

Experimentalist

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Draschmaier

"The moving finger writes; and having writ,
moves on: nor all your piety nor wit ..."



EXPERIMENT PLAN

RELATIONSHIP OF THE ...

... OF THE ...



Since this is the first year that the EXPERIMENTALIST has published two issues, it is hoped that those who may note the limited number of contributors will be spurred to contributing something of their own for our next issue, to be published early in May.

Each year the EXPERIMENTALIST awards medals to the outstanding contributions in the fields of literary criticism, essay, short story and poetry. This year the winners will be chosen from the material submitted for both magazines. An award for the top freshman essay is also presented to the outstanding essay in the competition which is open to all freshmen.

EXPERIMENTALIST

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EXPERIMENTALIST CLUB

THE LITERARY PUBLICATION
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The EXPERIMENTALIST is the literary magazine of the State University College at Geneseo. Each week interested contributors meet to discuss the merits of their work. The author of the work being discussed is kept confidential and, in most instances, is not revealed until the publication of the magazine.

After the meetings, which are held every Thursday in the Wadsworth Auditorium lounge, the participants fill out evaluation sheets. The contributions receiving a majority of the votes are brought before the editorial board. This group, composed of the members who have attended more than half of the meetings, votes on which material is to be published. All contributions with a two-thirds vote or higher is accepted.

Any person who is a full-time student at the college is eligible to attend the weekly meetings and/or submit material. We hope to see you at our next meeting. We think that you will enjoy this year's first EXPERIMENTALIST.

The Editors

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[Fields of Grass]

fields of grass
weeds of summer
gravel
roughness
 of sand
 that wet
 leeches

to my
calves feet knees
arms shoulders
possum grey
for lakewind
to paint again
cream

liquidparting one
canoe
close by one
ancientness of
pier
watching caresses of
submerged moss
standing
horizontally
on not very vertical
logs

are
the
gay gentleness
of a nudging head
on my shoulder
tonight

 and
what of tomorrow
tomorrow is today
 turned
 up side
 down
 and
 empty

by Bruce Edwards

DIALOGUE WITH A SAPIENT

"I get so mixed up and confused when people ask me 'What do you think about this or that?'" says the Novice, "and the opinions I do give don't seem to be my own but rather someone else's that I agree with. All the things to talk about have been all talked out, and those that haven't aren't worth talking about. I'm surrounded by thoughts and ideas and subjects, and nowhere, but no where can I make a contribution with a new idea or a fresh new slant on an old one."

The Sapien, who has probably heard this many times before and possibly may have expressed it once himself, smiles knowingly at the Novice and says nothing. The Novice continues his questioning. "What good is my Education if all I can do is quote verbatim facts and figures and opinions compiled by others? Doesn't that liken us to parrots?"

"Let me see if I understand what you're trying to say," says the Sapien. "In other words, you're saying you and your generation can't give any knowledge to the world because everything of any importance has been said and done; and that learning the ideas of others does you no good."

"Yes," agrees the Novice. "I guess that's what I mean." Then disgustedly he says, "See, there I go again--guessing instead of being absolutely sure of what I mean."

"Saying what you mean and meaning what you say is an art that comes in time with perception and experience," says the Sapien. "You're young; you're just beginning to live and to think and to question. A young child just beginning to walk will always stumble and falter. It's the same with reasoning and thinking--if you've never done it before you can expect to be unsure and shaky."

The Novice is not satisfied. "All right," he says reluctantly, "I understand that, but I still don't see how I can have opinions that are really mine or contribute anything to 'man's storehouse of knowledge.'"

"In order to form a viewpoint that's yours, you have to have an understanding of ideas and facts from others on which to base your observations and opinions," explains the Sapien. "But you must first learn who, what, when, where, and why before proper understanding can come." He turns full to the Novice and continues. "You spoke about being likened to parrots, but you can't make that analogy because they do not have the ability you have to understand, reason, and use facts to form opinions. Instead, liken yourself to a diver and use

your springboard to success."

"Fine," nods the Novice; "so why can't I do this?"

"Maybe you have and don't know it. Do you think that could be?" questions the Sapien. "No one sees life exactly as you do, nor do you see it as anyone else does; so there has to be newness and freshness in your thoughts. The fact that you are questioning rather than merely absorbing information is an indication of new perception. Your realization that you have a problem or conflict shows new perception."

"But that's not earth shaking or brilliant!" cries the Novice.

"No," replies the Sapien, "but it's a beginning and a promise of greater perception and depth. All of life is an experience; all experiences of all men through all time add to the 'storehouse of knowledge.' Your generation is no exception. You'll live your life and make your mark, however small or large it may be."

