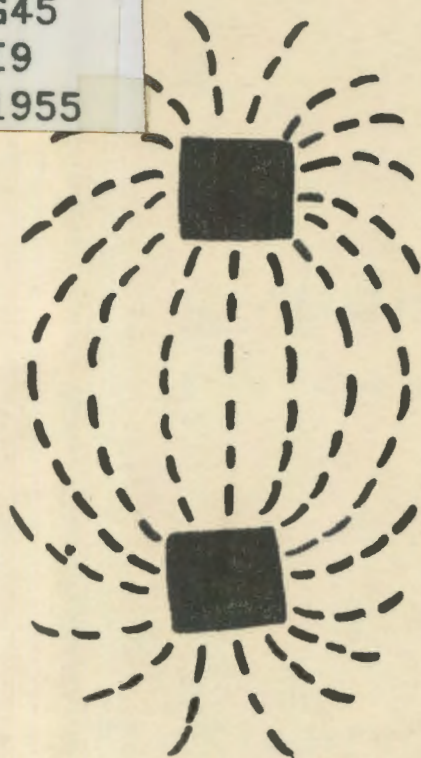


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EXPERIMENTALIST

SPRING 1955

S.U.N.Y. - GENESEO

EXPERIMENTALIST

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FATIAH

No elephant ever had as long a gestation period as *The Experimentalist* magazine. We hasten to express our pleasure in welcoming it and to thank our contributors and those hardy spirits, the members of the English Club, who proposed the magazine and worked indefatigably to make it a reality.

The purpose of *The Experimentalist* is to provide a medium of expression for the students of the College. We hope it will encourage people to write, to aspire to more articulate written expression, and to gain satisfaction from sharing thoughts and ideas with others.

We look forward to a long series of issues of ever-increasing literary merit and reader enjoyment. Anything within the broad scope of literature is of interest to us, and we shall continually invite your response.

The Editors

CAPP'S LIL ABNER—
A MODERN-DAY SATIRE

Judy Edinger



The bashful, awkward guy known as Lil Abner serves as Al Capp's go-between in his ridicule of today's world. This satirical style of writing never ceases to carry a powerful impact, for the reader who is truly honest with himself is sure to recognize some of his own shortcomings in Capp's characters and object to having them pointed out.

Capp's natural good humor is a definite asset to his work. In fact, Al Capp ranks far up the ladder of today's literary geniuses, and by the way, he resents having his work belittled because he has chosen the common newspaper as his media for reaching the public; he realizes how many thousands read the papers daily . . . especially the comic page. Much is to be said for this comic page, for as Capp himself said, "Comic strippers are storytellers . . . Dickens might have written in comic books if he could have gotten a contract.

Actually, Capp was delighted with his new idea of satire; no-one had ever done quite the same thing before, and, as he confessed, he was "exhilarated by the privilege it gave to kid the hell out of everything." He claims to have made a fifth freedom and says that without it the other four freedoms aren't worth much . . . he gave Americans the freedom to laugh at each other. His strip finds its fun wherever there is lunacy, and American life is surely full of lunacy. Capp also realizes that comic fans . . . old and young . . . like to see the funnies make fun of them; it's flattering, in a vague sort of way.

Al Capp's satire is strong and wide-reaching partly because he chooses current topics and fads and people as his subjects. Even Lil Abner himself takes on a slightly changed appearance when it is necessary for the impact of the plot. He has resembled such well-knowns as Frank Sinatra, Gary Cooper, Dick Tracy and even Huck Finn. In this way, Capp's humor never grows stale and his fans never know what the strip will contain from day to day. His loyal subjects are countless and he is ever grateful for "the willingness of the average American to laugh at a group of characters even more bedeviled than he is . . ."

Through Lil Abner, Al Capp satirizes nearly everything. His favorite family of Yokums are named from the marriage of the words "yokel" and "hokum" and just the *sound* of that word leaves exactly the right hillbilly flavor.

The Yokums live in Dogpatch which is, very cleverly, the big city's idea of the country and is distinctly hillbilly as is imaginable. The Yokums neighbors are as big and awkward and stupid as any loyal cityslicker believes. However, when Lil Abner visits the "big city," he meets his businessmen who are every bit as dumb as any of his Dogpatch friends. This, then, is Capp's secret of success . . . he makes fun of both sides of every issue for he is sentimental over nothing and does nothing to spare anyone's feelings. In this way, neither side can feel favored or unjustly criticized, for both are "treated" in the same manner; both are equally exaggerated. Capp said he tried to keep everything straight but colored it, however, with his conviction that "nothing is ever entirely straight, entirely good, entirely bad, and that everything is a little bit ridiculous."

