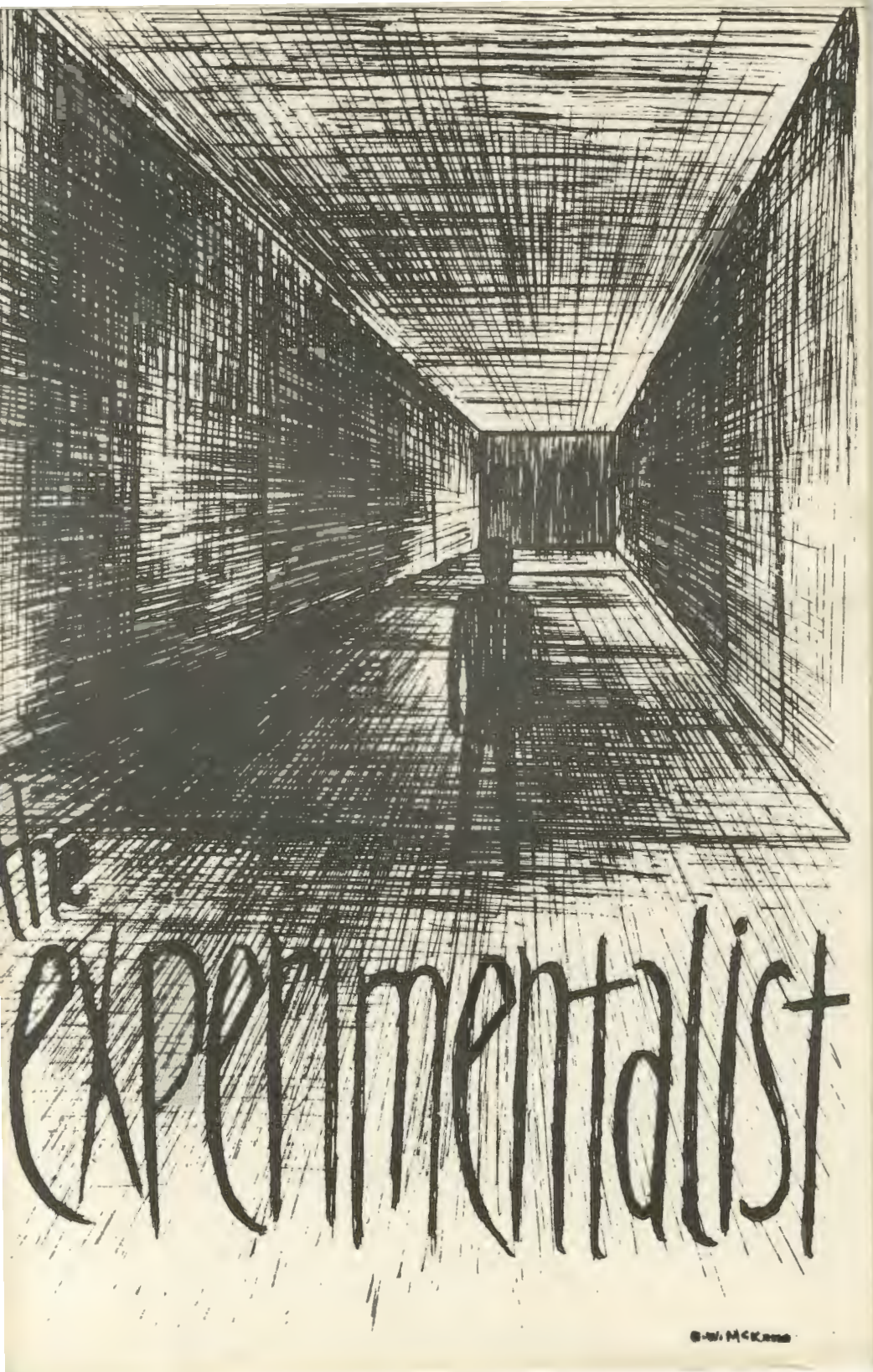
The experimentalist
B.W. McKenna

EXPERIMENTALIST

Editors:
GEORGE WILKERSON
ANGELA SALAMONE

Adviser:
MISS EDWEEN HAM

Art Editor:
GORDON McKANE

Treasurer:
ROBERT SCHULTZ

Editorial Board:
MARY COLLINSON
ROBERT ROOT
JEAN BARNES

Edited by the:
EXPERIMENTALIST CLUB

THE LITERARY PUBLICATION
OF THE
STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENESEO, NEW YORK

SPRING 1963

THE LUCY HARMON AWARD

SHORT STORY

Each year the EXPERIMENTALIST holds an open competition in the four fields of Short Story, Freshman Essay, Poetry and Literary Criticism. All work submitted to the magazine is eligible for an award and is judged by impartial judges, usually from other universities. This year, Thornton Parsons, Professor of English at Syracuse University, judged the Poetry and Literary Criticism and Sujit Mukherjee, Lecturer in English at the University of Padma judged the Short Story and Freshman Essay.

Although it is not a necessity that a winner be chosen, the awards are usually granted in the field which is deemed worthy. This year the only award winner is Douglas Brode whose story THE TORTURE CHAMBER won the Lucy Harmon Short Story Award. This story appeared in the first issue of the EXPERIMENTALIST and, for this reason, will not be reprinted.

