

Then came Polonsky

Just cry wolf

I really dig pop cult heroes. Hence, I sat anxiously awaiting the arrival of pop cult writer Tom Wolfe to Burton Auditorium last Wednesday night.

Well, I should have gone to see Frank Zappa. What I had expected on the stage that evening was some sort of super freak of the literary world. Instead, we were treated to a dapper dude resplendent in a lovely white suit with black shirt and tie. For a second, I thought that we all had been had, and that Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame had come in Wolfe's place. But, being a liberal fellow, I advised myself on not jumping to hasty decisions because of a man's wardrobe. After all, clothes do not make the man.

Or do they? For an hour and a half, we as delighted disciples were supposed to sit enthralled by Mr. Wolfe's not very enlightening comments on the counter culture. About the only revealing comment I heard all night was Wolfe's analysis of how Arlo Guthrie is merely our generation's version of The Lone Ranger. Yet despite the aimless, rambling tone of his speech, the audience made up mostly of equally well dolled-up dudes from the various branches of the Fine Arts Department, clapped loudly and laughed heartily at third rate Peter Gzwoski Show type humour. And if you don't know who Peter Gzwoski is, then you are falling behind in your Canadian content. One would think that the members of the artistic intellectual division of our university would have more discriminating tastes.

And that brings us to the role of the intellectual. Ac-

ording to Mr. Wolfe, his role as a writer is to adopt the position of as "objective egoist." This means that it is up to Mr. Wolfe not to preach any particular doctrine nor to try and see this doctrine adapted in practical terms. In this way it is not necessary nor proper for the writer to say what he believes. Rather, it is his duty to plug himself into the brain waves of his subject and to try and describe as accurately as possible what the subject is thinking. And it is in this light that Mr. Wolfe strayed away from answering any questions on his personal beliefs.

It seems generally accepted today, that if a writer, or actor, or painter wishes to be at all socially relevant, he must preach the revolution. Unfortunately, this sentiment is based on the assumption that most writers, actors, and painters believe in the revolution. It may be that artists do not preach revolution because of objective egoism, but rather because of subjective hedonism. Where will the artists in Grossman's be, when the Weathermen start throwing their grenades in the draught beer? One wonders whether Weathermen generally make distinctions between artists in Grossman's and sophisticates in the Royal York's Imperial Room.

But I do think that we should express some sympathy, or empathy, if you are so inclined, for the predicament of the artist intellectual. You see, on the one hand, those intellectuals who are out there leading the revolution in the Canadian colony, are lampooned as being self-righteous, arrogant, pending enlightened despots.

So, if the intellectual acts he is an effete snob. If he does



not act, he is a liberal cop-out. One wonders, how Che Guevara ever kept his sanity. As a matter of fact, some even wonder if he did keep his sanity. Well, old Che should have taken lessons from Tom "Pop Cult" Wolfe. You see, Tom mocked today's good writers for writing on the attitudes of revolution, not on the actual making of the revolution. As an example of this he cites the film, Easy Rider, which depicts revolutionary attitudes, and alas, not the revolution. So what does old Tom do? He depicts the attitudes of electric acid counter culture, but does not preach or believe in it. Tom is an "objective egoist".

You see, Che, Just cry wolf.

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