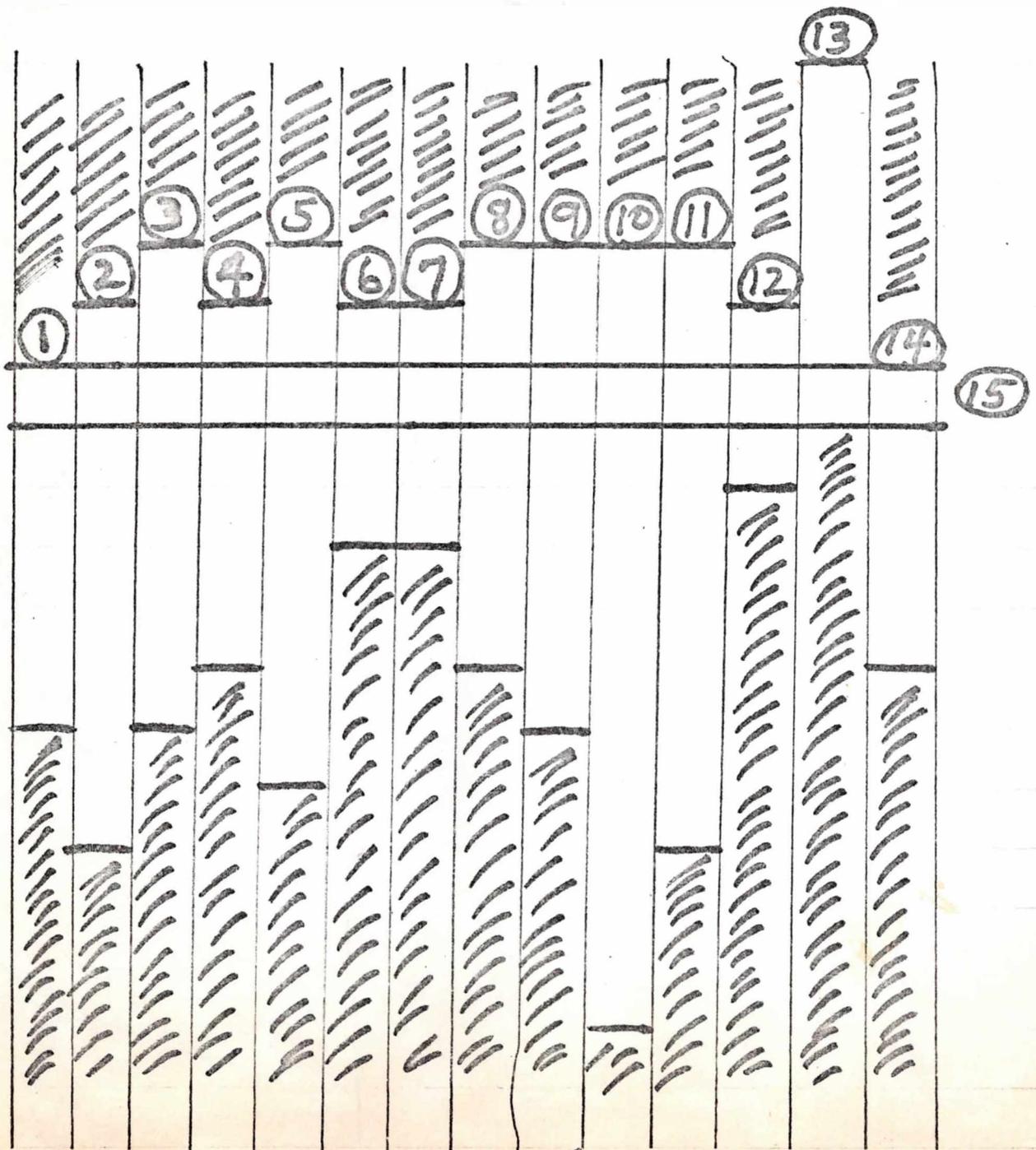


THIS IS THE COVER FOR GUYING GYRE #12

You get two (2) points each for boxed squares filled in. One point for all others. I'll put the solution in the next issue (or send me a SASE).

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 -- old SF author whose last name sounds like a first name. | 9 -- non-paying conventioners |
| 2 -- one of the rooms at a con full of few good deeds and many good works. | 10 -- projecting "what will" from "what is" |
| 3 -- a society without fandom. | 11 -- not genre fiction |
| 4 -- Campbell's flipside. | 12 -- gets one free ride at any convention |
| 5 -- the Harry Warner, Jr. of Canada. | 13 -- center of the universe in 1980 |
| 6 -- professionalism plagues peaks here. | 14 -- Carter, de Camp, and Wagner are all plugged in. |
| 7 -- 4-E Ackerman's unloved child. | |
| 8 -- a fanzine's life blood | |

The KEY is fifteen (15) across: In the late 1920's many SF stories took more time with scientific -----(15)----than in telling the story. (These are the boxed squares.)

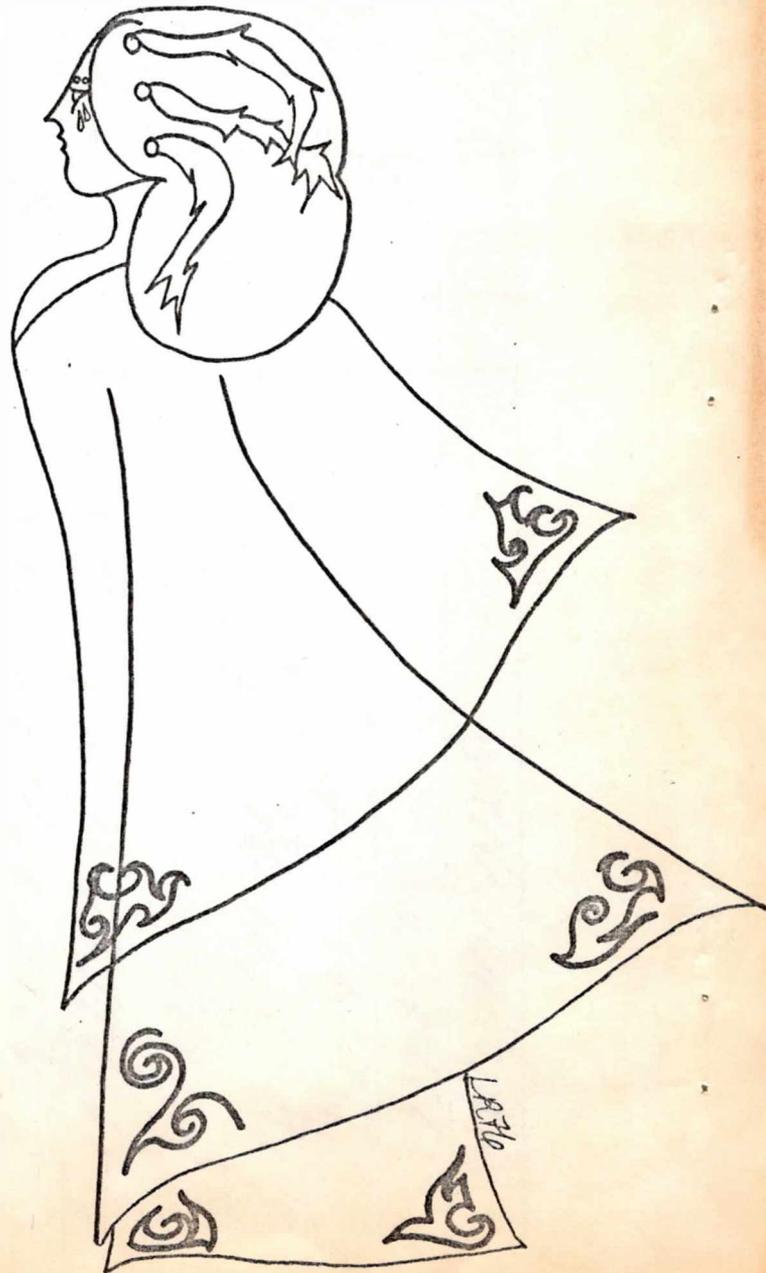


GUYING GYRE #12 (part of issue 11-12)

If you have not sent in the bulk of your PPENumbers or know a friend who would like such a list so s/he can participate, mention it next time you write and I'll send you a copy of the MASTER LIST OF SF/F AUTHORS/NOVELS. In fact, a few have gotten together and read through the list, each putting his/her numbers down. (I CAN think of pleasanter ways to spend group evenings but this one has its sharing compensations.) All I ask is that you send the MASTER LIST back when it's completed.

The school is still printing and providing the paper for GG. For this I thank them profusely. I'm required to set up a fund in the District Office so all money collected from subscriptions goes to them. I may have one subscriber out of 400 copies mailed. I can only imagine what they must think. The mailing privileges, though, after one time's use will probably revert back to my pocketbook -- because of PROP 13. We shall soon see.

Upon reading this issue you'll note that there are very few individual listings of PPENumbers. Their omission was not due to my lack of desire to include them. But the locs this time were so interesting and the material to be included so diverse, it just wouldn't all fit. I did use every PPE which arrived; they're all on the proper file card and part of a books ultimate evaluation.



by Brian Earl Brown

Science fiction is commonly said to have begun in 1926 when Hugo Gernsback launched the first genre SF magazine. There are two schools of thought abroad regarding this: one is that Gernsback is "The Father of Science Fiction"; the other holds that in creating Magazine SF, Gernsback dealt the genre irreparable harm.

It seems unfair to blame Gernsback, personally, for failures of the field. I doubt that a better or more well-meaning person could have been found to launch the era of Magazine SF.

Of course, the argument is that magazine science fiction itself was what corrupted the integrity of SF. There are powerful arguments for this contention. H. G. Wells is invoked to show the high quality of writing that existed outside and before magazine SF. Captain Future is pointed to as indicative of the crass "pulp elements" that crept into the genre because the genre was appearing in pulp magazines.

The notion that science fiction would have fared better if it had stayed allied with mainstream literature seems suspect to me. In The Proper Boskonian #14 Mark Keller reviews a number of marginally SF novels by mainstream writers. Summarizing, he says, "Curious, isn't it? At least two of the four above-mentioned writers, Eckert and DeLillo, are capable of writing effective prose. Why do their efforts turn to sludge when they venture into SF?" Keller doesn't have any answers.

George Zebrowski remembers a comment of the late John W. Campbell in regards to the writers found in the Orbit anthologies: "The trouble with these writers is they can write, but they can't think much!" (The Space Beyond, p. 285). Campbell has a point here. People who think that SF would have fared better in the mainstream are assuming that the only thing wrong with SF is the quality of the writing. The writing of the best SF compares well the mainstream and probably always has. What these people forget is that science fiction and the mainstream have different goals and approaches to literature.

The mainstream of fiction of this century has turned increasingly inward, to intense, personal, subjective experiences. The writing itself has become a more conscious exercise.

On the other hand, science fiction is involved with what might be described as "games-playing with reality". SF is orientated towards outward, cerebral, objective experiences. Simply put, the two fields are moving in opposite directions. Science fiction, if it had stayed in the mainstream, would have been warped into something totally different from what we know, or more likely reputiated for its reactionary tastes and interests. (James Gunn develops this idea of differing orientations for SF and mainstream in his essay in the collection Science Fiction--Today and Tomorrow.)

Science fiction would have separated out from the mainstream eventually whether or not Magazine SF had ever come about. There were conceptual limits beyond which the mainstream audience would not go. A wonderous creature or an implacable alien were acceptable, for they were essentially mundane visions. But to suggest that humanity would actually leave this planet, go out among the stars, meet alien creatures--alien monsters--as equal human beings, travel into dimensions inconceivable...that was "Buck Rogers" nonsense.

The "games-playing" imperative of SF inevitably would lead it from the readily conceivable to where a special set of mind was required. Not Slans, but people willing to accept the game-playing as game-playing. People who could accept the validity of an aesthetic of science fiction.

The heart of science fiction, as Campbell points out, is thinking. Everything else comes second. Bad writing (in terms of literature) is important only to the extent

that it harms the communications of that thinking.