CONTENTS

When the first molecular beads of rain began to splatter on the streets of Washington Square, they had little effect on the gathered populace. For it was early in the afternoon on a warm, sunny day in late October, and late October is a most beautiful time of the year in Greenwich Village: the children, urchins of the sanctuary that they are, climb into the fountain with their pants rolled up and proceed to wade and sail their boats, as if to try and stretch the dying summer months; the poets congregate around the selfsame fountain, and daze away the hours in solemn study of some long forgotten classics; while the folk-singers, with their guitars and bongos, and their beards and sweaters, gather under the leafy foliage trees which add immense beauty to the park.

But, later that afternoon, when the sun allowed itself to become hidden behind colossal gray clouds, and the drops became larger and more frequent, the children, with the sixth sense that all children everywhere seem blessed with, recognized that the summer was over, and left the fountain to find some mode of play more suited to the time of year; the poets, knowing that to stand stoic would mean to take a thorough shower, picked themselves and their books up, and, with a few well placed grumbles went inside; and the folksingers, in fear of having the precious tools of their trade ruined by the rain, invaded the lower haunts of the cellar coffeehouses to continue their serenade.

And by early evening, when the precipitation fell hard and fast, when thunder clapped loudly in the sky far away, and when darkness set in earlier than usual, there was to be found only one sole figure on all of Bleeker Street.

This was Lorenzo.

To Lorenzo, the rain had had the reversal of its effect upon the other Village inhabitants. For as they had spent the day interrupting their pleasures, from time to time, in order that they might look to the sky and calculate how much longer the beauty of the sun might last, Lorenzo had passed the afternoon quietly crouched by his window. Only when the rain became thick enough to drive the others inside did it become powerful enough to urge him out.

For Lorenzo loved the rain. He loved it at any time, in any form, in any quantity, but most of all he loved it as it was now, coming to him out of the night, when it sogged his shoes, soaked his shirt, splattered on his face, and saturated his hair

while the pitch blackness filled him to the brim with the sensation of solitude for which he seemed to crave.

Yet it must not be implied that Lorenzo waited, or even hoped for the rain as he nestled by his window. At one moment he sat there, and the weather outside was fair. Later he sat by the same window and there was rain, and at that time he left his room and wandered onto the street. This should not be confused with an act of waiting or apprehension, for he spent many days by the window in much the same manner when there was no hint of rain in either the nature outside or in his mind. Rather than waiting for any future incident, rain or otherwise, it was really a method of passing the present, for this was the task to which Lorenzo seemed devoted to. Whether he wasted a second, or used it for some purpose, it made no real difference (any more), as he had long since ceased to care. It only mattered that he lived that second for the reality that it was, for this was the only reality he knew. While many men find an afterlife too astonishing to believe, the complexity of this present existence was enough to confuse Lorenzo. The present he could just barely understand, the past was terribly blurred and harder to conceive, while the future - that was the joke of it all, far beyond the wildest dream. The distant future was no harder to picture than the immediate; the conquering of space was no more difficult to believe than the sunrise which would occur tomorrow.

Even the soothing rain, which was Lorenzo's great love, fit into this scheme of his. On the days without it, there was no depression, for there was no thought of it, there was only silence, or if necessary, work. The rain which had fallen in the past was a comfort to the past only; the rain which would fall in the future was a pleasure which might never come. The rain today, if there was any rain today, was the only relish Lorenzo knew, yet if there was none, it was as if he had always eaten his frankfurts plain.

As Lorenzo walked the streets, his movement was unmotivated; it led him nowhere, it took him any place. Although he circled the Village a number of times, never did he stop to look into any of the expressos or bars, the shops or the houses. His legs carried him into the park, yet he did not become fascinated by the screaming of the birds or the cackling of the squirrels. For they did not bother him, and he, being a reasonably fair man. did not bother them. They did not interrupt his solitude, and he was free to enjoy the gift of the gods, to indulge in the splendor of the lukewarm rain. If it had entered his mind that this would all soon end, his pleasure would have been cut in half. But he had trained his mind carefully, and such a

thought did not manifest. For not only did he not think of the future, he also refused to recognize it. Truly it can be said, he lived for the second he inhabited, the fraction he could feel, the moment which he knew.

How long Lorenzo's mind had functioned like this, there was no way of knowing. Whether it had begun in his early years, if it had established itself while he was dedicated to the task of flunking himself out of every college to which he was accepted, or if it had become affirmed while he worked as assistant cook on a tuna clipper, one could not tell, nor did many care to. For there were few who cared how Lorenzo thought; indeed, one could search thoroughly through half the world and be lucky to come up with one. Perhaps this was the reason for Lorenzo's form of existence. But no matter . . . this was Lorenzo, and this was his mind.

By late evening the torrents had thinned, and the storm had begun to subside. But as this occurred, Lorenzo's happiness did not gradually lessen. For to slowly walk home, and view the earth washed of its pugilence, cleansed of its prejudice, scowered of its hatred, and bathed of its ignorance, was the epitome of the pleasure, even though it was only momentary. For even as he would ascend the steps of the rooming house, he would pass Man hurrying in the other direction, carelessly throwing on his overcoat, madly eager to touch his foot to the outside steps and destroy all the good which nature had worked a miracle to produce.

But coincidence was to stop Lorenzo tonight. For as he shuffled towards his home, he happened to pass an alley which lay directly between two large and rather loud establishments, one a coffeehouse, the other a bar and strip joint, whose reputation for stripping its tourists of the money was far more widespread than the reputation of any of its femme fatales. While passing the alley, Lorenzo's mind was distracted for the first time that night. He became aware that a strange sounding voice seemed to be calling from the alley. He could not discriminate if it was calling directly to him, if it was calling to everyone, or, for that matter, if it was calling to just anyone, but in any case, he experienced a twinge of identification, and, with hands in pockets and an interested wrinkle on his brow, he sludged his way into the muddy passage.

