson quotes from Barbuse's UNDER FIRE), "I am not at peace as I had hoped . . . It is as if I could not see things as they were. I see too deep and I see too much."

Although the author never explicitly says it, I think it clear that this case of over-clear perception can easily be seen to be the feeling that has been described by Sartre as Nausea and by Camus as the Feeling of Absurd.

The Outsider is an exile, a foreigner in what he at one time thought was his own land—the earth. Perhaps the best way to put it in simple language is (most) "things just don't seem to make sense anymore."

Now that "anymore" seems to be an important factor for Wilson. Of all the Outsiders that he cites (T. E. Lawrence, Neitzsche, Nijinsky, Rilke, Van

Gogh to name a few) Wilson draws the conclusion that "The Outsider wants to cease to be an Outsider . . . he wants to be balanced."

The point at issue seems to be the inability for the Outsider to come forth, from the depths of his latently creative being, with one definitive act which will, in a sense, "make life worth living."

Von Gogh and Lawrence both committed suicide, the former physically and the latter mentally. They could not give of themselves in a creative and self-definitive act.

Wilson spends the better part of a chapter on the novels of contemporary Swiss-German novelist Hermann Hesse, the winner of the Nobel Prize for his magnum opus, "Magister Ludi."

Wilson shows well how Hesse has, literarily, passed along a continuum which has looked at the various ways of making "life worth living." I fully agree with Wilson's commentary that, so far, Hesse has not "found the answer that seems to suit him."

It is here that I repeat an earlier point: Wilson is almost conclusive in his statement that the Outsider wishes to stop being an Outsider. The last several chapters of the book express the idea that, somehow, Wilson seems to feel that only through a cognization of a religious "faith" (or desire) to live, can man re-affirm himself and thus live with himself.

Religion, Wilson is quick to point out, does not mean a specific creed; but more a non-specific, yet basal, credo involving acceptance of a non-literal idea such as The Fall, and the recognition of much of the futility by which human effort is characterized.

In this respect I think Mr. Wilson might have done well to re-read Camus's "The Rebel," rather

Penn State Foundation Elects Altoona Publisher

J. E. Holtzinger, Altoona publisher, has been reelected to a five-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of the Penn State Foundation.

The Foundation was established in 1952 to encourage financial contribution to the University to support programs for which appropriated and other funds are not available.

Five of the directors of the Foundation are elected by the Board of Trustees. Holtzinger was first named to the Board of Directors in 1952.

er than, early in the book, dismiss Camus as a sort of pre-conceived cohort of the subjective nihilist Sartre. Camus, I think, provides another avenue of possibility which Mr. Wilson, in this work, has not explored.

"In a world without values, man must create value(s) . . . I revolt, therefore we are" are two of the key phrases of Camus. Not fear, nor defecation of that fear (which Wilson seems to suggest); but revolt within the limits of this strange earth in which we find ourselves exiled.

Wilson realized an excellent conclusion to "The Outsider" on p. 279 when, quoting G. B. Shaw's "Back To Methuselah," Lillith says "I say, let them above all things dread stagnation."

It is a book well worth reading—regardless of whether you accept the hazy conclusions of the author. I'll lend it to you . . . —Stephen R. Blum

Swift Retires As Head Of Animal Nutrition

Dr. Raymond W. Swift, head of the department of animal nutrition at the University, will retire on July 1 after 37 years of service. He has been named professor emeritus of animal nutrition.

Dr. Swift came to Penn State in 1923 from the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station and in 1946 was named head of the animal nutrition program. He completed his undergraduate work at Massachusetts State University, and received his master of science degree from Penn State and his doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Rochester.

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Playhouse Review--

(Continued from page one) Thompson in the opening segment.

Although obviously working hard on the role, Fischer damages some of the feelings the audience should feel for the character by overplaying the part.

In contrast, he is enchanting and moving when he modulates his voice. At these times he assumes the sincerity Miss Thompson exhibits and is able to win the audience.

Excellent performances by most of the supporting cast does much to enhance the production. Zena Ginsberg as the manufacturer's psycho-analyzing daughter (one year older than her father's sweetheart) gives one of the best performances. Her entire range of emotions is strong and her rapid changes from anger to sympathy are smooth and convincing.

In one hectic outpouring of rage over his wife's concern for her father and disconcert for their marriage, Frank Browning is explosive and exciting. He leaves the audience as startled as his wife, and more pleased.

Anne W. Grant is wonderful as the deserted mother who can't understand or cope with her children. Her timing and delivery fit the role perfectly.

As the husband who wants to save his vanity as much as his marriage, David Frank gives a nice performance. He is flippant

about his wife's new love and yet conveys the hurt he feels.

Mimi Bensinger as the good-meaning friend who uses inappropriate examples, Mary Miller as a friendly and equally unhelpful neighbor and Leslie Preston as the kid sister infatuated with her sister's husband's manliness add much to the production.

Bishop has given some nice touches to the comedy scenes in the production which will run tonight and tomorrow at the playhouse in Neff's Mills. His handling of the scene where family and neighbors ogle the manufacturer is delightful.

However, in the direction of the hysteria and argument scenes, he has overplayed the character's emotions. This is most noticeable at the show's close when the happy manufacturer dances what appears to be an imitation ring-around-the-rosie.

Students Receive Award

Two students, Stephen Fearheller, senior in chemistry from Philadelphia, and William Ward, junior in chemical engineering from Glen Rock, N. J., received Merck Index Awards for high scholarship in the chemistry and chemical engineering curriculums.

The award is an encyclopedia of chemicals and drugs inscribed with the name of the recipient.



THIS HAPPENED ONCE. Part of what we now call Independence Hall was rented to a Philadelphia painter and naturalist, Charles Willson Peale, for a museum and picture gallery.

Congress had moved out and the Pennsylvania Legislature left the old "State House" for new quarters in Lancaster, Pa. The City of Philadelphia bought the building and rented the upper floor to Peale.

The symbols of America's Independence have had their ups and downs throughout U. S. history. And so has belief in the meaning of Independence itself.

Today, many Americans appear to be turning away from the idea that man's most cherished rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This Fourth of July is a good time to remember and renew the tremendous vitality and power that America has gained from that great concept . . . Independence.

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