This truth is most obvious in the career of Larry Niven. Niven is not an outstanding writer. His characters are cyphers, his prose is flat. Yet he has won several awards and has been nominated for many more because his stories are chock-full of "crazy ideas"--thinking, "games-playing with reality".

And when that thinking fails, not all the wonderous prose in the world can save it from being simply bad. (Darrell Schweitzer points out that it's not wise to tell a beginning SF writer that characterization is not important. True. I do not mean to denigrate the importance of creditable characters in a story. But I would put characterization not as one of the purposes of a story, but as one of the literary techniques for the execution of a story. As such, poor characterization means a poorly executed story.)

The development of Magazine SF liberated science fiction from the need of appearing as something else. It didn't have to appear as a Burroughsian romance. It didn't have to appear as a cautionary story against some new invention. It didn't have to excuse its weirdness.

And because it was appearing in periodicals, the authors not only knew what everyone else was doing, but knew that the readers did too. Magazine science fiction functioned as a hothouse, encouraging and forcing the growth of the genre.

The period of forced evolution did more for science fiction than all the disreputable connotations that went along with it did to hurt it.

As a self-defined genre, SF has not had to make appeals to a broad and indistinct audience. Had it had to, it would never have gotten beyond the level of Burroughsian romance. By feeding on itself, science fiction has become acutely aware of the problem of exposition and has, on the whole, become rather adept at it (partially because less has to be explained to the SF audience). And the familiarity of gadgets has lead SF into the more fruitful areas of sociology--studies of the impact of a gadget on society.

All of these things probably would have happened eventually whether or not science fiction had separated from the mainstream. That it had separated hastened this process, and raised to a conscious level, for the SF fan (meaning in this case anyone who accepts the validity of a SF literature), the problems of creating logical, efficient, effective prose.

The almost inevitable failure of mainstream authors to write adequate SF, and the failure of mainstream critics to perceive these failures, is indicative of science fiction's own well-developed aesthetics.

Why science fiction continues to be unaccepted by the mainstream is a separate matter.

As has already been mentioned SF and mainstream literature have been moving in opposite directions throughout this century, and so each fails the other's test of "literature".

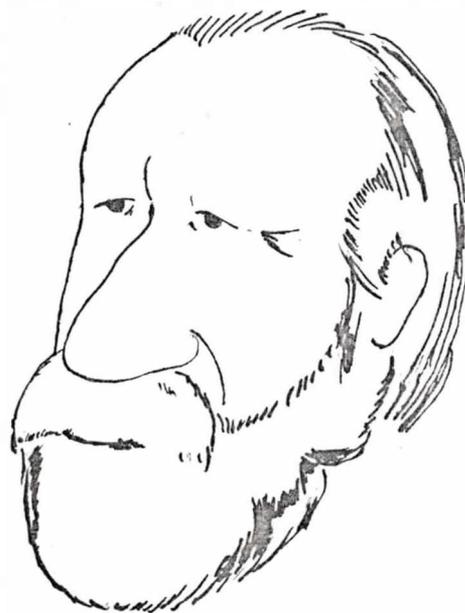
But SF also fails on a popular level as well. And in most cases it seems to be rejected on an instinctive level. We all know the axiom that "If it's good, it can't be science fiction." Much of this disdain during the 30's and 40's could easily be explained by the lurid pulp covers found on most magazines. Anything that featured monsters and half-dressed women couldn't be wholesome. But it's hard to explain why this belief continues long after the death of the pulps and the general decline in reading that's taken place. And despite Apollo and Viking this bias against science fiction continues.

It could be that the impact of those BEM covers and the newspaper comic strip, Buck Rogers (there was one, you know, and it was painfully childish and silly), continue on longer than I imagine. It is possibly true that most adults still remember those things from their childhood quite well.

The only other factor that would explain this antipathy towards science fiction is the idea of "future shock". People don't believe in tomorrow, or at least a tomorrow radically different from today. And even though they are living in yesterday's tomorrow, they refuse to acknowledge that change is continuing. Science fiction uniformly contends that "everything we know is wrong". A life just can't be based on that kind of notion. Even SF fans are more conservative about the future than their reading might suggest. It is easier to reject all this stuff about life on other planets, time travel, whathaveyou, as utter nonsense because it is so at odds with the premises of people's lives that they simply are unable to understand it.

Science fiction is becoming more accepted nowadays, possibly because its vision of a multitude of futures coincides with modern youth's own vision of a shattered future. But I don't see this increased popularity indicating that SF will be accepted back into the mainstream as legitimate literature or of it losing its identity by being outstripped by reality. As a games-playing literature, SF will always be at odds with the mainstream, which continues to define this reality. And as a games-playing literature, SF will always be inventing new realities at odds with contemporary reality.

All of which has little to do with Hugo Gernsback, but that seems to be the point. Gernsback started something of which he was never actually in control, so how could he be charged with hurting it?



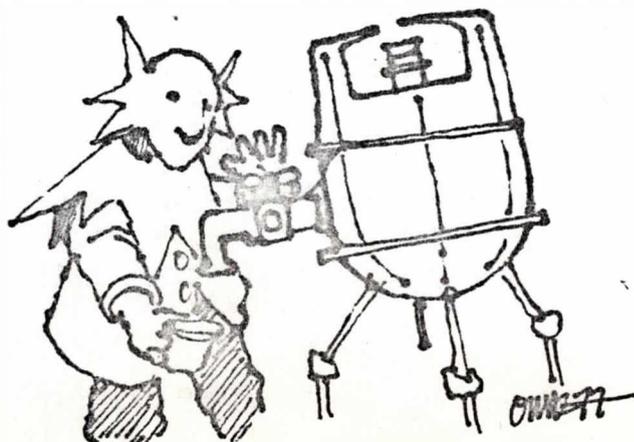
Reviewed by Lynne Holdom:

I first became acquainted with Swann's work through the short story "The Manor of Roses" published in Fantasy and Science Fiction which was narrated by a Lady who was not quite human. Tournament of Thorns is an expanded version of the same tale set in Medieval England filled with high ideals and brutal reality: earth and fire. Unfortunately, the expansion to novel length has weakened the sharp focus of vision of the shorter version but it is still an excellent tale well worth reading.

Swann's world is always peopled by the creatures of myth and legend, creatures for which our machine culture has no time. These creatures are sometimes beautiful and gracious, sometimes brutal just as nature is. In this tale the beautiful and the ideal are represented by the unicorn which the three adventurers seek in the first half of the novel before turning to the more worldly, yet still ideal, idea of going to Jerusalem on crusade. For theirs is an ideal Jerusalem, the Golden City of legend, rather than the real and so they are unmindful of the fact that previous young crusaders (the son of the Lady among them) ended in the slave markets of Algiers and Tunis rather than their Golden goal.

The novel is told from the perspective of three different characters (which I think weakens it considerably): Stephen, a Saxon peasant who is descended from the old royalty; John, the Lord's son and a couple of years younger than Stephen (he is the bookish one); and the Lady of the Manor of Roses who may or may not be human. The villainous element is furnished by the mandrakes, creatures which look as human as children but who suck the life and health away from true humans. Stephen tries to protect a child that the villagers think is a mandrake but they kill her and are proven right in their suspicions. In retaliation the mandrakes attack the village and kill Stephen's parents. It is they who shouldn't be killed but there is no justice in this world. Later while Stephen and John are off on their crusade, mandrakes again menace them, but they are protected by a girl that Stephen believes is an angel; but John, jealous of Stephen's attachment to her, believes her to be a mandrake. Then they come to the Manor of Roses where the Lady tries to keep them.

One major flaw in this novel is that the female lead character is different in the first section. There it is Miriam, a village girl who fends off Stephen's advances by telling him that one must be a virgin to catch a unicorn. But Swann tires of her (he kills her off in the Black Death almost offstage) and introduces Ruth, a mysterious damsel who is found in the ruins of an ancient temple. Personally, I preferred Miriam. Also there is the shifting point of view. It is not important until late in the novel that the reader knows just who the Lady is and why she is important. But in the end honor and love and idealism win out over brutality and death--a comforting message from the author, who wrote this novel on his deathbed. It is recommended.



I was just going to flip through GG 7/8 again to refresh my memory, but Zonk! I find myself reading it cover-to-cover (except for the lists) again. Really Gil, how can such stiff, stodgy, and ----er---- serconish stuff be so much fun? Because, I suppose, that in the act of discussing sf, fans tend to reveal so much about themselves. Fascinating creatures, fans are.

Why, for example, did Lynne Holdom like MOTE IN GOD'S EYE so much and dislike DUNE when I tend to think of them as basically similar (and liked MOTE less)? On the other hand, why did I enjoy THE INVINCIBLE so much more than RENDEZOUS WITH RAMA when I find it so hard to explain differences between them? Dunno, I guess that's the way it works.

Has anybody yet worked up a rating system for movies? I remember it being suggested. The novel rating system wouldn't have to be changed too much to apply to movies, and the movie project would probably be (relatively) manageable. There are alot more books than movies running around.

Adams:	SHARDIK	63
Adler:	TERROR ON PLANET IONUS	15
Aldiss:	THE DARK LIGHT YEARS	52
Anderson:	THE STAR FOX	61
	FIRE TIME	63
Anthony:	MACROSCOPE	65
	TRIPLE DETENTE	28
Anvil:	PANDORA'S PLANET	45
Asimov:	I, ROBOT	57
	FCUDATION TRILOGY	65
	END OF ETERNITY	59
Ballard:	THE CRYSTAL WORLD	78
Bloch:	LADIE'S DAY	40
	THIS CROWDED EARTH	57
Boyd:	ANDROMEDA GUN	56
Brunner:	STAND ON ZANZIBAR	60
	THE WHOLE MAN	64
Brown:	MARTIANS GO HOME	56
Beagle:	THE LAST UNICORN	88
	LILA THE WEREWOLF	77
Bester:	THE DEMOLISHED MAN	69
Bradbury:	THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES	87
Burgess:	A CLOCKWORK ORANGE	66
	THE WANTING SEED	63
Chant:	RED MOON & BLACK MOUNTAIN	54
Cherryh:	GATE OF IVREL	64
	HUNTERS OF WORLDS	65
Clarke:	AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT	65
	CHILDHOOD'S END	72
	THE DEEP RANGE	69
	THE CITY AND THE STARS	68
	RENDEZOUS WITH RAMA	35
	LION OF COMARRE	52
	IMPERIAL EARTH	45
Hal Clement:	CYCLE OF FIRE	56
	MISSION OF GRAVITY	64
Compton:	FAREWELL, EARTH'S BLISS	61
Crichton:	ANDROMEDA STRAIN	62
	THE TERMINAL MAN	51

deCamp:	THE COMPLETE ENCHANTER	64
del Rey:	NERVES	45
Dick:	THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE	62
Heinlein:	THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS	58
Herbert:	DUNE	73
	DRAGON IN THE SEA	52
	DUNE MESSIAH	52
Huxley:	BRAVE NEW WORLD	75
	APE AND ESSENCE	73
LeGuin:	THE DISPOSSESSED	73
Lem:	THE CYBERIAD	65
	THE INVINCIBLE	61
Niven:	RINGWORLD	48
	PROTECTOR	50
	WORLD OF PTAVVS	51
	THE FLYING SORCERORS	63
	THE FLIGHT OF THE HORSE	61
	THE SHAPE OF SPACE	57
	NEUTRON STAR	62
	GIFT FROM EARTH	52
	NOTE IN GOD'S EYE	56
Orwell:	1984	88
Pangborn:	MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS	86
Panshin:	RITE OF PASSAGE	71
Piper:	LITTLE FUZZY	60
Simak:	THE WEREWOLF PRINCIPLE	33
Vance:	MARUNE: ALASTOR 933	46
Van Vogt:	SLAN	56
	WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER	57
	MISSION TO THE STARS	60
Watson:	THE EMBEDDING	78
Wells:	WAR OF THE WORLDS	76
	THE TIME MACHINE	85
Williamson:	THE HUMANOIDS	66
	DARKER THAN YOU THINK	49
Wyndham:	OUT OF THE DEEPS	59

P.S.: And, of yes, who was that guy, Jerry Bohman? Cheers again ---

Martin Morse Webster	2108 Seminary Road	Silver Spring,	
	Maryland	20910	12-24-77
Harness:	WOLFSHED		78
Cherryh:	HUNTER OF WORLDS		41
Donaldson:	LORD FOUL'S BANE		65
Carter, ed.:	THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY STORIES:	3	71
Pohl & Williamson:	THE REEFS OF SPACE		70

Mark Jacobs Mills Cross Rd. Staatsburg, N.Y. 12580 5-29-76

Hmm...So you're an English teacher. You sound like the kind of teacher I wish I had more of. The kind you think of as human beings, not just teachers. I am a high school student, by the way, but I really shouldn't complain. Out of seven teachers I have, I can honestly say three, well four of them care about you as a person, and one, well she is totally beautiful and I absolutely love her. I know her as an individual, not just a teacher. She takes extra time to help me with my writing (Which, you may have noticed, needs a lot of help) is concerned about each of her students on a personal level. I love her and just wish more people, not just teachers, were like her.