No sooner than he had left the lights of the street behind did he realize what was taking place. A seemingly young and rather energetic girl appeared to be locked in battle with two men, one a Negro. She was struggling defiantly, but vainly, for the Negro suddenly began to slap her across the face, and when

she turned in pain the white man threw her to the ground. As she fell, the girl began to repeat the same call which had summoned Lorenzo from the street, and it could now be discerned as a cross between a cry and a whimper, a bastard son of a plea and a curse. The Negro then hurriedly threw his body over hers in a prone position, and, lifting his face to his comrade, grinned hideously, exposing a mouthful of gleaming white teeth, exhorting with a laugh:

"Me first!"

"Uh, uh!", answered his friend, displaying both comic inaneness and ignorant annoyance. "I ain't touching no bitch after a nigger done bumped her."

At that the Negro grew angry, and half shouted, "I said me first!" His accomplice gave a half hearted sullen look, but made no further attempt at debate, and the Negro was again free to turn his full attention to the squirming body which lay pinned beneath his gigantic hulk. He then started to bend his again grinning face down to kiss her, when he suddenly felt a red hot sensation going to his brain, and for a fraction of a second he tried to remember if it were possible for any woman to kiss that violently, when it quickly occurred to him that someone had kicked him in the head. Thinking that it must be his stooge turned against him, he started to holler at his dimwitted brother in rape, when he momentarily caught a glimpse of the figure standing beside him and sensed that the person trying to kick his head in was a perfect stranger. He felt his teeth give way under a profound blow, and while trying to stop from choking on a mixture of blood and enamel that was gliding down his throat, he received another concussion, this one in the left eye. In a half blinded fury, he swung out wildly with his fists, hitting nothing, and then half crawling, half grappling, made his way towards the street. Yet if he had remained at the scene, he would have been in no immediate danger of any further retribution, for the avenger was now occupied with jumping up and down on the body of the white man. The air was shrilled by a corporeal shriek, and then he was up and running down the alley right behind the Negro. The avenger could not help but laugh as they made their hasty escape into the street.

Actually, though, Lorenzo did not really know why he had proceeded as such. His first reflection had been to walk back into the street and leave the scene completely alone. He did not often interfere in the lives of others; he was having enough trouble with his own. But he had started the thing by entering the alley, and had decided that he must finish it.

He then turned to the girl, She was still on the ground,

Her face was in her arms and she was crying.

"Get up," he said, his voice shaking slightly. "C'mon now, get up." He offered her his hand.

She looked up at him slowly, sniffed in the tears, and took his hand. As she ascended, he snatched a glimpse of her sweatshirt, and noticed that it was from one of the New York City colleges. Looking deeper into her face, it registered that she was even younger than he had at first realized. That she was not over twenty was positive. During the recent episode, he had acted on pure instinct, believing her to be nothing more than just another of the Village sluts. It was apparent now that she was just a visitor, a frequent one most likely, but still a sightseer of sorts, and he felt shamed at his fellow man for the attempted act. If they were here now, he thought, they'd get more than just a shoe in the face.

"Are you allright?," he asked uneasily, for want of something better to do. She sniffled, shook her head 'yes,' sniffled again, forced a smile, again sniffled, and then broke into bawling like a little child. She fell into his arms and cried on his chest and the soft night wind carried her hair into his face. His stomach felt torn, for he felt responsible for her and all those in the world like her.

"There there," he found himself saying, "there there now." He patted her head and was pleased to find that her hair was as beautiful to touch with the hand as it was to have blown in the face. Like an angel's hair, probably, he thought. Just like an angel's hair. He almost laughed at the thought of he - Lorenzo - consoling an angel.

"I . . . want to . . . go home!," she gasped between tears.

"Of course. I'll take you home," he uttered soothingly. When he asked where she lived, she gave him the address of one of the women's dormitories at her university.

"Will you take me home now," she sobbed. There was no longer any fluid dripping from her eyes, but still her sobbing pulsed on.

"But do you want to go home like this?" he asked. She scanned herself, and observed that she was thoroughly saturated from her excursion on the ground. "Come on," he smiled, "We'll go into one of these joints and get a cup of coffee. When you've dried off and calmed down a little, I'll take you home."

"Allright," she said. She managed a smile, for she really did feel a little better. They began to walk towards one of the less popular, more ethnic cellar establishments, and Lorenzo managing to take a close look into her face, couldn't keep from making a simile. "Just as the world after the rain," he thought,

"washed and cleansed, bathed and scowered."

Lorenzo was both happy and astonished when the girl recovered much more rapidly than he had expected. But being at that stage in life where a bad incident is only a nightmare and a good one is reality, she was able to put the assault out of her mind, and enjoy the present situation, which was very much to her liking. Her wildest dreams had come true. She found herself in a carefully hidden dimly lighted nook with a real true member of the beat generation. She could not make her eyes stop from scanning his face, yet even in her feminine puerility, there was a hidden maturity of understanding which Lorenzo was soon to discover.

She then proceeded to bombard him with personal questions, and he, not having been asked about himself for an extended length of time, devoured them with relish. Yes, he wrote poetry. Only occasionally did he paint. No, he did not play the guitar. Yes, he lived right in the heart of the Village, in a little rooming house off Bleeker Street. Why did he choose the Village to live? He had to snicker at that one. Well, he said, because the people in the Village are like all the people in New York, only more so. Most people in the City will leave you alone. In Greenwich, they go out of their way to do so. They work at giving you solitude. And only in the Village could he be free from the anxious friends who disturbed his writing and his peace of mind with their countless questions like 'what are ya doing tomorrow?' How did he know what he was doing tomorrow? He had to get through today first!

