

Books, etc.

Inside (alias **Pulpinside**) made its first appearance of the year last week. A sigh of relief was heard over the entire campus as dozens of intellectually starved students grasped their copies close to their hearts or pored over the dog-eared pages in cafeterias and classrooms.

Inside has been extant now some three years. This year the editorship has passed into the capable hands of John Thompson, a third-year English student who was formerly associate editor and a regular contributor of poetry. Faced by a monetary stranglehold, he was forced to print the whole thing on pulp paper (hence the new name) and will only be able to gift us with four issues this year.

The appearance of the magazine has certainly suffered because of this. It no longer has the sturdy attractiveness which was its saving virtue in past years. It has lost a certain sense of permanence and, like back issues of *True Confessions* and *The Gateway*, its future may be confined to hygienic use in certain rural areas.

This is certainly no comment on the content of the magazine. In past years *Inside* was, unfortunately, the vehicle of an all-too-small group of writers who as a result were accused of cliquishness and "insiderism"—a term which came to have all sorts of connotations of intellectual snobbery. Mr. Thompson, however, seems determined to obliterate this stigma of esotericism. The current issue is eminently readable and relatively

diverse in subject matter and authorship.

The issue contains two short stories, one short play (I use the word in the broadest sense), a couple of poems, and an editorial that is well worth reading by some of the aspiring poets on this campus. One of the stories, unfortunately has lapsed into the very old and very dull "pity the poor artist" theme, but the other is one of the most enjoyable pieces I have seen in the magazine to date.

The amount of poetry in *Inside* has been cut down considerably. This may be a good thing in view of Mr. Thompson's comments and in view of some of the wretched stuff that has been printed in the past; but on the whole I think any literary magazine is going to suffer by putting the emphasis on prose to the exclusion of verse.

The poems that do appear are by Randhir Sehgal, a poet-engineer whose work has an easy flow to it, a certain sincerity and lucidity of style that is generally rare among young poets.

Mr. Sehgal's poetry also appears in *The Clown*, which threatens to become a major competitor to *Inside*. This little-known publication has appeared once (a second issue may be out by the time you read this), cheaply but together and quietly distributed by secretive figures in dark hoods. Actually, if you want to get hold of a copy, you might try contacting Dale Burgess at 8723-112 St. The magazine sells at 25 cents a copy.

The Clown contains a wider

range of material than the official university publication—everything from a discourse on free will to a half-page "thought" or prose-poem. Some of the contributors are the same people who supply *Inside* with material. Manuscripts on all subjects are acceptable, and should be sent to the address given above.

I have been asking myself which of the two magazines is better—*Inside*, published under the auspices (and with the finances) of the Student Union, or *The Clown*, privately published and sold at a minimal cost. It's a dangerous question, and I don't think any clear-cut answer can be given. *Inside* certainly benefits from better printing facilities, although its make-up and illustration still leaves a lot to be desired. *The Clown* is not as pretentious, and didn't let me down as much as *Inside* did this issue, since it offers its reading fare on a wooden platter rather than the tarnished silver one of *Inside*.

The quality of writing in both is generally good enough. *Inside* is undoubtedly consistently better, but lacks the flashes of genius occasionally come across in its competitor.

All in all, there's not much to choose between the two, and the competition (and competition there will be, despite the denials of the parties concerned) promises to keep both magazines on their toes, and to make the undergraduate literary atmosphere a little more exciting.

—Terry Donnelly

films

Billy Wilder's new comedy, *The Fortune Cookie* (at the Odeon) can be recommended pretty strongly.

Its name star, Jack Lemmon, gets the show stolen from him by Walter Matthau, who is better known as a Broadway actor; but I don't see why that should worry anyone.

Lemmon plays Harry, a television camera-man who gets injured while photographing a football game. Matthau plays Willie, a shyster lawyer specializing in fake whiplash-injury insurance claims who happens to be Harry's brother-in-law.

The plot concerns itself with Willie's attempt to extort a settlement from the football team and the stadium as compensation for Harry's "back injury"—a compressed vertebra actually incurred by Harry at the age of seven, playing paratroopers with his sister on the garage roof.

Harry, despite this evidence of incipient militarism, is a "nice guy" in that almost suicidal way often affected by Hollywood hero-victims: compulsively goodhearted, honest, humble, trusting and so forth. Why then does he allow himself to get involved in Willie's fraudulent schemes?

For Love!

You see, our Harry had this really vicious stupid wife who ran away with a clot who promised her fame and fortune on the nightclub circuit (she wants to Sing), with whom, against his better judgment, Harry's still in love.

So when she phones to see how he is, he can't resist playing sick to get her sympathy.

And Wife is very very interested in the money that looks to be wafting its way Harrywards.

Add one guilt-racked Negro football-player to prey on Harry's conscience (this chap thinks he's responsible for Harry's being in a wheel-chair, and is going to pieces as a consequence), and then on with the imposture!

The development of the plot is pleasantly reminiscent of Hollywood comedies of the '30s; so is the dialogue, which is full of wisecracks in the grand style.

But the main power of the piece lies in Matthau's performance.

I've not for a long time seen such a perfect example of the Aristotelian *alazon*—the joyous imposter, the fraud whose only honesty lies in his incredibly consistent sense of style.

Willie is glorious, whether he's sitting languidly in his run-down office drawing "Halloo" in the telephone at the super-suave insurance lawyers whom he has at his mercy, or robbing the box with money in it for the Unwed Mothers Fund at the hospital.

("Unwed mothers? I'm for that", he has absently responded a moment earlier when his bratty kids are pestering him to contribute.)

This sort of figure is tricky to handle. Most of his effectiveness is blunted if the audience doesn't loathe him, yet that loathing must somehow involve a good deal of sneaking liking.

Willie isn't quite Falstaff, but in this movie he doesn't have to be. All farce demands is big one-dimensional characters, and Willie fits the bill nicely.

As for Jack Lemmon's role: I suppose its success depends on whether Great Society American consensus liberalism irritates you or not.

Personally, I'm prepared to be charmed by it until it gets really weepy, at least in art. (And, with regard to life, I must say I find President Johnson much easier to take when he's being sentimental than when he's being bloodily practical.)

Anyway, the relationship between Harry and Boom-Boom the football player (I'm tempted to call it the White Whiplash) is fairly delicately handled.

I don't know what to say about the final sequence, which involves Harry atoning by letting Boom-Boom trample him down on a empty football field, only to get up unhurt, except that there's no reason why you should let it spoil the rest of this very funny picture for you.

—John Thompson

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