Wampeters, Foma, & Granfalloons (Opinions) by Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Dell, 3/76, 255 pages, \$1.95. Reviewed by Jim Coldfrank:

You, dear reader, probably like to classify things and people in your mind. This is a typical human trait. I tried to classify Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and came up with a partial and very wrong answer. Most authors do not so intimately put their personality into their work. Vonnegut does, but really understanding this author and his work is not easy. This left me with a great deal of frustration. I could never tell if his satire was a tearing apart or joking, and if joking, at what.

This collection of essays and a short play will give you a deep feeling for the man behind the novels. It will help you understand him and them better. I consider it better writing than his novels for the fact that he writes straightforwardly, and reveals the previously unrevealed.

Here are my old conceptions of the man: He is anti-people because so many of his characters are foolish, idiosyncratic, and self-centered; he is anti-technology, and anti-establishment. Here are the new conceptions: He is pro-people and compassionate. He mocks them with black humor for their qualities that hurt other people. He is pro-technology if it seems to him that that technology will do good rather than harm. He writes against negative values; he is against anything that destroys the beauty and living things of this planet in the name of "progress". Here is the reverse of the coin: he feels for the good values and creatures that he sees in the process of destruction. He mocks the people who hurt other people, but even loves them for their spark of humanity. He writes and speaks in a "laugh, clown, laugh" fashion, bitterness expressed through humor. It is impossible to take him seriously if you take him literally. It is only after the insights gained from W., F., & G. that his other works take on a larger meaning. One word of caution about W., F., & G.: Some of the essays are straightforward and very readable. Some are the usual reverse logic mockery. Some material is dated, some timeless. Some is preachy and dull. Taken altogether, this worthwhile book is invaluable to an understanding of the author.

Here are the highlights of Wampeters, Foma, & Granfalloons, some shorter and less relevant items being omitted:

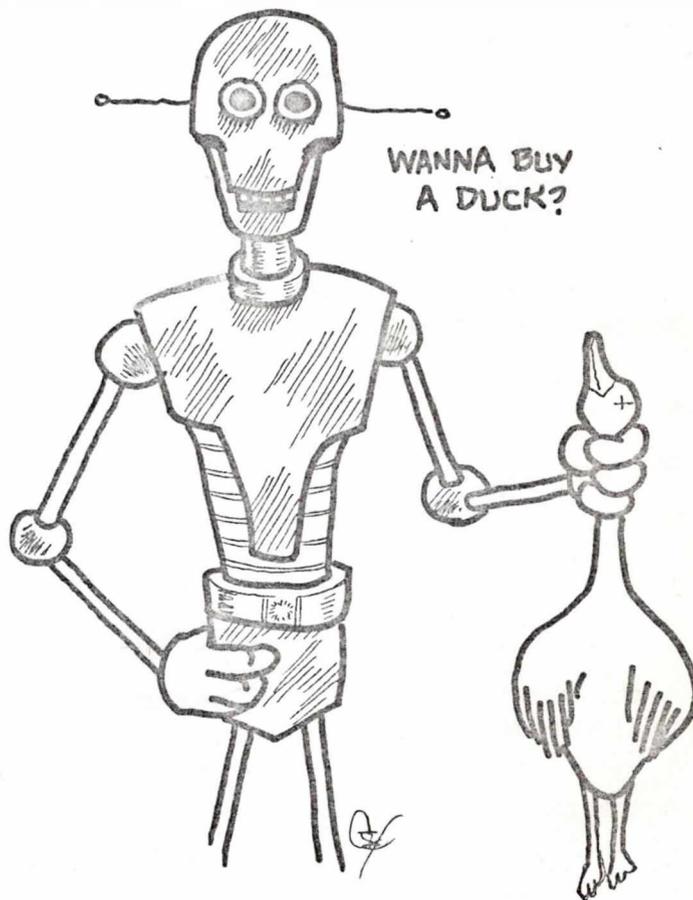
- 1.) "Brief Encounters on the Inland Waterway". A trip through the East Coast Waterway from Massachusetts to Florida. Reflections on people met, natural beauty, and some purely human mess.
- 2.) "Yes, We Have No Nirvanas", in which the Maharishi and Transcendental Meditation are taken over the coals with trenchant humor. Both informative and funny, it is truer today than when it was written. That must have been some time ago, because the price of mantras has tripled.
- 3.) "Fortitude", a play surrealistic and shocking, but not far beyond the state of today's medical art. A parable about keeping the old and terminally ill alive when death would be merciful. Truer today than in 1968 because the humanity of the question versus the legalisms has come into the public spotlight.
- 4.) "There's A Maniac Loose Out There" deals with "justice" and the appetite for sensation of the press and the public.
- 5.) "Excelsior, We're Going To The Moon! Excelsior!" is anti-technology, and anti-commercialism. It's worth reading whether you agree with it or not.
- 6.) "Address To The American Physical Society". Theme: scientists must be aware and care about the social consequences of their endeavors.
- 7.) "The Mysterious Madame Blavatsky". A rather good biographical article about the human being behind the cultist.
- 8.) "Biafra, A People Betrayed". The most moving and finest essay in the book. We read about slaughter, starvation, and rape when the Nigerians took over Biafra. The

newspapers told about little known people in a faraway country. Probably what we learned had little impact on us. Vonnegut was there with an aid mission. He tells of the atrocities, but more of the people's spirit and heroism, people who could play "'Finlandia' on a marimba" in the last pocket of hopeless resistance. Via Vonnegut's empathic writing YOU ARE THERE, in the midst of a heart wrenching experience.

9.) "Address to the Graduating Class of Bennington College, 1970". Very liberal, very anti-technology. Comment: Vonnegut rarely seems to realize in this and other articles that technology can be human and environment oriented. This article is valuable in understanding the author. He quotes Shakespeare's "King Henry VI": "To weep is to make less of grief." Then you remember that Vonnegut's black humor is his way of weeping....

10.) "Playboy Interview". The last article in the book. The author talks about himself with a mixture of straight and reverse logic, and his habitual irony. Read it last; it will be more clear in the light of what has gone before.

Wampeters, Foma, & Granfalloon is essential for anyone interested in Vonnegut, either as a prelude to reading his work, or achieving a better understanding of it in retrospect.



Dan Dankovic 828 Frank St. West Mifflin, PA 15122

12-15-76

Can I ask you a question? ((Sure)) How come high schools don't do anything to prepare you for college? ((Is it too late to change my mind?)) I just had a calculus final that was so hard that no one I know did better than 50%. The guy who made up the test was so proud of it that he walked around looking at people's answers and snickering and my chem final was just the same. ((Maybe they're recruiting labor for the local steel mills.)) I was an "A" student in high school, but I'm fighting for "C's" here. Makes you think about working in the steel mills. ((Hmm.))

Ken Ozanne 'The Cottonwoods' 42 Meek's Crescent
Faulconbridge, Australia 2776

6-8-76

I was down in Canberra yesterday, addressing a meeting of the Australian School Librarians Association. Quite a big Convention by Australian standards - around 200 attendees. The point is that I mentioned your project. Many of them were wild about the idea at the time (though they might have cooled down later.) So, if you get 100 or so inquiries or requests for samples of GUYING GYRE it's all my fault. I did at least suggest they send money. Actually I think anyone who does write will be more interested in the ratings you get from your students than from fans. I don't know how likely it is that any will know enough to produce lists themselves, but anyone who writes would probably be in a position to distribute forms, like the ones you use to children in their own schools. ((I met Ken at SUNCON; he seemed busy, pleasant, and sercon.))

DON D'AMMASSA, 19 Angell Dr., East Providence, RI 02914

7/5/78

First of all, I'm probably going to be producing a bi-monthly reviewzine some time soon. When I remember, I'll be including ratings per your system at the end of each review. This will solve the problem of my remembering to send you lists of whatever I've read. ((It also gives added insight into a reviewers mind! Thank you, Don!))

I did read GG and had a few comments about it. I disagree with O. Paul Maness, for example, that Burroughs is a necessary prerequisite to the enjoyment of Alfred Bester. I was very fond of Bester when I first read him, which was long before I read Burroughs. I enjoyed Burroughs too, for that matter, even though I was in college by then.

Lester Boutillier takes needless offense. If he resents people disagreeing with him, then he shouldn't state his opinions. If he's right that the definition of "New Wave" is totally subjective, then there's no point in using the phrase. I actually agree with this anyway. The definition is nearly totally subjective, and the term has become meaningless.

H.G. Wells may, as Lester says, have been an optimist at one point in his life, but he certainly didn't remain one.

As a point of possible interest, I did an analysis of the paperback publishers of your list of most popular SF. The breakdown is as follows for the list from fans.

Ballantine 62	Berkley 30	Lancer 11	McFadden 4
Ace 59	Bantam 22	Pyramid 11	Popular Library 3
Avon 37	Dell 15	DAW 8	Warner 2
Signet 36	Fawcett 13	Pocket 6	Award 1

The list for your students is only slightly different.

Berkley 10	Ace 6	Dell 4	Fawcett 1
Ballantine 9	Signet 5	DAW 3	Warner 1
Bantam 8	Avon 5	Lancer 2	Award 1

from HANK HEATH regarding his graphs 4/14/78

#1 is a graph plot of all the books where one variable is the number of responses, the other is the standard deviation.

Doing a distribution analysis of my own invention, I found that the upper third of the graph represents the most controversial books, like UBIK, TIME OF CHANGES, etc. The lower third represents high agreement among fen --sort of "best-loved" collection, like LORD OF THE RINGS, DOUBLE STAR, etc.