Her next question hit him rather hard. Had he ever gone to college? Yes. A number of times, in fact. No, he had never completed it. Why? The question riddled his brain. At first he could not think of any answer at all, and then he found so many responses clotting his mind at once that they were all lost before he could single out any one of them. Yet there was an urgency about this question, and he fought to give her an answer. The one he scrapped together, however, even he could only partially understand.

"I didn't really mind college except for the homework and the classes," he began. "On certain days I got the desire to just sit and read, so I did. Other times I had an idea for a story, so I stayed in and wrote it. And every evening I'd go for a long walk. At first, though, I made myself study by thinking about the diploma, that degree I'd get. But after a while, it seemed to move farther and farther out of my reach. Yet . . . I got so close to it at times. The thing was, it was always tomorrow that I'd get it, never today. The same thing happened when I landed one of the lowest jobs on a tuna boat.

I was gonna save my money and buy a boat of my own. I'd think about it all month long. But when payday came, it was only a drop in the bucket. Think about tomorrow, I told myself, its gotta come sooner or later. But I was always afraid that it would come too much later to do me any good. So I spent it all that day. Every cent of it. Every pay day. Because I knew I had those seconds."

The lamps in the erratic institution were shaded with shallow material shades, and there was one on each table, stuck in among the clam shell ash trays and scribbled menus. The sickening brilliance of these lamps in this den of darkness had the quality of reminding one of reality, and brought to the conscious mind the impression that sooner or later this place would have to be left behind. Without them, after a few hours a person might be led to believe that there existed no world outside the four sunken walls of this hidden lair. It was their presence which eventually brought to her mind Lorenzo's promise to accompany her home, and at length she mentioned it to him. He reacted as a person awoken from a dream, and she realized that he was the only person unmoved by the lights, the only one who did not feel the push to move on to something, somewhere else, whatever it was that the world of tomorrow held in store. She recognized this, and pondered upon it, for he moved her.

When they had passed onto the streets, he proceeded to summon a cab, but she stopped him saying that she wanted to walk, which she had no desire to do, but which she felt he would probably prefer.

They made no conversation during the walk, which was done in no way to a lack of questions on her part, for her more schoolgirlish nature had a million more which were yet unanswered, yet her other side, the deeply mature metaphastation of her, which was unknown to many people who knew her, and at least partially unknown to herself, knew that he was not now in the mood, just as it had known a few minutes earlier that he was a person who greatly appreciated the right to walk. She was a little surprised at this understanding capability of her's, and of course so was he. He was glad to find this ripeness of an underlying maturity in one so wonderfully childish on the outside. He sensed that she both walked and kept still for his benefit, and she had been precisely correct on both hunches. He did not wish to talk at this point, he was much too busy seeing sections of the city which he had not viewed by night in much too long a time, and partially because he had not seen them as such for an extended period, partially because of the almost magical quality of the excellent company, he was preoccupied in

finding sentiment in the age-beaten avenues, happiness in the young arm-in-arm lovers, courage in the brass plated badges of the corner cops, sadness in the little old men with their chestnut wagons and their twenty year old tweed coats, soberity in the staggering drunks who somehow dared to wander off the bowery, magnificence in the spic girls wearing their cheap flashy dresses, truth in the sadly battered taxis, their yellow paint jobs worn with time, and life in the faces made on the sides of a million apartment houses as a billion lights blinked on and off.

Then, before either of them realized it, they were standing at the door of her dormitory. He was seized by a sudden grasp of fear, a type of diffidence which in no way suggest cowardice, a kind of anxiety he had gone much too long without. She sensed this, and thought that if there was any key to unlocking whatever was there, that this would be it. She thanked him again for his help, and for the coffee, and of course for the company. Then she turned swiftly and began to mount the steps.

As she imagined would happen, this threw him into a state of near panic. He called out her name, yet when she turned to face him, he was at a loss for words. She smiled, but it was not a smile from the schoolgirl, it was a smile from a woman who was, in a sense, a thousand years old, and who had experienced the sensations of every woman who had ever lived. She seemed, momentarily, to be the woman of all times, the very personification of the weaker sex; she appeared to understand his every action, to know his every motivation.

He forced himself to grin as he had once seen a matinee idol do in a grade B movie. He had no conception of how ridiculous it made him look.

"I'd . . . Well," he said, "I'd like to see you again some time.

Her face curled into a full, lioness smile, and he was astonished to find himself thinking that in a sense, this child of gold was much older than he would ever be. He had no way of knowing that she smiled because she had been searching for the key, and he had just handed it to her on a silver platter. Still smiling, she came down a step, and, almost in a whisper, she exhaled:

"When?"

The implication hit him in the face. She had tricked him ! No, he had tricked himself. Yet - it seemed not truly a trick at all, but more the real scheme of things, the just due of society forcing itself on Lorenzo at long last. He knew the word he had to say, and yet he knew the recognition he would make in saying it.

And then the palpitating, unshaven, curly headed, flesh and blood, brittle boned existence which called itself Lorenzo and which had the audacity to believe it was immortal summed up all its sadness and sentiment, all its courage and conviction, all its desire and dedication, all his past and all his present, but most important, all his humanity, and said:

"Tomorrow!"

by Douglas Brode

[The flesh is trembling]

The flesh is trembling for release;
a high A note soon to be freed,
to shatter or deafen as luck
would have it.
An inhaled breath of the angry God
to scorch the soil and pale the countenance
of the unwary.
The unborn children of the never to be
named young of the peasant who had no identity.
A precious second never lived to capacity
but sold with the new second-hand furniture.
An incomplete remembrance of better
times which have yet to pass.