These Yokums themselves contain all the lovable, but somewhat ridiculous traits found in any American family whether from the most lonesome, isolated hills of Kentucky or from Fifth Avenue in New York City. Lil Abner's mammy is like most people's . . . "a miracle of goodness, but kind of bossy, quite self-righteous and sweetly ridiculous." However, Capp has accentuated all these traits in Mammy Yokum; he has made her the all-American mammy, only more so. Pappy Yokum is *the* proverbial henpecked husband. The meek way in which he allows Mammy to lead him around by the nose is quite demonstrative of the prestige American women have gained, but it is a bit exaggerated, I believe. Even Lil Abner's girl, Daisy Mae, (who recently became his wife), seems to be the average adult idea of a young girl . . . "widly beautiful, vaguely sloppy, and although infinitely virtuous, pursues her man like the most unprincipled seductress." In fact, Abner himself is not a true picture of an average American youth as many readers seem to believe. He is more a picture in the imagination of the people who glorify youth and dread growing old. Since Capp hates one-dimensional characters, those who are all good or all bad, he has made Abner a pleasing cross between the two; Abner is big-shouldered, narrow waisted and crudely handsome as all heroes must be . . . regretfully, however, he is also stupid. In this twist, Capp succeeds in knocking down the idea of perfection which many older people, and young ones, too, have built around modern-day youth.

Capp continued his attempt to point out the fact that there is good and bad in everyone in his portrayal of Daisy Mae's two brothers . . . Lem and Luke. As he said, "Good people in Lil Abner's town of Dogpatch are

like those in anyone's hometown . . . often a pain in the neck and the bad ones are often more attractive than the good ones!" Now, Lem and Luke are fiendish when they grab milk from hungry babies and worse when they burn down the orphanages to make light by which to read their murder and sex comics, (only to remember that they can't read). Nevertheless, even the most horrified reader is touched by the two boys' always respectfully asking their pappy's permission to do these deeds.

Lower Slobbovia, Capp's no-man's land, is an excellent example of his terrific ability to twist names around, enough so he won't be in trouble but not so much that they won't be recognizable. Capp was very honest and techincal over the location of this Lower Slobbovia . . . he even drew up a map for his readers that was perfectly reasonable except that some of the names given brought distrust as to the authenticity of the place. The two oceans were named the Hotlantic and the Pitzific. The capital city was known as Ceasar Sidddy, an obvious play on Sid Ceasar and this was the home of Good King Nogoodnik implying the blindness of the people to the poor characteristics hiding behind a nice (or partly nice) name. Some of the leading citizens of this land had such names as Douglas Snowbanks, Jr., Harry S. Rasputintruman, and Clark Bagle.

As fantastic as this nonexistent country was, the lovable shmoo who first entered the comic strip world in 1948 was even more popular. He represented the impossible for which all men search . . . that intangible thing that would be a cure-all. The shmoo was different in that he dropped dead from sheer delight if anyone stared at him hungrily for he lived on love and loved to be eaten. It could taste like chicken, steak or pork depending on how it was cooked. It laid butter, eggs and grade A milk. The skin made fine leather or cloth, its eyes, suspender buttons and its whiskers, toothpicks. Lil Abner said, "Wif these around, nobody won't neva hafta work no more . . . all hoomanity kin now live off th' fat o' the' land . . . namely shmoos." This human desire for easy and inexpensive living is again emphasized in Capp's most recent plot . . . that of the "druthers" that everyone would druther eat than anything else. Mammy Yokum owns the druther-rich land and expresses her desire to give away the druthers free to everyone, but a sly business tycoon pulls the wool over her eyes (as so often happens in the confusion of business these days), and agrees to package the druthers for her and charge the public for the box only. Of course, he raises the price higher and higher and only time can tell us the outcome of it all.

Many cartoonists secretly yearn to someday paint something worthy of hanging in an art gallery, but not so Al Capp. Perhaps this would be the case if he were just an ordinary cartoonist but he is smart enough to realize

the possibilities of his really clever comic strip and truly loves his work; he is pleased over what he terms his "unique combination" of slapstick and satire. He says the landscapes and naked women of the art museums are not significant art. According to him, and he seems sufficiently backed in this by the number of his avid fans, the comic strip is the best way of telling a story and can best record the history of the times for future reference. In my opinion, Capp's method of satirizing contemporary events is unique and carries a great deal of force behind it as does all good satire.