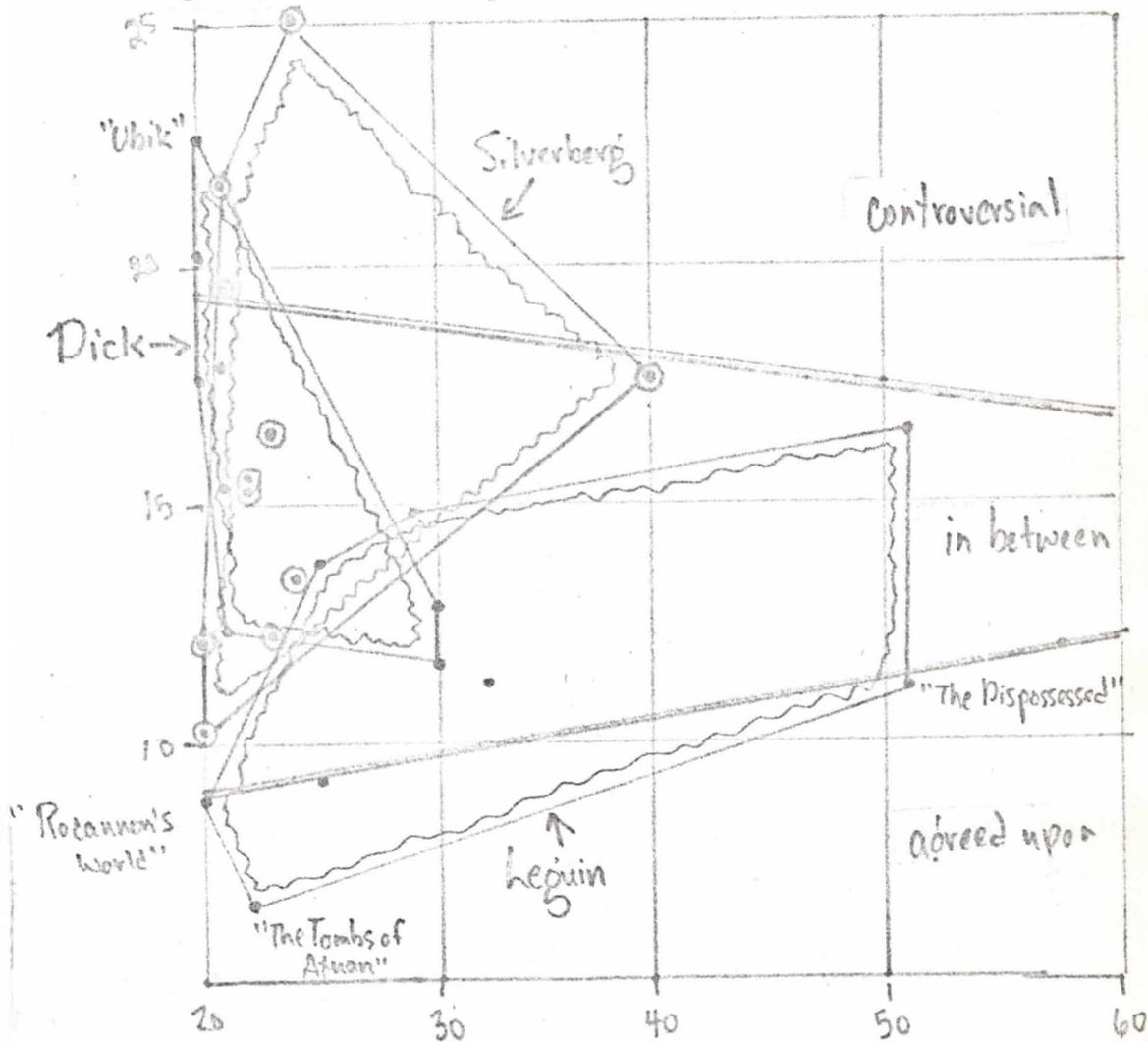
Over this I plotted Heinleins's books (C). Man for all seasons that he is, his books run the gamut (from TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE to DOUBLE STAR). It would be interesting to get publication dates to plot with these to see if he's progressed gradually into controversy.

#II shows Silverberg, Dick, and Le Guin from the same graph as (D). On all these graphs, note that the more widely read books are more agreed upon. Especially Le Guin and Clarke. Anyway Dick and Silverberg come out as rather controversial, with Bob's coming out with more range, and Phil K. being less widely read.

#III Does the same for the old standbys Clarke, Asimov, and Delaney. Note that Asimov tends to be more conservative (middle of the road). Note that Clarke tends to define the boundaries of conservatism. Delaney is more controversial and less well read, as though he's making a stance. Very interesting Results, no? ((YES))

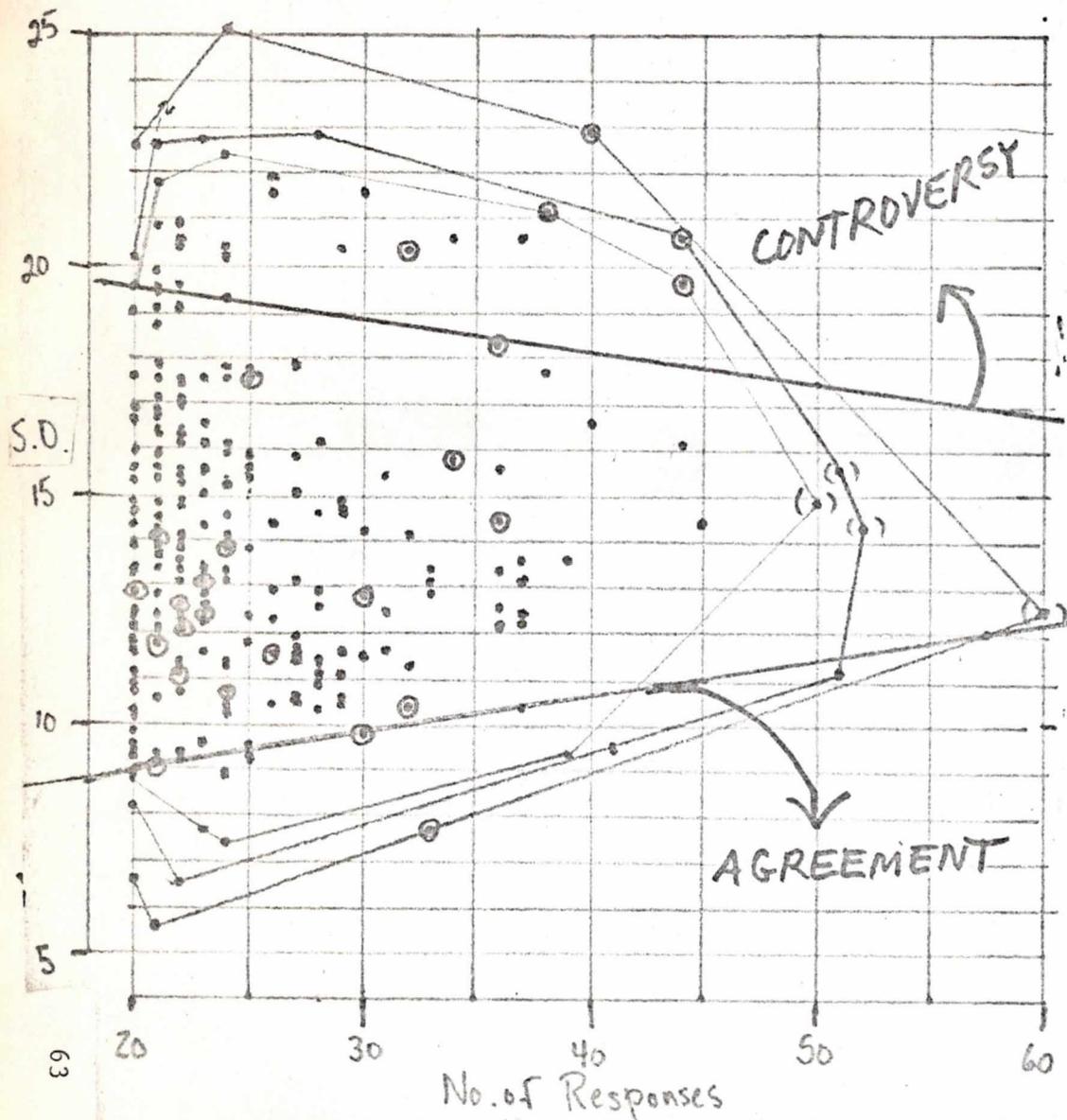
(II)

"Time of Changes"



I

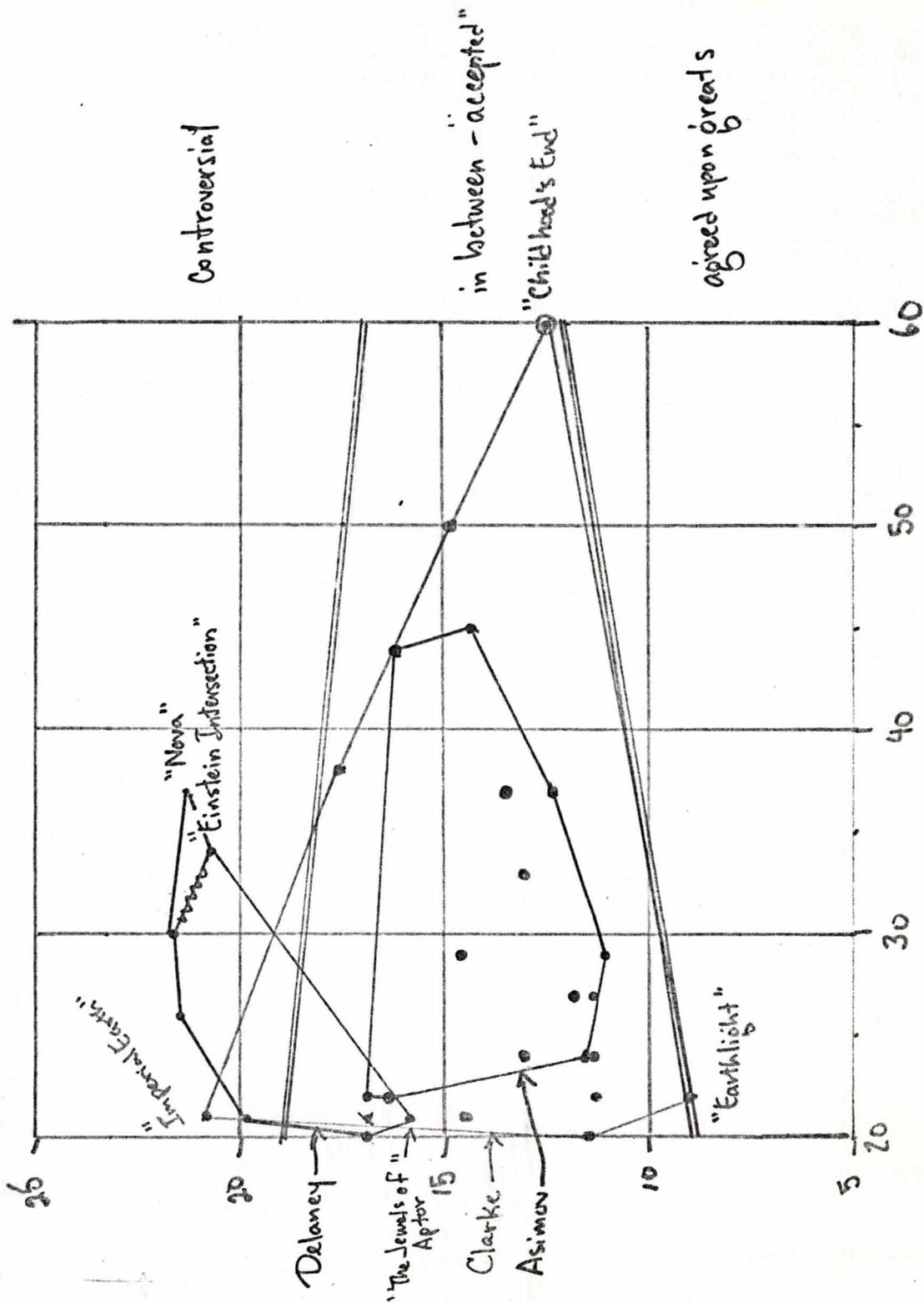
⊙ = Heinlein



mean # std. dev.

- 76.10- 20-22.59 Ubik (Dick) †
- 64.45 24-25.14 Time of Changes (Silverberg) †
- 71.87- 40-22.96 Time Enough for Love (Heinlein) *
- 75.35- 20-20.13 The Three Stigmata of Palmer Ed (Dick) †
- 69.90- 21-22.69 The Sirens of Titan (Vonnegut)
- 68.10 21-22.57 Barefoot in The Head (Aldiss)
- 65.57 23-22.72 Andromeda Strain (Crichton)
- 63.10 28-22.88 Cemetery World (Simak)
- 76.65 44-20.48 Stranger in a Strange Land (Heinlein) *
- 61.80- 20-19.66 The Black Cloud (Hoyle)
- 68.38 21-21.79 The Book of Skulls (Silverberg) †
- 66.50- 24-22.43 Creatures of Light & Darkness (Zelazny)
- 47.42- 38-21.08 I Will Fear No Evil (Heinlein) *
- 79.32- 44-19.62 The Moon is A Harsh Mistress (Heinlein) *

- 81.38- 39-9.32 The Demolished Man (Bester)
- 80.87- 24-7.47 Rite of Passages (Ranshin)
- 81.30- 23-7.78 Earthman Come Home (Blish)
- 79.05- 20-8.99 Harold's Journey (Lanier)
- 87.67- 51-11.12 The Dispossessed (Le Guin) x
- 88.44- 41-9.52 More than Human (Sturgeon)
- 81.00- 22-6.60 The Tombs of Atuan (Le Guin) x
- 89.40- 20-8.18 Watership Down (Adams)
- 84.97- 33-7.78 Double Star (Heinlein) *
- 94.67- 21-5.54 Lord of the Rings (Tolkien)
- 89.05- 20-6.65 Martians Go Home (Brown)



III

Well, on to this issue of GG. The illos are fabulous. All through GG I kept on admiring them, and even yours were worth some admiration. Maurice Harter's one on p.75 GG 10 is a classic overstatement and very neat indeed. Is it a reflection of somebody nosy, that somebody knows? I love it.