Here the Sapien concludes his advice to the Novice. "Now," he asks to find out if he has been understood, "the next time someone asks you 'What do you think about this or that' what will be your reply?"

"I'll say not many things," say the Novice, "but something--something perceived and interpreted by me that can be called mine."

"Yes," agrees the Sapien, "you understand."

by Anna Mae Drake

The Leaves Fell

The leaves fell like summer's
Parting tears.
The sun's warmth lingered on my
Shoulders as if it hated to
Leave me
Cold and alone.
I prodded a tuft of dried grass
With a summer-browned toe
And walked on.

by Elizabeth Jayne

VIEW

The sleeping landscape stretches

reaches outward

climbs upward

The earth is turning, black to white and bends

to the hills

and there, the bruised black and blue

of sky and hill

blends with the clouds

and spreads,

softly folded,

above me.

Here, before me, the heat and warmth

let free from its pipeline journey,

dances, setting the fields in motion

and the clouds to quivering.

It turns the hills so moist,

that one might reach out

and lick them

and taste their wounds.

And so, the valley grows

and sleeps

while Autumn prints her change.

by George Wilkerson

A WOMAN STOPS TO WEEP

Alone in a quiet room, a woman stops to weep.
There on the bed she had lain with her child.
They had taken this soft, dead being from her side.
Yet she cried not.
The man who had sat silent beside her
Could once again help develop the life which she could bear.
But now, as she stares at the empty bed,
She thinks not of her dead child,
But instead of the man who had created it.
Now he too is dead. Only a memory is left.
Alone in a quiet room, this woman stops to weep.

by Glenda Bater

RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ is dead
Jesus Christ is gone
And yet the Christ within me lives
And yet the thought lives on

Moses' bones have passed
And Moses' bones are dust
And yet the jew in every man
Remains, betrays his trust

Noah's ship sails not
For Noah's ship is coal
And yet the beasts still sail with him
And yet they feel his soul

To live and sense no man
Is but to die alone
Still feel that I will live within
When flesh has turned to stone

by George Wilkerson

THE TORTURE CHAMBER

How long I have been in the torture chamber, I do not know. I have no conception. I have no idea. It might be months. It might be years. I only know that every day passes like an eternity, and since they regulate the periods of darkness and light which I receive, they control my hours of sleep and activity. These periods do not seem to be in any stereotypical pattern, and since there are no windows, I cannot recognize the passing of the days.

Not only are there no windows, there is no furniture but my bed. I do not really know why this is. I imagine they have done this to separate me from reality, and it has worked, for the small realities of a desk and a chair, a pen and some ink, might do much to keep me from my depressions. Although they pretend to detest these depressions, when I tell them how to keep me from becoming depressed they do nothing to correct the situation.

The horrors I have been exposed to here are great, yet the worst are those of the mind, and not of the body. Physical pain has given me no great trouble. It is strange that I remember as a boy being terribly afraid of it. I recall doing everything to avoid it. Now, I welcome it as a gracious change from the daily attempts at mental erosion. My captors would probably say that this is one of those 'strange things about me! But I know that it is not strange. Strange to them, maybe, but not strange to me, and not strange to my race. For I am a homo sapien. I am a man, not one of these . . . these creatures, these illegitimate sons of what was once a great society of peoples.

It was as a boy that I began to realize that I was different. I must admit that at first I was worried about myself; I thought perhaps there was something queer about me. The thought entered my head that I was a mistake, that I should never have been created. But when I began to look into the annals of civilization and the histories of mankind, I slowly came to the conclusion that these creatures surrounding me were not the same species described in the pages. Their physical resemblance was of course unbelievable; it was enough to convince them that they were men. However the truly important feature of mankind - the understanding mind - is missing. At first I had hopes that it was not lost, but merely misplaced. My hopes were short lived. In a state of panic, I tried to show them that they were growing away

from mankind. They laughed, they scorned, I was orally stoned at every turn. But I persisted, for it was my notion that God had not created me for nought. I became affirmed that he had chosen me to right them; to get them back on the path that mankind had followed for years. True, the path contained serious shortgivings, erratic errors, and a multitude of mistakes, but still in all, it was the path of man, and from that path there can be no detours. When I continued to philosophize, I was brought here. Only when I had been locked in did I realize I was a prisoner - there was no escape. But more than pity for myself, I felt sorrow for them. They had taken their only hope and locked it in an ultra-modern dungeon.

At first I found it hard to believe my fate. I could not conceive that God would leave me here to decay. I felt that somehow, someday, he would deliver me. And believing that my time here would be short, it was not hard to construct a mental journal of all that took place. I still remember those first few days vividly.