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ADIEU

Hubert Gerstman

Adieu Geneseo—we'll remember youse,
 The songs, the laughs, the booze,
 The pals, the gals, the halls and the falls,
 The books, the looks, the schnooks and the crooks,
 The dances, the glances, the hucksters and instructors,
 The jokes, the folks,
 the marks

OH TO BE A TEACHER

Betty A. Herrala

Oh, to be a teacher
Would be very fine
I'd get up very early
And be to school by nine.
I'd be so very merry
In every sort of way—
All of my dear lil' students
Would look, then say,
"What's wrong with her today?"
Oh, to be a teacher
Would be very fine.
Since perfecting many tricks
At least I'd know their line.
And happy is the teacher
Works five days a week.
If I'm ever one of these,
A second job I'd seek!
And remembering . . .
I "mustn't do this," and "Don't do that,"
"Don't tease the dog—stop mauling the cat,
Mustn't crowd ahead in line
But let your teacher by"
(Even though your tummy says
That you are going to die.)
Think I'll be a teacher
Just to tell them as I was told—
"Mustn't sass your elders, until you are as old."
Checking the mail box
Man alive
I'm now enrolled
Class of '55!

PENITANCE

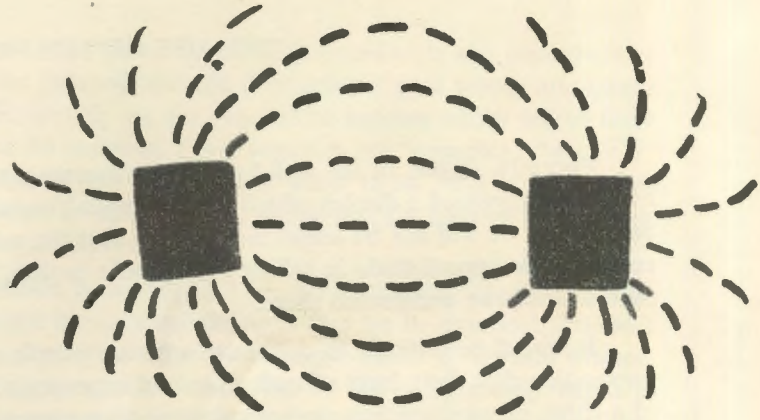
E.M.S.

A bird sang, and the world
Hung in silence in the sky.
Notes so far away and lone,
The only sound, save for a sigh.

THOUGHT

Eugene B. Cooper

To live for a moment,
To die for years,
This is our fate,
This feeds our fears.



PHYSICIST

Anonymous

Man whirling through a curved cosmos
Asks: Is Heaven on the outside of the curve?
Is Susquehanna on the inside of the curve?
Man made of matter that is motion
Of particles with a half life of one ten-millionth
of a second
Of charged and neutral change bombinating in a
void
Asks: What is Man?
What is Soul?

FRIENDS

Hubert Gerstman

Look around you
Friends have found you
Stop that sadness
Rejoice in gladness
Here they are
Your friends.
Drink the wine of fine companions
Climb the vine of fine moms and dadnions
Drink and joke of days gone by
Drink and drink till glass is dry
Drink till faces strange surround you
Count them as friends among the milieu.
One by one they all go home
Drink until you're all alone
Friends.

THE AGE OF THE PRACTICAL MAN

by Tom Sullivan

Recently, in one of the well-known bookhouses on lower Fifth Avenue, there appeared a display which read: "Do-It-Yourself Books Now On Sale." And we will not be amiss in assuming that the sale was a complete success. The appeal made in selling these books is that they are so simple even a child can understand them.

It would be difficult to determine whether people are pleased at the implication that their level of understanding is properly equated with that of a child, or whether they sincerely believe they cannot comprehend anything above the child's level. Some people see in this craze a healthy revival of handicrafts in the home; others might think it to be a trace of old New England frugality and an attempt to economize by "doing it yourself."