Let me start with GG9 and see where it leads us. LORD OF THE RINGS is not universally enjoyed by me, maybe because there is too much to read and I can't possibly read everything and have other books and things to do, that come first. Also, I never was one for the Saturday morning cartoon shows and still don't care much for cartoons and the like. Given the time, opportunity and little else to do I could get around to LOTR, but too much ahead of it. It is significant, I thought, that the deviation on LOTR was only 5.54. The large deviation on TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE is also significant and not surprising (22.96).

A book I just recently read is AQUARIUS MISSION by Martin Caidin, which was not too bad, but for the ending. It was the type of ending that leaves another story to be told, a story to follow, but will there be a sequel. You get to the last few pages, and say to yourself where is the rest of it; is that the end?

I do not have the time to go to the Fill-In sheet and find the PPen quite adequate to my needs for rating books. I think CHILDHOOD'S END is an overrated and a downer of a book. I did not like the theme and did not read it beyond the first time because of this. The ending and theme of the book can often make a difference between enjoying a book and re-reading the book. It may be a great book, even by my standards, but if I don't like the ending I may not read it again, for some time, if ever.

I agree with Christopher when he said of a classic when the readers go back to a book they will do so "...out of their own ~~their~~ enjoyment-- and that is what we mean by a classic." Key words are "...own enjoyment..." Reading the Warner letter brought to mind something I like about this issue and that is the deviation factor of the early listings. The point or rating spread gives a better indication of the books' popularity than just listing them by themselves. This quote of the Warner letter is true to my heart: "My heart feels particularly warmed by the preponderance of high numbers given to the E.E. Smith books, which have been getting so much flack in fanzines from a handful of prolific writers who dislike them." Good for you Harry.

Buzz Dixon: STAR WARS: A Review* I would love to see THE DEMOLISHED MAN on the screen, but I think a good script is demanded of it, for it to be a good flick. It is a great book, re-read several times, but does not lend itself to the panorama, the vastness, the wide open, hugeness of STAR WARS. It would take more explaining than would STAR WARS.

The biggest handicap faced by sf flicks is not now the special effects, as demonstrated by those in STAR WARS, but it is the money involved in producing the special effects. I think one reason for STAR TREK'S demise was the cost of producing it, largely the high cost of optics, etc. I, also, think the public is wising up to what it wants in quality sf flicks and not the cheap, obviously false special effects that ruin a lot of the cheap films. It takes money to make a good sf flick and a good script and a lot of fun. Like a lot of fans of STAR WARS the bar scene is CLASSIC. My big disappointment was with it not winning the Oscar as best flick. I said s.o.b. The film world is still doing it to the not so quality films. BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID vs MIDNIGHT COWBOY has the same analogy.

Reading my letter (and much thanks for inserting it) I thought I really sounded like I knew what I was saying and made sense, too? Incredible! To Donald Franson: What is wrong with taking this project seriously as well as for fun. The two can go together unless one lacks a sense of humor and a serious side also.

D.Gary Grady: "...I believe we're seeing an evolutionary development in the level of sf writing and reading." To which is applied to and within the genre of sf and not to reach any arbitrary level set by the mainstream or such. Concerning his idea for Hugos, the problem you have here is that some people, large, small, etc. would give extra evaluation to a story, novel, etc., give a higher rating than they normally would. Sort of like Geerymandering. False ratings. Good idea, but would it really, safely work, without inflated ratings. Honesty would be of paramount importance, and fair judgements.

The Jodie Offutt letter sounds a lot like me. Thanks. It was for me wasn't it?

If I had gotten into fandom earlier, instead of the last 3 or 4 years I WOULD DEARLY like to have met E.E. "Doc" Smith and Murray Leinster. My regret. Until I know better I will be suspect of sf courses in colleges and high schools. Who is teaching them? What is their background and knowledge of sf and their interest? Just a surface interest brought on by whatever reason the sf course is being taught? Where they the only one available to teach? And a lot more questions.

Maurice Harter: It would take somebody with a background in sf to teach a course along the lines Harter advocates, like teaching FUTURE SHOCK with SHOCKWAVE RIDER, and STANGER IN A STRANGE LAND in a philosophy COURSE BRAVE NEW WORLD and 1984 are two books I'm tiring of hearing about as classics and typical, but they do sound typical of what would show up in a sf class. They would more likely turn kids away from sf than onto it.

Denny Bowden has a good point in his letter Force feeding is never a good way to get to know something.

Hank Heath: Trying to tell folks what's good for them, what to look for in the future, what they should be prepared for is an impossible task. It is not the American way. (His paragraph p.65, bottom).

KARL FLORAN, RFD, Lee Rd., Chester, MA 01011

5/24/78

I really liked Pauline Palmer's review of MESSENGER OF ZHUVASTOU by Andrew Offutt. While there was a lot of sex and violence in it I still thought it rated a 95 two years ago. After all, the people on that planet were a bunch of lusty barbarians. Offutt's methods of description made them seem more like real people.

I've just about given up on trading SF PB's, locally or through the mail. It seems as though no one that I know cares to trade. Also, the second-hand bookstore in Springfield hardly has any SF PB's now. Either people are hanging onto their books or someone is beating me to it every week. But I've still got around 300 PB's to trade, if anyone from your group is interested.

By the way, did you go to see STAR WARS? How long did it show at the local theater? It was here for ten months! It drew a good crowd even during the final weeks. I saw it three times. One person I talked with in Holyoke told me he saw it eight times!

I did some more browsing through GUYING GYRE 9 today. I enjoy many of the reviews that your readers send in. The scoring varies quite a bit. I can see that one man's medicine can be another man's poison. Even readers that score one book the same will differ on others. But that's what makes SF so interesting.

On the Project trail:

LeGuin: A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA (85), TOMBS OF ATUAN (70), THE FARTHEST SHORE (90). Catch her on Public TV with Ellison?

Clement. MISSION OF GRAVITY. (90)

What fun. If Harry had been my high school physics teacher, you might see a changed man at this typewriter.

Gunn. THE IMMORTALS (73)

Varley. THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE (80) At the end, too much of a good thing, tho

Leiber. OUR LADY OF DARKNESS (FAN) (90) Gorgeous Richard Powers cover...

Tom Robbins. ANOTHER ROADSIDE ATTRACTION. Does this count? 90.

Kate Wilhelm. MARGARET AND I. (70) Was this reviewed by Pete Prescott in Newsweek once? Being marketed for the masses now in pb at yr local drugstore. Has a prime depiction of frustration, sexual and otherwise, and is narrated by the heroine's subconscious. Margaret seems to have found the entrance to another reality, or is she merely going wacko?

Wilhelm. LET THE FIRE FALL. (90) Another book to be hooted about; pb by the lost Lancer and probably not much seen in the Doubleday edition, this is a fantastic, whirlwind story about what happens when aliens visit earth, and all die, leaving only an alien child. Aliens never pop up again, but the human reaction is traced ~~xxxxxx~~ down the decades vividly, once an initial premise is accepted-- that a randy hayseed has the instincts of a Hitler. Also refers to the only sf magazine surviving in 1984: Monologue....

Russ. WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO... (60) Sez Sam Delaney: "...got to be the finest S F novel I have read in a handful of years." And how many years can you fit into your hand? Like her earlier novel, this one is much misunderstood. Then again, even those who understand it don't seem to think much of it....

LYNNE HOLDOM, PO BOX 5, POMPTON LAKES, NJ 07442

7/7/78

((After fifty plus PPENs Lynne said:))

In case you're wondering, I did up 440 of these for the Teaching SF Bureau which Joanne Burger published. (It's \$1.00 for N3F people.) I wrote just one brief paragraph on each book. These are from vol. 2 which will be pubbed when I do 500. So far I've done 350 and have read about 20 more than that but I don't write them up alphabetized until I have 50. Okay.

((Lynne, I'm the proud owner of five copies of your first volumn; the students find them VALUABLE. They're short cuts to finding books that interest them. Anyone interested, write to

Joanne Burger
55 Blue Bonnet Ct.
Lake Johnson, TX 77566

I don't remember (since I must have at one time known) how much to recommend you send if you're not a member of N3F. But they're worth a couple of bucks. NOW PRAY TELL, WHERE DO I RUN IF THEY'RE SELLING FOR THREE???)

I've been meaning to send you for sometime the results of the sf discussion group I lead--dominated might be a better word--last winter. My objective was to choose recent books, not too well read generally, which would be interesting to both sf and non-sf readers, which would show the variety of the literature. These were arranged from the most here and now to the farthest out. I encountered a couple problems. I had chosen as the 7th and 9th selections Lafferty's ARRIVE AT EASTERWINE and Russ' THE FEMALE MAN. Both were then out of print. So, instead I found substitutions.

The group was small: five others and myself. Three identified themselves as sf readers; Ellen and Nancy did not. The sf readers were very traditional in their viewpoints; the non-sf readers were more tolerant and willing to consider more experimental writing. In the ratings, my suspicion that I rate high in comparison to others seemed confirmed. Of course, none of these were fans.

I was pleasantly surprised what a good book THE SHOCKWAVE RIDER is. It led to the best discussion. The most difficult to read was CHILDREN OF DUNE. Several of us had trouble finishing it. And this was a best seller?

Strangely enough, my favorite, THE DISPOSSESSED, came out tops in the overall rankings. PAST MASTER, which is a very fine book, however, came out last; it was my second choice.

The experience was rewarding from the standpoint of reading the books. But the level of discussion was low. I fear that I overpowered them. But when they didn't respond, I felt compelled to go on talking. I don't think I ever want to be in a discussion group of which I am in charge.

	Debie	Ellen	Mike	Nancy	Roger	Dathy	Average	Ranking
Ben Bova MILLENIUM.	85	35	60	75	65	45	61	7
John Brunner SHOCKWAVE RIDER	75	82	67	55	87	65	72	2/3
Kate Wilhelm WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG	85	72	61	75	82	55	72	2/3
Larry Niven RINGWORLD	75	45	78	42	75	55	62	6
Ursula Le Guin THE DISPOSSESSED	45	72	84	58	98	85	74	1
Frank Herbert CHILDREN OF DUNE	65	65	80	58	78	75	70	4
R. A. Lafferty PAST MASTER	55	88	25	57	88	25	56	9
Harlan Ellison OPPROACHING OBLIVION	45	45	88	42	84	45	58	8
James Tiptree STAR SONGS OF AN OLD PRIMITIVE	55	55	55	75	86	55	64	5

NOTES FROM A SIT-IN WITH KATHERINE KURTZ

taken by Gil Gaier

One of my sister schools had a SF convention which was fun to attend. There I got lots of close up time with A.E. van Vogt, Kathleen Sky, Steven Golden, Bill Rotsler, and Katherine Kurtz. I didn't get to talk with Max Erlich, Bob Bloch, CD Fontana, Ferry Pournelle, or John Boyd -- who upon being called that immediately asked to be addressed by his real name, Upchurch.

The only one I took notes on was Ms. Kurtz. Here they are in as orderly a form as I can muster. For the uninitiated: Ms. Kurtz has written the DERYNI series: DERYNI RISING, DERYNI CHECKMATE, and HIGH DERYNI. She is currently writing a three book series which is called CAMBER OF CALDI ('78), Saint Camber ('78), and CAMBER THE HERETIC (rsn). According to Ms. Kurtz, three more are planned which will deal with KELSON. If I recall correctly the Camber set precedes Deryni and the Kelson (a set of three as well) will follow it chronologically.)

