Wilson, Angus, 1913-1991.

Angus Wilson letter to Sandra Kent
1969 February 20

Abstract: British novelist Angus Wilson wrote this eight-page letter to Sandra Kent in response to her letter regarding a dissertation she had written concerning his novels.
### Descriptive Summary

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<td>Wilson, Angus, 1913-1991.</td>
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<td>Angus Wilson letter to Sandra Kent</td>
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<td><strong>Inclusive Dates:</strong></td>
<td>1969 February 20</td>
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<td><strong>Extent:</strong></td>
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### Administrative Information

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**Biographical Notes**

**Angus Wilson**

Born August 11, 1913, in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, England, Angus Wilson was also a short story writer, editor, critic, biographer, and playwright. Wilson was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1980 for his contributions to literature and the arts.

While working at the British Museum during the 1940s Wilson began writing short stories and other short pieces, most of which were portraits of postwar Britain. He has been ranked among the best short story writers of the twentieth century.

By the 1950s Wilson became impatient with the short story form and in 1952 his first novel, *Hemlock and After*, was published. The characterizations in two of his novels, *Late Call* (1964) and *No Laughing Matter* (1967) are discussed in this letter.

In addition to being knighted, Angus Wilson received the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1959, for *The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot*; the Yorkshire Post Book of the Year Award in 1970, for *The World of Charles Dickens*; and honorary degrees from a number of universities including the University of Leicester, University of East Anglia, University of Liverpool, University of Sussex, and the Sorbonne. Angus Wilson died on May 31, 1991, in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England.

**Sandra Kent**

Sandra Kent (Harris) was an undergraduate student at Leicester University from 1966-1969. In her final year at Leicester she wrote a dissertation related to Angus Wilson, exploring the "wild garden" theme in his work. She received this letter in response to a letter she had written to Wilson.

**Sources:**


Derived from Sandra (Kent) Harris, e-mail message to Timothy Murray, November 12, 2010.
Scope and Content Note

British author Angus Wilson wrote this eight-page letter to Sandra Kent in response to her letter regarding a dissertation she had written concerning his novels.

In his extensive letter Wilson agreed with some of Kent's ideas regarding his use of the "wild garden" theme in his novels. He elaborated on the characterizations in at least two of his novels, Late Call and No Laughing Matter. He spoke of specific characters, as well as the broader meanings in his novels, particularly in terms of culture and society. In the final paragraphs of the letter Wilson offered some general thoughts on life, writing, "... but what matters, perhaps, most is not an end ... but the energy, curiosity, intelligence, compassion, and powers of shaping that we put into the process of living ... ."
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Wilson, Angus, 1913-1991--Correspondence.

Kent, Sandra--Correspondence.

Topical Terms

Novelists, British--20th century--Correspondence.

Characters and characteristics in literature--20th century.

Form/Genre Terms

Correspondence.

Occupation

Novelists.

Personal Contributors

Kent, Sandra, correspondent.

Related Materials in this Repository

This item forms part of MSS 099 Miscellaneous Literary and Historical Manuscripts.

MSS 291, Jay Halio papers related to Angus Wilson
Detailed Description of the Collection

Autograph signed letter with envelope, 1969 February 20 [Box 61 F885]

1 item (8 p.)