I fell the bootmarks of time upon
my chest and would cry out, if only first
I could breath.
There is no release, the trapped
multitudes heard their suppressed
anxiety, a legacy for the sensitive soul.
And you, what do you know of this,
do you feel, or rare animal, do you think?
If it were over, retrospection in
tightly clinched fist, what has there been?

by Sandra Parker

The One Eyed Cat

The day rose, making diamonds of dew;
Clouds parted, seduced by the sun;
Morn and eve intermingled as one,
While somewhere an owl sang his last whoo-oo
And the one eyed cat
Stared silently and sat.
The bells rang out their purest song;
Mourners came in black and veils;
Relatives smilingly cried and told their tales
Of how they'd suspected this and that all along.
And the one eyed cat
Stared silently and sat.
She screamed and moaned;
The water boiled; the midwife intoned;
One slap--arms flailed;
The new life opened its mouth--and wailed.
And the one eyed cat
Stared silently and sat.
The canons coughed, the sirens sighed;
The arrow arched and touched his side;
A bullet danced and felt a heart;
The troops tied their shoes and did their part.
And the one eyed cat
Stared silently and sat.
A message came and said, "Guess who?"
The words were clear, had a deafening sound;
Wasn't it addressed to you--and you?
And the one eyed cat within us all
Stared silently and faced the wall.

by Hildi Knapp

As a young child, I had many ambitions which came and went according to my changes of mood or to my reactions to the events which took place around me. A newsreel of the Royal Family of England might hold visions of myself as the Queen, or at very least one of the young Princesses; a sharp word from "Mommy" could make me decide that mothers were the very meanest people on earth, hated by one and all, and that any young miss with an ounce of vision would do well to concentrate all efforts on becoming a father in her old age, because fathers were always kind and good. My dreams of fame and glory ran the gamut from cowgirl to ballerina, but one image of myself, though seasonal, stayed with me for many years; _____ - Farmer.

Every summer I spent my vacations at my grandparents' farm. To more sophisticated eyes, the place no doubt looked small and rather shabby, but mine were the eyes of youth and innocence and they did not see the worn appearance of the buildings and machinery, or the fences which marked the boundary of the land. My knee-high-to-a-grasshopper view is still crystal-clear in my mind and, as I saw it always in the same season during those years of my growth, the scenes retain a peculiar sort of continuity, almost as though the same leaves were on the trees, the same grass sprouting on the lawn, the same crops growing in the fields as when I left the previous summer. Since I had not been there to see the snow cover the grass, or the crops harvested, or the leaves turn color and fall from their lofty heights, it is no wonder that these things seemed never-changing. The buildings were in need of paint, but its lack gave them a softened appearance, shaded their outlines and caused them to blend with the surrounding landscape in such a way as to make them an integral part of their setting. Apple, pear, cherry, plum, and peach trees flourished and oak and chestnut, elm and willow towered loftily or gently bowed each according to its own tendencies; lilac bushes bore their magnificent burdens willingly and roses and iris, sweet-pea and hollyhock, peonies and petunias grew where they would; with abandon they spread themselves in all the likeliest places and seemed to know which spots were exactly right to display their beauty at its best. Chickens pecked about the dooryard; ducks waddled among them, ridiculous ducks thinking themselves quite grand and never realizing that the haughty carriage of their heads made their movements seem even more awkward; goats grazed on the hill near the barn, their white whiskers bobbing as they munched; cows

could be seen in the meadow, the collie frisking in and out among them and occasionally nipping at a straggler's heels; and the cat, that imperious cat, who entertained thoughts which she never revealed, but which caused the expression on her face and in her eyes to lead one to believe they contained more than trace of the mystic, sunned herself on the step leading to the house. The house of my grandparents.

Much of the charm of these summer visits was directly due to the two people I loved best in all the world, next to my parents and my brother. It must be true that when two human beings live closely together for a number of years they begin to resemble each other, for though their statures and features were not at all the same, there was something about my grandparents which was remarkably similar; even then their hair was white - not grey, but silver-white, with not a trace of the original color showing anywhere to even hint that they had once been young. Impossible to think that they had ever been infants and had been born into this world the way ordinary humans were; they had always been old and had always been called "Grandma" and "Grandpa." They both possessed the same type of olive complexions, browned even more by long hours in the sun and wrinkled like raisins, but not in a scary way, for the lines grew deep when they smiled at me, which was often, and I felt that those wrinkles had been made especially for me, so much pleasure did I take from watching them deepen and then flatten out to their original lines with each change of expression. Their hands were alike, too, full and strong and adept at doing so many different and wonderful things, and yet, surprisingly gentle whenever they held a baby chick, or stroked a kitten's fur or whenever they touched me. Perhaps the greatest similarity of all lay in their eyes; those eyes which wept and twinkled, but most of all eyes which whenever they looked at their land betrayed the deep love which they felt for it and for all things living and growing there. To them there was no such thing as alien soil. God had created the world and all things in it and the soil would take care of the creatures if the creatures would take care of the soil. Land, whether in their native Italy or in America, was the greatest gift which the Creator could bestow and they thanked Him every day of their lives for His bounty. Prayer alone was not their only form of thanksgiving; they thanked Him with hard work; they thanked Him with the sweat of their brows, with the cricks in their backs, with the stiffness in their knees and joints and the calluses on their hands- And they thanked Him with the pleasure in which they partook of the fruits of their labors - in the golden corn and the white

potatoes; in the firm radishes and the tender green onions; in the tangy sauce made from ripe tomatoes and used in so many de-delicious dishes, from pasta to pizza; in the foaming yellow mild and the pale, pale butter; in all the vegetables and all the fruits and all the dairy products. And if Grandpa took a little extra pleasure in thanking Him for the red wine made from grapes grown on the land, I really think God understood.