The convention was so intimate that we all (fifteen or so) sat in a circle around her and listened and questioned. Here are my imperfect notes of some of the remarks she made at Claytoncon in April 1978.

- 1 -- Ms. Kurtz is writing a screen adaption of DERNYI RISING.
- 2 -- "I've barely scratched the surface of this universe."
- 3 -- She didn't like the Ballantine series covers for Deryni, but/^{loved}the one for CAMBER OF CULDI and wants the artist Ted Coconis to do others.
- 4 -- The basic inspiration for the Deryni series was a dream.
- 5 -- She started purposely with a juvenile character so she could grow with what she knew. Proved to work well.
- 6 -- "If I did not keep time lines, lineage charts, etc., I would get lost myself."
"One of my foibles is a memory which slips."
- 7 -- My purpose of writing is to entertain, interact with people, and teach. "I'm something of a teacher."
- 8 -- "I work at developing character in three dimensions: physiological, sociological, and psychological."
- 9 -- DUNE by Herbert was extremely influential in her writing. She studied the action/dialogue interaction and how Herbert handled the action. "I don't like anything else he's done."
- 10 - "Tolkien is interesting though much more fantasy than what I'm into." It took her four attempts to get into the LORD OF THE RINGS.
- 11 - Dorothy Dunnet, who writes historical novels, is a favorite of hers.

ODDS AND ENDS: Mr. Kurtz rides a horse (half Arabian) for pleasure and exercise; doesn't "play K and K because it takes too much time and is too much work; is a cat person.

Perry Peckham, 1741 P St. N.W., Washington D.C. 20036

6/25/78

For advice on how to handle your question of assigning averages to these novels, I would recommend two things. First, when calculating their average, that you throw out the high and low figures so that your calculations will not be thrown off by unrealistic figures. Also that you show the range of PPENs with those averages also not including the high and low numbers. As to the question of how many PPENs you should have before you figure out an average, I would suggest a number of 42. (This is arrived at taking the classic statistical base figure of thirty needed for a random sample plus two for those thrown out plus ten because you are not using true interval stats and the sample is not that random.) If you think this is too high, notice the fact that some authors come out much better in your guide than is actually the case across fandom. For intra-author comparisons, fewer books would be needed. All in all, I wish you success. 69

Firstly we have GG 5/6. The first thing one sees, naturally, is your cover on GG 5, which I think is the best piece of artwork you've turned out. It seems almost to be a study for an animated film.

I would think you should utilize the enormous Healy-McComas anth, ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE for your class. Unfortunately it is probably rather more expensive than you might want, being \$4.95 even in the current Ballantine paperback edition. It would make a useful item for historical perspective, but even more useful would be a compilation of Don D'Amassa's fine articles on sf authors, if he had ones on more well-known authors. Even so, these essays of his would probably prove useful to some courses. I hope he collects them all up in book form someday. Most recently I've been reading his series of articles on Cliff Simak in STARFIRE. A fine work.

It becomes a bit hard to comment on the stuff in GG, because of course so much of it is personal preference stuff, with various fans showing their various colors, and that don't make for a very stable feedback loop.....suffice it to say that it's great fun to read.

Excellent cover by Mayer on GG "6". Did you read the article on doing fanart by him in the latest GODLESS? Nice work.

D'Amassa's list is, of course, crogglig. I hope he wins the hugo, and I'm happy he won the faan award.

To Steve Dorneman; I haven't really lost my sense of wonder, but it takes more than Burroughs to get it up these days....and I still re-read an occasional Burroughs book just for the hell of it. And the idea of Thuvia skimming along the Martian skies during the storm still brings vivid pictures into my mind, as do the Carrion Caves, Ras Thavas' lab, and the rykors and kaldanes. Among many others. But ten years ago, these images had a much stronger effect on me.

(Ms) Pat Turner, 4500 78th St., Sacramento, CA 95820

9/27/78

I'm rating "new" books according to your system as I read them. (I say "new," since I'm continually discovering authors. I've recently been introduced to both The Deryni and Darkover, for instance, tho' I've seen both on the shelves for ages.) I'm also going back and rereading old favorites and rating them, fresh in my mind. Every few months, I'll send you an update. ((PERFECT))

Let me give you a little personal data, to put my own opinions in perspective. I'm 27, at least 3/4 human (the other 1/4 seems to be a crazy blend of hobbit, elf, Deryni & Darkovan, with Jedi schooling and giving a wave of allegiance to the Lensmen). I've a degree in natural science from Humboldt State (it's in Arcata, a town about 90 mi. from the Oregon border.) I've been reading SF and fantasy for as long as I can recall. One of my first books was a volume of fairy tales, which I feel have fantasy elements to them -- or is it that fantasy stories have or use the elements of the fairy tale? I started reading juvenile SF in the second or third grade, and I've got a copy of that book on my shelf now. It was called "Space Cat," by Ruthven Todd ((?)) and I love it today as much as I did 20 years ago. I've been looking for the two companion stories for the last several years, "Space Cat meets Mars" and "Space Cat Visits Venus." In addition to my reading, which I do most of the time -- to my parents' eternal frustration -- I also write. I've had a few things published in a fanzine, BELLEROPHON, about four or five years ago. I am also a Trekfan (a more sedate & adult term than "Trekkie"), an avowed STAR WARS fanatic, and have a marked interest in other cults of SF fandom, including Dragonfen, Amber, Known Space, Darkover and the Deryni. I've only recently attended my first con. (I don't count the two Trekcons I went to in the same class as SF cons.) Mythcon was a blast and I'm glad I went. I'd like to go to Octocon, but I'm not going because I have to work part of the weekend. In related fields, I'm a novice D&Der, thanks to a dear friend's brother. Anyway, that's me in a capsule, except for my passion for cats, the Okland Raiders, 19th Century Russian romantic composers, historical costume novels, any of the sciences, most of the "pseudosciences," Masterpiece Theatre, and a few thousand other things.

I'm signed up to take TCU's English Dept. course in Science Fiction this fall, so I may have a report for you sometime. ((PLEASE)) I've seen the required readings for past courses from folks who were taking the course, but there's supposed to be a new kid on the block teaching the course this time. So it's an unknown quality. (A student last year -- this year he was a ringleader of the anti-apartheid protest at Vanderbilt, but that's another story -- told me he was assigned to do a paper on "Why Robert Heinlein decided to write STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND as science fiction." Seems to me you could boil it down to a single economic factor....)

And in re the Project:

John D. MacDonald: WINE OF THE DREAMERS 80, BALLROOM OF THE SKIES 75,
THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH & EVERYTHING 78

First two are genuine SF novels written between the time JDM started selling to the science fiction pulps and started writing best-seller fiction. The other technically qualifies as fantasy -- a stopwatch that stops time in its tracks -- but extrapolates the effects in terms of relativistic physics. Damfine stuff. I think MacDonald's CONDOMINIUM should be classified as SF -- it has every technique an SF writer should use -- and Charlie Brown says it's as much science fiction as LUCIFER'S HAMMER is. But some might disagree.

Heinlein: TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE 60

When the story moves, it's fairly involving. When it devolves down into yak yak yak, it's not. Heinlein seems to think we all ought to jump into time machines and go visit our pioneer forefathers. (Imagine the surprise on their faces.) Seriously, there may be something wrong in an attitude that assumes there will always be fresh frontier lands waiting for us to spoil -- so that it doesn't matter if we poison our present domicile, then leave it for dead. We just may have to put a hell of a lot more work into making another planet habitable than we did in making our un-.

Tucker: YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN 85, WILD TALENT 85, ICE & IRON 70

Loved the way the time-travel station deteriorated as society fell apart outside in YOTOS. // WT is the definitive telepathy novel. Shows how one can combine a first-person narrative with a third-person omniscient viewpoint -- but with realistic limitations! Every man a Tuckerism....//The paperback version of I&I. Underrated, I think. The depiction of a guerrilla warfare, fought in isolated skirmishes over a vast spon of time, and not necessarily given to the technologically advanced, in a subtle and intelligent device. Great idea, story perhaps needed a little push.

Matheson: BIT TIME RETURN 85 (FAN)

Dick: COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD 85, A SCANNER DARKLY 65

This last suffered critical overkill, I think. He's been there, fer chrissakesure it's not SF, and the characters don't really draw my sympathy, but it was life sliced up properly, I think.

HF Heard: A TASTE FOR HONEY 70

Bloch liked this book, and did a screenplay adaption, but the filmmakers in England totally rewrote it and called it THE DEADLY BEES. Book is better, if only because the hero is a mysterious Mycroft....

Daniel Keyes: THE TOUCH 65

A novel about a couple exposed to radioactive dust, and its effects -- most most notably the reaction of people in the outside world. Pays commendable attention to the human element, but the melodramatics get a little strong, and I wonder if the climax isn;t too anti-.

Sheckley: THE STATUS CIVILIZATION 80, MINDSWAP 85

The first is good social extrapolation. The second is one of the most entertaining and downright hilarious SF books I've read. For a while it seems to get too bogged down in its reality breakdown; but the ending is one of the most

beautifully realized depictions of alienation in science fiction.

Bradley: THE FORBIDDEN TOWER 80

Sorry, but I've been busy, and this is the first Darkover book I've read.

It's hard for me to make a judgment on this book, because if the people in it didn't talk so much it would be a much better novel. But she sure writes nice.

COMING SOON: "the faces of torrance"

J. Owen Hanner, 3059 Woodland Circle South, Island Lake, IL 60042

6/3/78

I've found, in the high school I went to, that the school sf course was looked upon as an easy couple of credits. The class was mainly populated with rather unsavory types who had no interest whatsoever in sf, but were in a bind credit-wise, and needed a couple fast, and took the sf class to get them. I never took the class myself because I was afraid that studying sf would ruin my enjoyment of it (it's only been recently that I've been able to reread some of the English and American classics I studied in h.s. and enjoy them), and the make up of the class would ruin any chances for me getting anything worthwhile at all out of it, and they weren't excited or even interested in it. The text was a book of excerpts and condensations of several of the most "commercial" sf titles, like the ever present Wells and Verne, a little Bradbury, a smattering of Clarke, a shot of Heinlein and a dollo0 of Asimov, and the kids were supposed to learn something from it. I expect it was a class that different teachers taught depending on who'd been had the previous semester. You know, "Okay, Kelley, you've been a real pain in the neck this past semester, so until you shape up, I'm assigning you the sci-fi (probably how they thot of it) course," and Kelley would go out and get drunk that night. It really wasn't the high point of a student's curriculum, and I don't think either the students or the teacher could be singled out as the reason it was so atrocious; it was definately a concerted, group effort. Wish it could be different. I'd like to see you or Lan Laskowski shake 'em up. Hell, if either of you taught it, I'd attend the claass myself! Nuff said. Peace! ((Thank you Owen for the vote of confidence.))

Dennis Jarog, PO BOX 48461, Niles, IL 60648

Comments on the evals: am not surprized by them, the only one among the top fifteen that I found unreadable is ZANZABAR. Overall Brunner is one author I never cared for. Style of writing, something.... I did note with disappointment that no book by Bradley is on the list. ((Some are now!)) Inexcusable. The very last book on the list is unexpected in that it got a higher rating than I thot it would.

Among books that I have admired of late: GATEWAY by Pohl, THE DOSADI EXPERIMENT by Herbert, THE RIDDLE MASTER OF HED by McKillip, TIMESTORM by Dickson, THE FORBIDDEN TOWER by MZB and of course the SILMARILLION.

I suppose it's to be expected that the kids like the Gor books but still....

Buzz Dixon's review of STAR WARS is one of the best that I have seen and I couldn't agree more. Suffice it to say for the first time ever -- sense of wonder as opposed to awe (2001) has been successfully transplanted to the screen. ((I, personally, thought Buzz' SW review was EXCELLENT. And his analysis of STARS MY DESTINATION was EVEN better.))

There are arguments about the project: I think there is a danger only if the numbers become an end in themselves. Indeed tho I do some reviewing myself, I do not take revs or numerical guides as the answer; they can give an indication but that is all. To an extent THE PROJECT is a popularity contest. ((RIGHT!)) That's all, in fact, that it can ever be. But there is no final answer save to pick up the book and read it. ((Considering the PPENS are Personal Preference Evaluation Numbers, that's what THE PROJECT is meant to be: a popularity contest!))