Whatever the cause, this phenomenon, this "Do It Yourself" slogan, is but a reflection of something which is more basic and fundamental. It is but part of the world of "practical knowledge" about which we hear so much. The utility, the use, the practical end is accentuated daily in our action and in our thoughts. Even in our moments of leisure we are encouraged to be practical. We should pursue a hobby because it might be useful to us some day, we should subscribe to professional magazines, we should expand our vocabulary so as to be better able to sell something to someone, we should be friendly to so-and-so because he might put in a good word for us.

The ivy walls have given way to training centers. These cacophonic mills mass produce masters at bridge-building, masters at vibration and frequency, masters at supersonic speeds, masters at thermo-dynamics, who are the Pied Pipers to armies of technicians. To regulate the confusion we have procedures and methods empirically arrived at to give us maximum efficiency. We are a society of mechanics in which the inventor of a portable something-or-other can amass a fortune while the patent is pending.

Nor can we neglect the workshops and laboratories by which we grow professionally. These are polar magnets which attract the latest theories and methods—it is here that the radical becomes orthodox and is rendered digestible to the profession, whose motto is conformity. The national organization imparts these revolutionary discoveries to its members at its convention—the minutes are compiled in a yearbook for further reference. And we reach milestones in salesmanship, accounting, law, medicine, and education. These professions are known by their white collars.

This is the bread and butter reality which confronts and confounds us all. Our energies are directed towards a vocational goal whose attainment spells security. Occasionally we are exposed to lectures which tell us there are other spheres in the universe. These lecturers are "experts in their field" who act as ambassadors and explain their world to us. And so some of us become vaguely aware of other worlds, which quickly became subordinate and revolve around our hub of activity.

You might answer by saying that we are controlled by circumstance, that the basic struggle for survival demands that we be practical. To some degree this is true. Yet what does this struggle mean if the idol towards which we are groping is a hollow one? Are we not being grossly unfair to ourselves if we can reason only in compartments, if we disassociate ourselves from our heritage, from the joys and sorrows of men who have gone before us? Are we justified in devising schemes for further isolation and fragmentation which, carried to their logical end, would render us unable to communicate with the man across the street? We have seen the evils of political fragmentation. Are we unaware of the fragmentation within our society?

This utilitarian concept narrows us by placing arbitrary limitations upon human capabilities. It is a two-edged dagger which pricks all of us, and each edge has its venom. It reaps upon us the evils of specialization and deprives us of the joys and delights of broad knowledge and understanding.

Ortega y Gasset in his *Revolt of the Masses* describes the specialist as a person whom civilization has made hermetic and self-satisfied within his limitations. And his egotism compels him to regard his narrow pursuit as the only goal worth seeking. The specialist even thinks it is a virtue that he takes no cognizance of what lies outside of his narrow sphere, and he gives the name "dilettantism" to any curiosity for the general scheme of knowledge. Perhaps the view of the specialist is best summed up by John Henry Newman in *The Idea of a University*, "Men whose minds are possessed with some one object take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in pursuit of it, and are startled and despondent if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport."

At the other end we are deprived of the delights of broad understanding and knowledge. Each of us has a burning desire for knowledge which is part of our nature. It is only when we become professional or vocational that we become channelled. Then some hidden voice tells the scientist that test tubes are more important than Kant, to the lawyer Blackstone is to be preferred to Dostoyevsky, the blueprints before the concert and Reading Readiness before *The Taming of the Shrew*. And these arbitrary values are used to confuse and warp the minds of men. Is it any wonder we cannot

see beyond our nose when practicality tells us that this is the proper scope of our vision? Our small circle becomes the only reality, and conversely, anything which does exist must somehow be fitted into this narrow circumference. Eternity itself must take on dimension.

It is not difficult to see how this insidious evil has become common practice to all of us. We have become so concerned with the job, the organization, the latest slogan, that we cannot possibly see the general nature of things. In our leisure time we become "informed" so that we may be conversive with every ridiculous detail of some overall theme of dubious value. But what of that critical juncture in our existence when we stop to meditate and to ponder upon the meaning of the struggle? What handbook is to guide us then? What index will point the way to solution?

Does there exist anywhere a general curiosity, an inquiring mind which seeks to know not because it is useful, because it is practical, but because this knowledge will lessen the inner feeling of barrenness? Little do we hear of what used to be the *beau ideal* of Education, the development of a man who aspired to gain what T. S. Eliot terms "a totality of view."

Has it become unimportant to develop minds which have learned "to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason"? John Henry Newman says of this man, "... such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot be but patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another." Who among us comes within the shadow of such ideals?