These then were my impressions. Small wonder that my visions of being a farmer may have dimmed, but have never quite disappeared.

by Mary LaDelfa

A Cave Imprisons Me

I am prisoner in a cave
Dark, deep, dank
Truth's warm light touches not my face
Opinion's wind chills my heart

Cave's mouth throws my screams down steep cliffs
Cursing awaiting death
Death that devours for hundreds of feet
Hungry beckoning death

Beneath my skull's roof
My mind looks from its cave
At my feet a baby crawls
Shackled not yet

I cannot flee my cave to reach
Freedom.
To die as an adult
To live again as a child ... in a straitjacket ...
in a straitjacket

by LeRoy Clinton

[A burning within]

A burning within
as glistening golden roughness
crawls down the throat
and scraps the inside of the belly,
a loss of reality,
an escape from reason,
a tempory madness
that dissolves into
permanent disorder,
a clutching at the bowels,
a crushing of the brain
caused by a thunderous whisper,
a resolution firm and eternal
until the next time.

by Robert Root

A THOUGHT OF JENNY

A thought of Jenny then,
warm, close and all that was love
in moments they had shared alone;
a thought of Jenny now,
cold, pale, and all without life
the two for the first time alone;
a thought of life without her---
he, awake with the constant loss,
and she, in the silent sleep;
a thought of life without her
that wasn't life at all;
a sudden step and a leap.

by Robert Root

The floor of the structure was made of an extremely dense, metallic, slippery substance and would not react in any way to the frantic kicks which Mr. Striker had inflicted upon it.

The walls of the building, if you could call it that, were of glass, but the thickness was greater than any he had ever seen before. It did not have the usual bell-like ring, which might accompany a martini glass. Rather, its sole reaction to any kind of hammering was a dull thud - - - and hammering was what Mr. Striker had done.

Hammering was what Mr. Striker had done.

All day.

Mr. Striker had pounded on that solid, unyielding glass wall for a whole day and now he lay on his back, on the smooth floor, staring blindly at the ceiling, rubbing his sore fist with his hand -- panting all in one smooth, rhythmic effort.

Perhaps, he thinks, he could sleep awhile, then awake and try again. But - - - No - - - he had done that. He has done that often; slept, rested and then resumed pounding, pounding with his fist, until the soreness and fatique overcame him and he had to sleep again.

His eyes cleared and he began to scan the sides of the structure from where he was lying. It was round, perfectly round, with the same thick, glass walls encircling it. He had walked the full circumference of his prison many times, but the entire wall remained the same, free of interruptions, clean and smooth. The bottom of the glass wall did not sink into the metal-like floor, but seemed to meet it in an invisible union. It appeared as if the only force holding the wall and floor together was the weight of the wall itself.

Mr. Striker's eyes were now leveled at the ceiling and the study of its design became intense within him.

As far as he could see, the wall seemed to rise to a point about thirty-feet above the floor, and then to converge to a central point at the center of the roof itself, from which

radiated a strange, soft light. The source of the light had never crossed Striker's mind before, but now he was engrossed in its newness. The strange depth, and hue of the light became a source of interest. He noted that it was not of any sort with which he was familiar, but was rather of a different type, producing a cooling radiation throughout the entire structure. Strangely enough, the warmth and intensity of the light had varied previously from cold to warm, but was now at a pleasant radiance. It had none of the usual effects with which light is usually associated (constancy and specific intensity), but it produced a pleasant, almost life-giving, sensation. Soon, undoubtedly from the long period of staring at the light, he grew tired and fell into a slumber lasting for two-and-a-half hours.

The light was now gone and only a soft glow remained. Upon awakening, Mr. Striker sat up quickly and began passing his hand

over the smooth

metallic

floor.

He was groping for something.

Shortly, he found his handkerchief and, wrapping it around his hand so that the thickest part covered his knuckles,

he sat up, and walked to the glass

window-like

wall.

Noting a slight stain on the glass, resembling a smear of blood, as one might note with the naked eye on a laboratory slide, he propped his weight on the glass wall. Resting on his left arm, he began POUNDING at the stain with the handkerchief covered fist.

There were long intervals between each thrust as he began, but the lapse between shrank as time wore on.

He POUNDED at the glass for almost fifteen minutes,

then his arm dropped to his side and he rested his hand against the wall. Almost within the same instant, he began to sob softly, but as he stood crying, his sobs came quicker, until he was heaving spasmodically, gasping for air through the tears. The water flowed over his face in a rainfall of sorrow and within a few moments he has raised his head and now, more in anger than in method, he was banging FURIOUSLY at the wall.

Harder his fist struck the wall

Harder, his fist pounded the glass

Harder, he threw himself into the frenzy

Harder, he hit the wall with his fist
and the pain therein added to his anger.