DAN DANKOVIC, 828 Frank St., West Mifflin, PA 15122

I finally got to take the University of Pittsburgh's course in science fiction during the winter term, and it was a rather nice experience. The professor, Dr. Phil Smith, is a very knowledgeable and interesting lecturer, although he does have an unfortunate tendency to look down upon authors such as Howard, Burroughs, Norman, etc. The reading list was pretty much divided between "classics" and modern material. Grading was based on two take-home essays, plus an optional project, which could be a paper or presentation about SF, or a short story. (I ended up with a B+, and probably would have gotten an A if my short story was any good, which it wasn't)

I took GG 9/10 to class one day, as an example of a non-professional fanzine. Dr. Smith was quite interested in your work. Also, at least one person was interested enough to write you, so I guess it did some good.

Now it's slander-a-book time. It's not often that I'm moved enough by a book to say more than a sentence or so about it, but it sometimes happens. So here goes.

WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG by Kate Wilhelm - This was one of the novels required for the SF course. I gave it a rating of 50, even though I couldn't finish it. Now I realize that this is a very unusual attitude toward this book. Several people in the class thought that this was the best SF book they'd ever read, and just about everyone liked it. I thought it was very dull. However, I also feel that it is a very fine piece of writing. The characterization was brilliant, as was the interplay between personalities. The book is an artistic success. All the artistry in the world means nothing to me, however, if I don't like the story. I guess I'm somewhat biased in that I just don't like clone stories. This stems from the first novel about cloning that I ever read, a book called The Clones. It was written by P.T. Olem, an obvious pseudonym, and no wonder, considering how abysmally awful the book was. I got a bad case of clonophobia from this book, and since then I've never been able to enjoy any story about cloning, no matter how well done. (Yeah, I know it's a screwy explanation, but there it is)

LORD FOUL'S BANE by Stephen R. Donaldson Rating - 70 - This is an excellent fantasy, the first book of (alas) yet another fantasy trilogy "in the tradition of Lord of the Rings". This is one of the few books I've seen, however, that can be called a Tolkienian fantasy without being a mere imitation of Tolkien. Donaldson has many original ideas, not the least of which is the casting of a leper as a main character. He also has a fine touch with personal and place names, a very important consideration in fantasy and sword-and-sorcery (one of the things that contributes to the great readability of Tolkien and Howard is their mastery of the art of inventing names). The book would have gotten a better rating, however, if the main character were not such an utter shmoe. Thomas Covenant is an infuriating character; you want to reach into the page, grab him by the throat, and beat some sense into him. I haven't yet read the other two books of the series (THE ILLEARTH WAR and THE POWER THAT PRESERVES), but I assume that Covenant will become less of a shmoe as the series goes on.

THE MOUSE THAT ROARED and THE MOUSE ON THE MOON by Leonard Wibberley

I fully realize that placing these books under the category of science fiction is stretching it a bit. Both contain science fictional elements, but taken as SF, they are very bad SF. However, I like these books so much that I'm including them, and if anyone doesn't like it, (insert appropriate bathroom noise here) to them.

THE "RICHARD BLADE" SERIES by Jeffrey Lord - I've read three books of this continuing series, with more on order. Blade is sort of a modern day Conan, sent by a computer into different alternate worlds in search of scientific knowledge. He is of very high intelligence, a trained killer deadly with anything from swords to guns, and a mighty lover. Now tell me, what more could anyone want from a fantasy hero? If you can get by the computer part without wincing (this SF element is very shabbily done) then you find yourself with a pretty good

(and different) sword-and-sorcery book. Lord's writing is reminiscent of John Norman, but his style is much more refined than Norman's. I know you don't much care for Norman either, but if you did you'd probably like Richard Blade.

THE FOREVER WAR by Joe Haldeman Rating - 73 - Joe Haldeman came to Pitt earlier in the year to promote "Mindbridge", and he was persuaded to give a talk about writing to the SF writing class. My professor encouraged us to go and listen to Haldeman, so I went. Many of the questions from the class were about The Forever War and its relationship to Heinlein's Starship Troopers. Haldeman was influenced by Heinlein, of course, but he has much improved upon many of Heinlein's ideas about space wars. Haldeman was much questioned about the downer ending to the book, but he defended it by saying that he just felt that it should end that way. Now, it's his book to end as he sees fit, but I feel that the ending does detract from the enjoyment of the book. In numbers, I would say that the book loses ten points in the ratings because of the ending. Then why did it win all those awards, you ask smugly. Beats me.

And finally:

THE "AMBER" SERIES by Roger Zelazny - With the publication of "The Courts of Chaos" as a serial in Galaxy, the Amber series is presumably complete (although if Herbert can sneak a fourth Dune book by us, Zelazny may decide to add on to the series). Zelazny should be congratulated for his skillful blending of fantasy and science fiction, and for holding the idea together through five very good novels. Amber is a nice concept, the one perfect world of which all others, including our earth, are mere shadows. I find myself fascinated by the conflicts of the royal family, and especially by their family history. The shadow idea is a new twist on the alternate worlds concept, and the royal family's method of travelling from shadow to shadow has to be a unique idea. I'd highly recommend at least the first two books (NINE PRINCES IN AMBER and THE GUNS OF AVALON) for any high school SF class.

Now for some anthologies (when you only write once a year, you may as well touch all the bases).

I was quite surprised recently when I read the first two books of Roger Elwood's "Continuum" series. I usually avoid anything with Elwood's name on the cover, but Continuum 1&2 were quite good. As you probably know, Continuum is Elwood's "continuing story" project, where authors were asked to write a series of interconnected stories, one for each of the four Continuum books. Authors with stories in each book are Anderson, Farmer, Scortia, Pangborn, McCaffrey, Wolfe, and Oliver. There's also a "round robin" type thing, with four authors each writing a story on the same theme. All the stories are good to excellent. Rating - 77

THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY STORIES #1 edited by Lin Carter - This book contains a lot of good fantasy and sword-and-sorcery stories. Included are Marion Z. Bradley's "The Parting of Arwen", which narrates the final meeting between Arwen and Elrond, in which Arwen tells her father of her choice to become mortal and marry Aragorn. Bradley does a fine job of imitating Tolkien's style. Also in the book is Lin Carter's "Black Hawk of Valkarth", which tells of the early years of Carter's own S&S hero, Thongor the Mighty. Add to that another delightful Cugel the Clever story by Jack Vance, a Fafhrd and Grey Mouser tale by Fritz Leiber, plus stories by Alexander, Howard, Smith, Bok, Decamp, McIntosh, and Saunders, and you have a great book for fantasy lovers. Rating - 85

WOMEN OF WONDER edited by Pamela Sargent - This was another of the required texts for the SF class. This is a book of stories "by, for, and about women". There is an excellent introductory essay by editor Sargent on the contribution of women to science fiction. The stories range from mediocre to excellent, and include several which are either excerpts or forerunners of novels. These are Vonda McIntyre's "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand", recently released in novel form as "Dreamsnake"; Anne McCaffrey's excellent "The Ship Who Sang"; and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's equally excellent "False Dawn". Also included are stories by Merrill, MacLean, Bradley, Dorman, Reed, Emswiller, Leguin, and Russ; plus what I consider to be Kate Wilhelm's best story, "Baby, You Were Great". I believe that there are two other "Women of Wonder" books out now, and I'll be watching for them. Rating - 71

First, since this is my first chance to respond to CG in a detailed way, I'd like to respond to the idea behind the Project, rather than specific comment hooks in 9/10.

In general, I'm very suspicious of anything which remotely resembles a survey or a sampling. Statistical studies that I have seen used in social science fields have always seemed the height of boredom and misinterpretation. Survey questionnaires evoke a response from that portion of the public, the sample population which bother to respond in the first place, and there is an inherent bias in this.

On the other hand, I like the Project. I cannot bring myself to value the numerical results which the responses bring. On the other hand, I can't help seeing another purpose behind the Project. I'm a physics major (although not for long) and I can't help but cringe when I see numbers, which are cold, hard, and indifferent things (but nonetheless intriguing), treated as though they could help us understand something which is inherently unquantifiable. Some how, it takes the magic away.

But the Project seems to be revitalizing an area of fandom that seemed deficient to me in the past few years. (Admittedly my perceptions are incomplete and maybe erroneous.) You've got people talking about science fiction again! Books, authors, and the merits thereof. Well, maybe that's exaggeration--there will always be a few fans in some lost corner of a darkened con suite discussing their favorite authors. But it's nice to see something almost solely devoted to the literature.

Since you're a teacher of sf, I'd like to mention a series of seminars given here at Stanford. I mentioned them in a loc to Don D'Amassa's Mythologies, and that portion of my letter saw print. However, it might be interesting (for me, at least) to talk about the mechanics of the seminar, and goals.

The seminars are called Physics through Science Fiction, and that is their purpose. The engineering physics sequence taught here consists of 4 rather dry courses based on the classic undergraduate text, Resnick and Halliday. Mechanics, Electricity and Magnetism, Light and Heat, and Atomic Physics (which uses a different text). The ~~xxxxxx~~ last two courses are taught with an optional science fiction seminar, and they meet for five sessions during a quarter--an unbelievably short time, and you wouldn't expect that anything could be done in 5 one-hour meetings. But a lot does get done. The number of sections vary, depending on interest. The maximum section size is about 12-15 or so. Each week, in advance of a section meeting, we are given a reading assignment and a set of questions to ponder, and the readings for the week are then discussed at each meeting.

We've touched on a wide variety of topics -- the physics of black holes, the physics of time travel, the nature of extra-terrestrial intelligence and CETI, the relationship between science and religion, the nature of the interaction between science and society, slow glass, 'ancient' science fiction, etc. I would say it's one of the most successful experimental ventures at Stanford. And it proves to me that physicists can indeed be well-rounded intellects.

At some point, I think it would be nice if you talked about your philosophy of teaching, especially teaching sf. I've been involved in science education and programming in the past (although not science fiction), and I'm wondering how you approach the teaching of sf, what your goals are in teaching it, and how you try to achieve those goals. How do you get students to think? How do you create an atmosphere conducive to creativity? How do you communicate interest and enthusiasm?

GREG HILLS, c/- 22a Polson St., Wanganui, New Zealand (sea mail only) 7/23/78
 331 Featherston St., Palmerston North, New Z. (air mail)

Lord of the Rings (series-fan)	Tolkien	96
Foundation trilogy (series-sf)	Asimov	88
The Door into Summer (sf)	Heinlein	86
Nine Princes in Amber (fan)	Zelazny	86
The Dragon Masters (sf)	Vance	87
The Hobbit (fan)	Tolkien	92
The Dancers at the End of Time (series-sf)	Moorcock	92
Earthsea (series)	McGuin	82
Dune (sf)	Herbert	46
Dhalgren (sf)	Delany	38
Stranger in a Strange Land (sf)	heinlein	48
Time Enough for Love (sf)	Heinlein	68
I Will Fear No Evil (sf)	Heinlein	22
Tau Zero (sf)	Anderson	72
inside outside (sf)	Farmer	34
The Dying Earth (fan)	Vance	86
The Eyes of the Overworld (fan)	Vance	85
Showboat World (sf)	Vance	87
The Left Hand of Darkness (sf)	Le Guin	86
Rendezvous With Rama (sf)	Clarke	88
The City & the Stars (sf)	Clarke	86
I, Robot (sf)	Asimov	82
The gods themselves (sf)	Asimov	83
Slaughterhouse 5 (sf (??))	Vonnegut	14
Time of the Eye (sf)	Ellison	14
Watership Down (fan)	Adams	75
Dragonsinger (sf)	McCaffrey	82
Dragonflight (sf)	McCaffrey	84
Dragonquest (sf)	McCaffrey	84
Dune Messiah (sf)	Herbert	38
Children of Dune (sf)	Herbert	42
The Heaven makers (sf)	Herbert	42
The Blood-red Game (sf (??))	Moorcock	82
The Ice Schooner (sf)	Moorcock	66
Deathworld 1 (sf)	Harrison	78
2 (sf)	Harrison	78
3 (sf)	Harrison	77
Stainless Steel Rat (sf)	Harrison	82
SSR's Revenge (sf)	Harrison	82
SSR Saves The World (sf)	Harrison	78
The Space Merchants (sf)	Pohl & Kornbluth	77

There! Take that! And may you get a headache trying to sort it out. Typos in title & author notwithstanding, ratings are accurate as I can get (I keep on having to fight the urge to use a straight ranking---ie as a %age---and don't like the idea of leaving out 0, 1 & 9...even while, rationally, I realise that as no-one is using them it doesn't matter!)).