My mind was saved chiefly through the help of a pet. Upon entering my domain, I found a small shadow in the wall to be in actuality a tiny hole. In it was a little emascu- lated mouse, half starved. Realizing that my captors would destroy it if they learned of its presence, I moved my bed over that portion of the wall, and then kept the little thing alive by feeding it from my own food. But it would not come near me at any other time except when I was eating. Then, and only then, it would sense the presence of food, tiptoe out of its hole, and stick its elflike head at me from under the drapings of the covers, sniffing into its minute nostrils the sweet smell of vital food, its ears straight up in some kind of a precautionary manner. I would feed it.

It looked feminine, so I called her Josie in the remem- brance of a lost love from my earlier, somewhat happier days. Still, as soon as we had cleaned the platter together, she would run back to her niche. I would call to her softly, hoping to forelong the moments of company and for a chance to stroke her as when as a boy I stroked my pet cat. The animal paid me no attention.

But I was patient, and a day finally came when she did recognize me - or at least started to recognize me - as some- thing more than just a provider of food. It happened after the evening meal. She finished licking a drop of omelet from her urchin paw, and somehow knowing that there was no more for the gullet, she primly and sassily turned her little

frame and started to disappear under the bed. As always, I hopelessly beckoned to her.

"Josie," I said. "Josie. C'mere, Josie. C'mon now," and for no apparent reason she stopped short in her tracks and brought her tiny face (which was almost all eyes) into line with me. She stood there, her body hunched over, staring at me. It lasted for a few very long seconds. Then, in what seemed a state of uncontrollable panic, she scrambled for her home. But although no contact was made, I was left with the afterthought that it was not impossible, and that I, being what might be the last true human on earth, might be able to make contact with this animal as people in the past always found it so simple to do. And that night, as I lay on my hard mattress, thinking away the hours, I found myself filled with happiness and what almost could be called a type of love for this grey little beast.

The next day, she died. Of what, I do not know. I first realized that something was amiss when she did not appear for the morning breakfast. Bewildered, I looked under the bed, and saw the little frame stretched out on the floor, panting heavily. I picked her up carefully. At first, she shivered at my touch. I brought her close to my face. She lifted her dangling head, and her animal eyes met mine. Then she relaxed; her panting stopped. Her head rested on my thumb, and she made what seemed to be an attempt to lick my hand. A small, purring noise came from deep inside her. And then she was dead.

It was then that I entered my first severe depression. It evoked no sympathy from my captors. If anything, it caused them to treat me even more barbarically. There was more of the physical torture, (which they always professed to be harmless sedatives), and naturally a larger dose of the mental agony. They were furious when they learned that I had fed the creature; they pretended to be afraid of the dangers to my health. They would not have made good thespians, for even I could see past their shanty acting. They were angered to the madness by the fact that I had received some comfort in my solitude.

Up to this time, they had done little to try and change my opinion; they had been relatively happy in making me thoroughly miserable. But after this, they were different. They became determined to change me into thinking like them. I was glad; I welcomed this action, for it insured me that I was right. It seemed logical that if they had been convinced of their own correctness, they would have been content to

hide me away; they would not have worried about conforming me. It was obvious that it was all a measure of convincing themselves that they were right, and only fallacies need such convincing.

However, they lacked one thing in their torture, and that was imagination. And truly, this I missed. For the stereotype of the torture became worse than the actual acts. It was the same every day: the periods of what they called "discussion" which amounted to nothing more than just me sitting and listening to their theories, the exact same basics slightly rearranged day after day. This always led me into a depression, sometimes rather subtle, at other times very overt. I had to fight to control myself, for at the slightest signs of my becoming tense, the propogandist would flee and be replaced by a gawking, muscular monster of an assistant who would administer what they called "sedatives," which always did me more harm than good. They put me into a troubled sleep, which was a more painful way of leaving the depression than was just sitting it out. At first, I actually believed them when they told me they gave me the sedatives to help, but when I tried to tell them how they merely increased my torture, they would only say "now, now, we know what's best." And then I realized that they knew ... they knew.

Finally, my faith in God left me. I began to see that here I was, and here I would stay. There would be no deliverance. I would be no Messiah. I was only a martyr.

But I did not grow bitter. For I still had my faith in man (the old form of man, the form of man that I resembled) and I still remained confident that this breed of man would triumph, that he would win, that someday he would bring sense to the world.

Yet I cannot hate my torturers, I find it impossible to despise them. I know because I have tried. I have made attempts again and again to curse them, but I always come to the same end: I fall on my hands and knees and beg - yes beg - for their salvation. At first I could not understand why I did this. Later, the answer seemed quite apparent ... it is because I am a man. I am human. I have not lost the sentimentalism, the sympathy, the strength that was the heart of that great race. And because of their own ridiculous breed of justice, my captors can lock me and my kind up, but they cannot destroy us.