Then, in one final flurry of wrath, his fist burst through the glass, shattering it in all directions about him. Some flew outside the wall, and others landed all around him, singing on the hard metallic floor. His wrath turned to a feeling of elation. He had made it through! He had made it! His happiness consumed him and it was not until five minutes later, when the initial excitement had worn off, when the throbbing in his wrist drew his attention to it. The arteries were severed and the blood flew strongly, literally bouncing, in short spurts, from the wound.

In an attempt to halt the flow, he clutched at his wrist with his free hand and frantically searched for his handkerchief. It was then that he saw it

lying outside of the wall

where it had flown when
he had successfully broken through the glass.

He fell to his knees, still clutching at his wrist, and groped towards the handkerchief. He took a step, then fell to the floor, the dead weight of his head ringing on the metal floor.

In awhile, Professor Wilmer stepped into the laboratory and flicked on the light switch. He had looked over all of the various bell jars when he noticed that one had a small hole in the side. He lifted it from its metal base and removed the dead

specimen from the plate.

"Poor things" he muttered, "they try so hard and once they make it they are so disappointed."

He put the specimen in a recepticle nearby and extracted a new one from his eternal jar.

As it squirmed between his fingers, he dropped it onto the plate and placed a new glass cover over it.

"When will they ever learn" he mumbled, as he left the room, "When will they ever learn?"

by George Wilkerson

The stoic calm

The stoic calm,
when in dark canopied solitude,
disintegrates;
the firm, hard mouth,
away from a performing need,
goes limp and slack;
the bright humour,
with no one to see what it hides,
reveals pain;
the tower of bricks,
with mortar withdrawn by abandonment,
crumbles into dust.
The beloved name,
that joy and injury have scarred into the brain,
is screamed aloud.
The only reply
in an echo.

by Robert Root

DOCTOR AZIZ: DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARACTER

In preparing this essay, I have made no effort to read Forster's Aspects of the Novel, in which he explains in detail his philosophy of novel writing. Indeed, I have not only avoided an effort to read this volume; I have made a conscious effort to refrain from even flipping through the pages.

My reason for doing this is simple. It parallels closely Fielding's reason for avoiding marriage. "I suspect that it mostly happens haphazard, though afterwards various noble reasons are invented. About marriage I am cynical." It is very possible that Forster may have had his aspects in mind when he wrote Passage to India, but it is also possible that, when put down on the printed page, these aspects are somewhat written to fit the novel. I believe that there is always some element of haphazard chance in the writing of every novel, always the possibility that some incident, no matter how large or small, will pop up in the author's mind, and be included, although it is completely unnecessary in the eyes of the stereotype. When used as a guide, a book like Aspects may mean the difference between a good novel and a bad one. When used as a god, it may destroy a beautiful idea. I by no means wish to say that Forster writes in too much of a stereotype, but if I proceeded to analyze his novel step by step in accordance with such a book, I would be inferring this to some extent. Instead, I wish to look deeply into one of the characters, and trace his development throughout the book.

Doctor Aziz, as he appears in the first chapters, is the personification of the conquered India. He goes about his pleasures (such as the dinner party at which he is first seen) as he goes about his work: humbly. His entire philosophy at this point in the book is summed up in a simple statement which he makes to his companions: "Why talk about the English? Brrrrr! Why be either friends with the fellows or not friends? Let us shut them out and be jolly." Like an unhappy child, he can actually shut the English out of his mind when he is engaged in a party with his own kind. And at a whistle, he leaves his pleasure to report, even though he is positive that his superior will not be there and will not have bothered to leave a note.

Yet even here, there is a spark in Aziz, It cannot yet be called a spark of rebellion, but possibly a spark which will grow into a spark of rebellion. It is clearly noticeable when Aziz tells his dinner friends "if my teeth are to be cleaned, I don't go at all. I am an Indian. It is an Indian habit to take

pan. The Civil Surgeon must put up with it." With this he leaves to report to his superior. He believes that the superior has summoned him for the sole purpose of ruining the dinner party. Yet he does stop before reporting, and brushes his teeth as he swore he would not. Although he would not do it in front of his friends, he has a basic fear which drives him to doing it before reporting.

Shortly after, Aziz meets Mrs. Moore in the mosque, and the only aspect which does not change in Aziz throughout the entire book becomes established: he begins to idealize Mrs. Moore. She is the first person whose shoulder he can cry upon. He cannot cry on the shoulders of his friends, for they would cry back, and that would spoil everything. He cannot cry on the shoulders of the English, for they do not listen. As she exists at this point, Mrs. Moore is willing to listen to his exhalations, but whether it is because of boredom, interest in India and Indians, or genuine feelings for this man is not clearly stated. However, since Aziz makes little or no contact with her after the incident in the caves, and does not bear witness to her apathy, he never loses the beautiful mother image which his mind first formed.

Any real emotions which we are starting to accumulate for Aziz are shattered by the next facet of his personality which is revealed. This is that the majority of his pity is not for his people and their position, but rather for himself. He is depicted as staring at a photograph of his wife, telling himself how unhappy he is. Yet even with the picture, he cannot envision in his mind how his wife really looked. Again, he reminds himself how miserable he is, and in doing so "becomes happier." His indulgence in self pity seems to be a great job.

Yet even at this early point in the book, Aziz is changing. It is stated that "about a month ago," he had been invited to tea at Fielding's house. At the time, the invitation had had little meaning, and had not impressed him at all. Yet when a second invitation comes, he becomes extremely excited and wants frantically to attend.