We have become so practical that we cannot see even as a vision what our place is in the universe. If there remain a few who somehow have survived by simple stubbornness to take first things first, perhaps these will impart this knowledge to us. If you are truly interested in securing this general knowledge of things, perhaps, through strenuous effort, you might "do it yourself."

THE LOST

E.M.S.

Someone cried,
"Take heart!"
Laughing, I replied,
"I take all hearts."
And looking down,
I found that mine was gone.



RECOLLECTION OF A LATE EVENING CONVERSATION

Anonymous

EVERY MAN wishes to project himself
out of himself
because . . . just over there
 is
genius.
Aesthetic
 appreciation
 is
the
recognition
of
experience.
A DOCTOR is a MAN
 who
has learned to call
a human a specimen.
Have you ever noticed that
a glass has a navel?

VICTORY

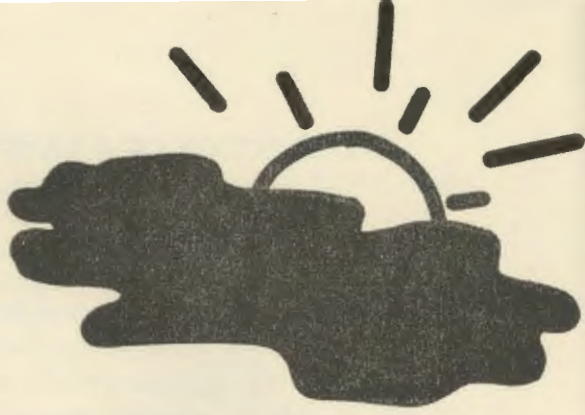
E.M.S.

Misfortune is my lover.
He follows up the stair.
He listens softly at my door,
And opens it with care.
Across the floor he steals
And stops beside my bed.
At last I have eluded him,
For I am lying dead.

MELANCHOLY

Eugene B. Cooper

The wind and the rain come often
When the heart is sorrow heavy,
The days drag out to torment us
And gloom is life's sad levy.
Love has flown the way of death,
Peace seeks aid in our sunken face,
The mind is torn of all things bitter,
Our souls rest in their own disgrace.
Now comes the very forlorn truth,
We seek in vain a light,
And with a withered sigh,
Continue our wayward flight.



CHRISTOPHER FRY AND THE WONDER OF REALITY

Jeanne Smith

"Reality is incredible, reality is a whirl-wind. What we *call* reality is a false god, the dull eye of custom. Nothing could be so wildly, perilously, incomprehensively fantastic as reality itself."

If, as Webster would have it, a critic is one who expresses a reasoned opinion on any matter involving a judgment of its value, truth or righteousness, I should never presume to write a criticism of the works of Christopher Fry. If, as Webster elaborates, a critic is one who expresses an opinion on any matter involving an appreciation of its beauty or technique, I can fully qualify. I am not altogether rational where Mr. Fry is concerned, could never give a judgment of the value, truth, or righteousness of his work. When it comes, however, to an appreciation of its beauty and technique, I bow to no one.

Christopher Fry's main concern in life, as expressed in his work, is with reality. The very existence of man is a miracle and though the hero in most of his plays woos death and rejects life as an utter waste of time, he usually winds up quite alive and reluctantly glad of it. This spirit is brought out best, perhaps, in "The Lady's Not For Burning." The play deals with a witch-hunt and, perforce, a "witch," who is not a witch at all but a thoroughly respectable and sensible young lady, a soldier-of-fortune dying to be hanged, a chaplain whose belief in himself is an act of faith—

"And what may seem nonsensical

To men of affairs like yourselves might not seem so

To me, since everything astonishes me,

Myself most of all. When I think of myself

I can scarcely believe my senses. But there it is,

All my friends tell me I actually exist

And by an act of faith I have come to believe them."

various villains, semi-villains and assorted citizenry. Though Monroe K. Spears says that this play exemplifies all of Mr. Fry's worst tendencies and stands up least well of the five plays under his (Mr. Spears) examination,

I think it brings out admirably the playwright's struggle between the two realities, the seeming disillusionment with life and the actual wonder of existence. It is Thomas Mendip, the world-weary soldier, who claims a murder in order to rid himself of the world only to find himself shot by the "arrow of larksong . . . falling in a stillborn sunrise," who states one of Mr. Fry's favourite themes.