There is hope for the future.

The blonde young intern, having pushed the food cart to the door, reached into the pocket of his starched linen blouse for the keys, when his duty was temporarily interrupted by the friendly arrival of a co-worker.

"Hi, Bob. Will you and Marge be able to make it over to our house tonight?" questioned the co-worker.

"Oh, no, Steve, I meant to tell you," answered the blonde young intern. "Marge's mother is coming down from the city, so I guess that puts off our bridge game again."

"You're just afraid, that's all. You know how bad Kathy and I beat you last time. It's a good thing for you we don't play for money, boy, or . . ."

"Or we wouldn't play! Doctors may have a fortune, but as for interns, that's a different story. Especially when we're trying to get families going!"

"You don't have to convince me, fella. I'm with you. Say, you're feeding 'Napoleon,' huh?"

"Yeah."

"I guess he's just as crazy as ever?"

"Look, don't talk like that. You know how sorry I feel for him. He's different from a lot of the others . . ."

"Oh, yeah, sure. You weren't here when he arrived, were you, buddy boy? Haven't you ever heard what he did his first week here? Why he . . ."

"Yeah, yeah, I know all about it. He found a mouse in his room and called it 'Josephine' and kept it alive from his own food. I don't care to hear the details again."

"You don't care to hear the details. Well, pal, let me tell you, ya' shoulda been there that morning when we walked into that room and found him standing there with that dead mouse in his hand. I swear, he wouldn't talk for weeks. Hmmp. Damn fool. He's lucky he didn't get hydrophobia. And you say he's different. Sure he's different. He's loonier than all the others put together."

"I'm not sure. But I've found one thing out- he's not at all vicious. I can tell by his eyes. Every time he looks at me, those eyes of his . . . well, they just get me. I begin to get the feeling that he feels sorry for me, the way he looks at me."

"Sure, Poor 'Napoleon.' He feels sorry for the world. Well, he'll always be in there where the world can look after him."

"You think so? Don't you think he can ever be rehabilitated?"

"No. Anyway, I hope not. For his sake."

"What do ya mean?"

"I mean he's happier in there . . . where he can live in his own little dream world . . . than he would be out in the real world. In there, he can see God, the universe, the world, the human race, and himself . . . everything . . . exactly the way he wants to see it. But I don't think he could take it . . . out there."

"Yeah, I guess."

"Sorry about the bridge game."

"The wha? Oh, that! Well, Christ, don't let that worry you. We would have beaten the pants off you anyway."

With that he left, to go to his own neglected duties and the blonde young intern in the starched white linen blouse was left standing alone in the hall, fumbling with his keys, while inside the room "Napoleon" sat in a corner, waiting impatiently for his dinner.

by Douglas Brode

EMBARASSMENT

I stood by the rail aflood with sweat,
As the ship came to the wharf.
A thousand welcomers watched the deck
And saw me lean out and barf

by Robert Root

FIDELITY

I hear her call, a desperate wail:
"Betray you? Lies! Untrue."
But all man's will is weak and frail;
I know: I cheated too.

Who dares to say: "Resist emotion?"
We're pretenders one and all,
And even those who cry: "Devotion!"
Cannot deny the siren's call.

by Robert Root

[IN THEY FLY]

In they fly,
The pewter-grey couriers
Of the damp east wind.
They cry, and wheel
And come to rest on
The mist hugged shore.
Or, like scattered silver
Corks, bob on the wind
Ruffled bay.
The wind may change.
Out they fly
Gliding and gleaming
Against the sun, like
Bits of mirror bright
In the blue sky of summer.

by Elizabeth Jayne

[THE FOG STALKS IN]

The fog stalks in.
The water-phantom,
To creep and cringe
On door-steps and
Chimneys.
To beckon us out
And swallow us,
In the damp furry
Throat of night.

by Elizabeth Jayne

THE CASTLE

When Freddy, Ted, Mary, Bill and God,
made the world,

They, being Him, made it slowly,
piece by piece,

like a child's sand castle

and just as weak.

And Freddy, Ted, Mary, Bill and God,
held the tide of time.

They, being gracious, waited for awhile
and a while

and added towers and a drawbridge.

Then Freddy, Ted, Mary, Bill and God,
added the intricacies.

They, being perfectionists, wanted it perfect
to the last detail

and so they took the sad-thought droplets
and let them drip.

Freddy, Ted, Mary, Bill and God,
let them drip, until

They, being tired, dashed the last of them
to the ground

and ran to supper
and bed.

And Freddy, Ted, Mary, Bill and God,
left their castle.

They, tiring of their game, left it to the careless murder
of the tide

which came, in time, and leveled the sand
leaving it smooth.

by George Wilkerson