At Fielding's house it is revealed that Aziz does not dislike prejudice, he merely dislikes prejudice aimed at himself. When Miss Quested mentions visiting the home of a Hindu, Aziz blurts out with "slack Hindus - they have no idea of society; I know them very well because of a doctor at the hospital. Such a slack, unpunctual fellow. It is well you did not go to their house, it would give you a wrong idea of India." Here Aziz had told us that he is capable of recognizing the faults of an entire race through the observation of one of their kind, attri-

buting his major characteristic - slackness - to the race. Aziz is not a fair man. Still, he is upset at the unfairness of others around him.

When we soon find Aziz playing sick, he has been changed to some extent through his newfound friendship with Fielding and his extended relations with Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore. He no longer pretends that the English do not exist. He has begun to enjoy his interactions with Fielding, and has actually invited the two females on a friendship party of his own, which he is afraid to go through with. This is his reason for playing sick. A simple statement made at this time, "his conventions were social," does much to shed light on his personality. He does not act out of an inward feeling of what is right and what is wrong, he only acts in accordance with the dictations of society. It goes on to state that he is sitting in bed thinking about beautiful women, yet he avoids any kind of an affair. He does not refrain from indulgence because of his own standards, but rather because he would lose face if found out. "There is no harm in deceiving society as long as she does not find you out, because it is only when she finds you out that you have harmed her; she is not like a friend or God, who are injured by the mere existence of unfaithfulness." This statement, which appears at the end of book one, sets the mood for book two, Caves.

Early in book two, Aziz's lack of ability to cope with problems is aptly described. A number of small and very easily rectified things are driving him to near madness. He appears incompetent to solve any one of these minor difficulties, much less all of them piled on him at once. And if not in the front of his mind, then at least in the back of it, is the feeling that all this is happening to him because he is trying to 'bridge the gap.' "Trouble after trouble encountered him, because he had challenged the spirit of the Indian earth, which tries to keep men in compartments."

At the party in the caves, Aziz, rather than to try and be a cool and honest host, goes into a heat and tells a lie a minute. He does this out of a desire to make the two women happy, to show them a good and funny time. Now his feeling towards the English is in reversal to that stated earlier. He no longer wants to ignore, is no longer afraid to entertain. He wants only to bridge the gap. But even in the attempt at bridging, he is beginning to recognize the depth of the gap. "Hospitality had been achieved, they were his guests; his honour was involved in their happiness. Like most orientals, Aziz overrated hospitality, mistaking it for intimacy, and not seeing that it is tainted with possession."

The important action in the part of the story takes place when Aziz, in the cave with Miss Quested, suddenly flees from her side. From the second of his entrance, he is not the same man, although it takes a short time longer for the change to become evident on Aziz than on any of the others. He appears to be in a state of 'sweat' until the moment on the train when he is arrested. Then the impact of the caves is brought out fully on him.

From this point it grows harder to analyze the actions of Aziz, because the author uses neither dramatic irony nor any large amount of negative capability. He does not see who has done the act, if there really was any act, and does not let us watch the struggle with knowing minds. It is almost impossible to tell what motivates Aziz's actions. Has this feeling of love he has for the Englishwoman really made him try to embrace her, or has he been brought to trial by a mistake? Does he grow terribly bitter in the time behind bars because he is an innocent man ruined or because he is a guilty man trying to evoke the pity a ruined innocent man would receive? His earlier actions, including his loneliness, his desire for women, and his love for these particular women, would make one think the possibilities of guilt are great. Yet these are countered by the facts that he did not really find Adela personally attractive, he strives for social respect, and he is frightened by the power of the British.

However, from here on every single action of the British makes Aziz grow more and more bitter towards them. First, the fact that their unfair handling of the court (in which they have already pronounced him guilty and are merely trying to decide whether to go easy on him or not) makes him bitter, is certainly understandable. But he also grows bitter towards Miss Quested and Fielding, or have ruined their social position fighting for him.

Yet this is really a change in degree, not in actions. When he first met Fielding, there was some bitterness even during those best moments of friendship when Aziz misunderstood some of Fielding's innocent comments. The underlying feeling of bitterness which he has kept deep within him has been growing stronger and stronger, ever since he wandered into the cave. It is almost like a sickness which, at the point of leaving the cave, appeared as a rash, putting the man in a strange and uncomfortable position, and then, in the following days, gradually took over his entire being.

The distance that has grown between Aziz and Fielding shows up when they discuss the possibility of an affair between Fiel-

ding and Adela. Aziz believes the rumor to be true, and Fielding thinks it is so absurd that he doesn't even have to renounce it. When Aziz finally blurts out that he really believes it, Fielding is both horrified and angry. Since there is at least a trace of the old friendship remaining, Aziz tries desperately to calm him down, exclaiming that he was a fool to believe it. Yet he continues to believe it. Since he later suspects Fielding of going to England in pursuit of Adela, when he hears of Fielding's marriage, he takes it for the worst, and bases his future life on a mistruth. When he finally learns that it is not true, he is not readily willing to change his attitude, for as Forster says, "he had built his life on a mistake, but he had built it." Although we have seen his personality change in many ways, he has reverted to one of his early methods: he again tries to ignore the English, to make believe they can't bother him. This is exemplified in his tearing up Fielding's letters without even bothering to open them.

An incident leads one to believe that Aziz may return to his own self. While he and young Moore are out on the boat, they come close to being shipwrecked, and afterwards Aziz is much like he was before the cave incident. This might lead one to believe that possibly the caves threw him into something resembling a state of shock, in which he could maneuver and exist but not with his normal sense of logic. This boat incident is a counter shock, but since it is not as strong as the original shock impact, it does not fully restore him, the effect is only temporary, and soon he reverts to bitterness.

by Douglas Brode