"For the reason of laughter, since laughter is surely
The surest touch of genius in creation.
Would *you* ever have thought of it, I ask you,
If you had been making man, stuffing him full
Of such hopping greeds and passions that he has
To blow himself to pieces as often as he
Can conveniently manage it—would it also
Have occurred to you to make him burst himself
With such a phenomenon as cachinnation?
That same laughter, madam, is an irrelevancy
Which almost amounts to revelation."

It is the seeming disenchantment with living in general that, I presume, prompts Harold Clurman to contend that "He seems to take for granted that every intelligent person agrees that life is terrible and to be a blithe optimist nowadays is to set oneself down as an idiot." Yet, if Mr. Clurman would go beyond the outer appearance of words and attitudes of Fry's characters and take into account that they invariably end up unburned, unchanged, unstoned, in fact very much alive and determined to stay that way, he will come closer to the truth of Mr. Fry.

"A Phoenix Too Frequent" again demonstrates the passion for life and joy hidden beneath the false front of, in this case, a woman's fickleness and false desire for death. It is the story of Taegus, the soldier, Dynamene, the "sorrowing" widow and Doto, her faithful maid. Taegus comes upon the two women in a tomb, languishing over the death of Dynamene's husband, Virilius, a man so "punctual, you could regulate the sun by him" with "the cautious voice which made/Balance-sheets sound like Homer and Homer sound/Like balance-sheets." Taegus, supposedly guarding six hanged bodies, drinks with Doto and falls in love with Dynamene. In arguing Dynamene out of her fond wish to join her husband in the Underworld, he succeeds so well that she is quite prepared to forget her husband and bring unalloyed joy to Taegus within the first eight minutes of this wonderful one-act play. Taegus, however, discovers the loss of one of his bodies and resigns himself to death. As he is about to kill himself, Dynamene, determined woman, offers the body of her late-lamented husband to take the place of the unfortunately mislaid corpse. Taegus, horrified at first, allows himself to be persuaded and love, life and joy

once more win out. Through *Dynamene*, Mr. Fry expresses his credo in, "What appears/Is so unlike what is. And what is madness/To those who only observe, is often wisdom/To those to whom it happens." Doto, the personification of the faithful and slightly ribald maidservant so well loved by earlier playwrights, makes a wise and delightful observation on

"Our names. They make us broody; we sit and sit
To hatch them with reputation and dignity.
And then they set upon us and become despair,
Guilt and remorse. We go where they lead. We dance
Attendance on something wished upon us by the wife
Of our mother's physician. But insects meet and part
And put the woods about them, fill the dusk
And freckle the light and go and come without
A name among them, without the wish of a name
And very pleasant, too."

In "*Venus Observed*" we are presented with the fascinating premise of a modern-day Paris being asked to make a difficult choice between three women. The Duke of Altair, weary of flitting from one eager lady to another, chooses three, "All of them at some time implicated/In the joyous routine of my life." One of them his son, Edgar, must select as his mother. There are a varied and amusing assortment of odd characters involved and before the last curtain we have the Duke falling in, out, and, again, in love, a confession by a reluctantly reformed swindler, a symbolic archery game and a roaring fire. The Duke, rather bored with life, finds solace in the stars, yet manages to make the observation, "I see nothing strange. If we can move and talk/Under the sun at all, we must have accepted/The incredible as commonplace, long ago," again Mr. Fry's assertion of the wonder of existence. Rex Harrison, who played the Duke on Broadway, contends that "The abstract things, such as Rosabel standing for the Tragic Muse or the Duke being a modern Prospero are not for the actor but for special people in the audience to make in their own minds if they want to Fry is observing life more than he is moralizing about it." How ready critics and playgoers alike are to dress a simple, revealing comedy up in deep, dark symbolism, particularly so in the case of Fry who, as Mr. Harrison states, is merely observing life, not moralizing it. So does Alexander Woolcott complain that "Mr. Fry's rich and often cryptic prose and the unearthly assortment of characters he created to deliver it seemed to suggest some extra and portentous meaning, some important universal message, and when, after following him with polite and anxious attention for about an act and a half, I could identify nothing of the kind, apathy began to set in."

In his three miracle plays, "Thor, With Angels," "The Firstborn," and "The Boy With the Cart" Mr. Fry restates his favourite themes. In "Thor, With Angels" we have the struggle between the two realities, the contrast between the pagan and Christian concepts, in the vague doubts of Cymen about his pagan beliefs and the firm faith of Hoel who is crucified for this faith. Hoel, realizing his ultimate end, asks,

"Why don't I settle
To a steady job in the grave, instead of this damned
Ambition for life, which doesn't even offer
A living wage? I want to live, even
If it's like a louse on the back of a sheep, skewering
Into the wool away from the beaks of crows;
Even like a limpet on a sour rock.
I want to live!"

Here Mr. Fry speaks out loudly and strongly for Christianity and the new hope to be found there. Cyman, begging forgiveness of the murdered Hoel for the sorrow of the world, avows,

"While I leave one muscle of my strength
Undisturbed, or hug one coin of ease
Or private peace while the huge debt of pain
Mounts over all the earth,
Or, fearing for myself, take half a stride
Where I could leap; while any hour remains
Indifferent, I have no right or reason
To raise a cry against this blundering cruelty
of man."

"The Boy With the Cart" is a story of innocence, but the eternal conflict is still there, this time the conflict of Cuthman and his misfortunes, of his determination to build his church and his enemies' determination to prevent his building it. Briefly, it is a tale of miracles and of the wandering of Cuthman in his search to find just the right spot to build his church. On the death of his father, Cuthman, a shepherd, builds a cart in which to carry his mother away from their village to a new life. His joy upon being shown the consecrated spot by God is expressed in the words,

"But when creation's tide crawled on its first
Advance across the sand of the air, and earth
Tossed its tentative hills, this place of idle
Grass where we are idling took the imprint
Of a dedication, which interminable
History could not weather away."

The innocence of Cuthman, symbolizing the simple faith of the medieval peasant, brings about three miracles which see the church to completion. The Chorus (for the first and only time used by Fry) expresses the wonderful insight of "Between/Our birth and death we may touch understanding/As a moth brushes a window with its wing."

The vision of a prophet, Moses, clashes with the unassailable power of a pharaoh, Sete, in "The Firstborn." Commonplace reality and the true, miraculous reality wage their unending battle in this story of the return to Egypt of Moses, once a hero and now an exile, to upbraid Pharaoh for his unjust treatment of men. His disgust at his fruitless efforts to make an impression on the immovable ruler, who claims that he has put to purpose men who would otherwise have had not the least meaning, is expressed in

"Not the least meaning, except the meaning
Of the breath in your lungs, the mystery of existing
At all. What have we approached or conceived
When we have conquered and built a world? Even
Though civilization becomes perfect? What then?
We have only put a crown on the skeleton
It is the individual man
In his individual freedom who can mature
With his warm spirit the unripe world."

After the death of Rameses, the firstborn of Seti, whom he had tried in vain to save, Moses wonders why the necessity of God should feed on grief, but finds solace in "But what does eternity bear witness to/If not at least to hope? Eternal failure/Would make creation void before the void/Had seen creation." "The Firstborn" is, according to one critic, Fry's most successful drama, while another finds that the conflict contains little dramatic tension. To me, the plea of Moses to Pharaoh to respect the dignity of man and the search of Rameses for a faith in something, or someone, tangible is most moving. Even the expected, and here admittedly contrived, death of Rameses at the hand of the Angel of Doom is suspenseful and terrifying, inevitable as it is. The stirring prose and masterly use of dramatic situation hold one to the end.

In all his plays, Christopher Fry is searching-for truth, for moments of insight, for true reality. We should be grateful that he has chosen to do so in poetry, the "language in which man explores his own amazement the language in which he says heaven and earth in one word the language in which he speaks of himself and his predicament as though for the first time." Mr. Fry hopes and visualizes a theatre, now in

its birth pangs, which will see a return to the poetry which has always expressed man's thoughts. If the audience will be treated to such poetry, theme and technique as have been offered by Christopher Fry, this "new" theatre cannot come soon enough. Is there a poet or playwright today who can express the love of life and joy as well as does he?

"If we stop pretending for a moment that we were born fully dressed in a service flat, and remember that we were born stark naked into a pandemonium of most unnatural phenomena, then we know how out-of-place, how lost, how amazed, how miraculous we are."

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DAY'S END

E.M.S.

The turmoil of rolling clouds of black
Spewed blood across the golden light
Of the setting sun last night.
No star came out, no moon.
Sooty sky spread o'er the red,
Covering the place where the sun had bled.

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