TODD GOLDBERG, 28 Ellis Rd., W. Caldwell, NJ 07006

6/25/78

So this is THE PROJECT! My god, you've set quite a task for yourself in trying to rate every SF book ever written, especially since there's no strict definition of SF. I don't know how necessary such a project is, but it's certainly interesting comparing my opinions of books to the average PPEN ratings. I'm shocked to see such "classics" as THE GODS THEMSELVES, 2001, SIRENS OF TITEN, IMPERIAL EARTH, and others so far down on the list. The higher-rated books were generally universal favorites, so I agreed with most. The other interesting comparison was between the student and fan PPEs. I'm not sure how old your students are, but it seemed that the more complex SF books such as those by Bester, LeGuin, etc. placed lower on their lists than on fandom's, while they tended to like more fantasy and adventure, such as the Gor stuff. DUNE was a notable exception.

Sorry to be so late in responding. 7/8 and 9/10 were very enjoyable.

Despite my material in SFReview, my involvement in fandom is limited due to academic responsibilities.

Re: Fred Jakobcic, I find his paranoia regarding "literary" intellectualism in sf as symptomatic of a general feeling of inferiority among fans as regards the place of SF in literature. I'm an English major and an sf enthusiast and I can see both sides of the fence. I know that a lot of folks in the "literary establishment" uphold works whose chief merit is that they are hopelessly obscurant, and that concurrent with this love of obscurantism is the belief that plot is a necessary or, in some professor's minds, an unnecessary evil. However, not all professors see things that way. At Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, where I'm entering my senior year, the English Department has two professors who are highly knowledgeable and interested in sf. As a matter of fact one is Duane Ackerson, whose work has appeared in Alternities edited by Gerrold, The Best SF 74 by Aldiss & Harrison, Future Pastimes edited by Scott Edelman, VERTEX and numerous other anthologies. All sf isn't good literature, but neither are all mainstream books good literature. But all good literature does have one thing in common, it speaks with power to the human condition. And in a century where ever accelerating change is the norm, sf speaks with more power, more frequently to the aspect of human change than the mainstream locked into its Aristotlean thought trains ever can. As for entertainment, that too is part of the human experience and as surely as form follows content in good literature so will entertainment forever remain in good sf.

On other matters, I don't believe in Sturgeon's Law; you can't quantify quality.

A final word, John Varley's second novel, TITAN is a stunning achievement. It will be serialized in ANALOG but wait for the hardback from Berkley; the ANALOG version had to be cut in order to match ANALOG's length requirements.

Good luck, Gil, on THE PROJECT. Here's my contribution. I look forward to 11/12.

anderson

96 WE CLAIM THESE STARS
 93 A KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS
 93 THE REBEL WORLDS
 85 TAU ZERO
 84 BRAIN WAVE
 86 A CIRCUS OF HELLS
 82 ENSIGN FLANDRY
 83 AFTER DOOMSDAY
 82 FIRE TIME
 82 CORRIDORS OF TIME
 78 SATAN'S WORLD
 78 STAR WAYS
 77 PLANET OF NO RETURN
 77 THERE WILL BE TIME
 78 THE WINTER OF THE WORLD
 75 INHERITORS OF EARTH (w/Eklund)
 74 WAR OF THE WING MEN
 72 THE PEOPLE OF THE WIND
 72 THE BYWORLDER
 67 MIRKHEIM
 67 THE DAY OF THEIR RETURN
 64 THE STAR FOX
 42 STAR PRINCE CHARLIE (w/Dickson)

asimov

83 THE FOUNDATION TRILOGY
 84 THE STARS LIKE DUST
 73 PEBBLE IN THE SKY
 62 THE GODS THEMSELVES
 62 END OF ETERNITY

anthony

76 CLUSTER

biggle

78 THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS
 75 WATCHERS OF THE DARK

blish

77 CITIES IN FLIGHT
 78 MIDSUMMER CENTURY
 72 STAR SWELLERS
 65 ALL THE STARS A STAGE
 52 SEEDLING STARS
 62 SPOCK MUST DIE

bova

85 THE STAR CONQUERORS
 74 AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN
 48 DUELING MACHINE
 42 MILLENIUM

brackett

86 THE STARMEN OF LLYRDIS
85 THE HOUNDS OF SKAITH
82 THE REAVERS OF SKAITH
78 THE GINGER STAR

brunner

83 THE LONG RESULT
77 slavers of space
73 THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY
73 RITES OF OHE
68 BORN UNDER MARS
68 ATLANTIC ABOMINATION
68 THE WORLD SWAPPERS
68 GIVE WARNING TO THE WORLD
65 PSIONIC MENACE
63 THE WRONG END OF TIME
53 total eclipse

budrys

84 MICHAELMAS
83 ROGUE MOON

bradbury

62 THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES

bulmer

58 THE WIZARD OF STARSHIP POSEIDON
66 THE SECRET OF ZI
53 CYCLE OF NEMESIS
52 NO MAN'S WORLD
22 WORLDS FOR THE TAKING

campbell

78 THE MOON IS HELL
63 Invaders FROM THE INFINITE
63 THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE
63 THE ULTIMATE WEAPON
62 THE PLANETEERS
62 ISLANDS IN SPACE
58 THE BLACK STAR PASSES

chandler

68 THE ALTERNATE MARTIANS
67 SHIP FROM OUTSIDE
66 RIM IN SPACE
65 STAR COURIER

coarke

97 THE CITY AND THE STARS
88 RENDEVOUS WITH RAMA
82 LION OF COMARRE
76 EARTHLIGHT
76 SANDS OF MARS
72 CHILDHOOD'S END
73 DEEP RANGE
73 ISLANDS IN THE SKY
72 PRELUDE TO SPACE
73 DOLPH'N ISLAND
65 IMPERIAL EARTH
58 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

chalker

94 MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS
87 AJUNGLE OF STARS

de camp

78 LEST DARKNESS FALL

delany

52 BALLAD OF BETA 2
22 TRITON
12 DHALGREN ((?))

delrey

83 PSTALEMATE
52 ROCKET TO NOWHERE
48 MAROONED ON MARS

dick

78 MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE
68 DR. FUTURITY
65 DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP

dickson

98 TIME STORM
83 TACTICS OF MISTAKE
82 MISSION TO UNIVERSE
78 WOLFLING
76 ALIEN FROM ARCTURUS
72 THE PRITCHER MASS
78 HOUR OF THE HORDE
75 TIME TO TELEPORT
72 NONE BUT MAN
68 THE R-MASTER
42 STAR PRINCE CHARLIE (w/ anderson)

farmer

82 TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO
82 DARE
72 TIMESTOP
68 THE OTHER LOGS OF PHINEAS FOGG

harrison

65 STAR SMASHERS OF THE GALAXY RANGERS

heinlein

78 PUPPET MASTERS
73 CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY
72 HAVE SPACESUIT WILL TRAVEL
65 RED PLANET
67 STAR BEAST
68 STARMAN JONES
66 TIME FOR THE STARS
62 BETWEEN PLANETS
55 METHUSELAH'S CHILDREN
45 STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND
48 ROCKETSHIP GALILEO
32 TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE
34 SPACE CADET
38 PODKAYNE OF MARS
23 STARSHIP TROOPERS
03 FARMER IN THE SKY (absolutly bitrod!)

herbert

48 HELLSTROM'S HIVE
13 DUNE MESSIAH
12 THE GOD MAKERS

hoyle

82 BLACK CLOUD
72 A FOR ANDROMEDA
62 ANDROMEDA BREAKTHROUGH
58 MOLECULE MEN
56 INFERNO
52 FIFTH PLANET
42 ROCKETS IN URSA MAJOR
38 INTO DEEPEST SPACE

jakes

52 WHEN THE STAR KINGS DIE
22 PLANET WIZARD

janifer

02 Bloodworld (disgusting)

koontz

73 DEMON SEED

laumer

76 DINOSAUR BEACH
67 STAR TREASURE
56 LONG TWILIGHT
43 EARTHBLOOD (w/brown)

knight

65 RITHIAN TERROR
62 MIND SWITCH

lieber

55 WANDERER

lewis

43 OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET
38 PERELANDRA

malzberg

14 BEYOND APOLLO
12 UNIVERSE DAY

mcintosh

63 BORN LEADER
33 THE MILLION CITIES

NIVEN

74 THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE (w/p)
72 PROTECTOR
72 WORLD OF PTAVVS

norton

83 STAR BORN
77 GALACTIC DERELICT
66 STAR MAN'S SON
84 STAR GUARD
47 FORUNNER FORAY

silverberg

82 ACROSS A BILLION YEARS
67 THE PLANET KILLERS
66 COLLISION COURSE
64 STARMAN'S QUEST
58 LEST WE FORGET THEE, EARTH
28 THE WORLD INSIDE

simak

92 WAY STATION
92 A CHOICE OF GODS
82 WEREWOLF PRINCIPLE
77 COSMIC ENGINEERS

smith, ee

78 all SKYLARK and LENSMAN

stableford

76 CRITICAL THRESHOLD
73 SWAN SONG
72 THE HALCYON DRIFT
72 THE PARADISE GAME
72 THE PROMISED LAND
72 THE FENRIS DEVICE
68 WILDEBLOOD'S EMPIRE
62 THE FLORIANIS
48 RHAPSODY IN BLACK

vance

96 THE BRAINS OF EARTH
94 TRUILLION: ALASTOR 2262
87 MASKE: THAERY
78 THE LAST CASTLE
76 BIG PLANET
74 MARUNE: ALASTOR 668
68 ORAGON MASTERS

varley

88 THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE

van vogt

84 THE WAR AGAINST THE RULL
83 WEAPON MAKERS
82 THE HOUSE THAT STOOD STILL
77 WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER
89 SLAN
72 MISSION TO THE STARS
74 BATTLE OF FOREVER
76 VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE
64 EMPIRE OF THE ATOM
65 THE WIZARD OF LINN
62 QUEST FOR THE FUTURE
68 SILKIE
47 SIEGE OF THE UNSEEN
24 THE ANARCHISTIC COLOSSUS
32 THE SECRET GALACTICS

white

73 SECRET VISITORS

wilhelm

64 THE CLEWISTON TEST

williamson

68 BRIGHT NEW UNIVERSE
53 TRAPPED IN SPACE
52 LEGION OF SPACE
44 TRIAL OF TERRA
43 COMETEERS

wylie

77 AFTER WORLDS COLLIDE
65 WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

zelazny

97 BRIDGE OF ASHES
83 DOORWAYS IN THE SAND
74 THIS IMMORTAL

foster, ma

98 THE WARRIORS OF DAWN
86 THE GAME-PLAYERS OF ZAN

nelson

86 BLAKE'S PROGRESS

tiptree

85 UP THE WALLS OF THE WORLD

levin

82 THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL

hamilton

85 THE STAR KINGS
84 RETURN TO THE STARS
83 THE VALLEY OF CREATION
82 THE STAR OF LIFE
82 THE SUN SMASHER
82 DOOMSTAR
82 BATTLE FOR THE STARS
82 THE CLOSED WORLDS
78 THE HAUNTED STARS

((Elton, the following are from a page which I missed. Soooo it's catch-up time. Sorry.))

nourse

68 SCAVENGERS OF SPACE
63 PSI HIGH
58 RAIDERS FROM THE RING
54 UNIVERSE BETWEEN

pangborn

67 WEST OF THE SUN

panshin

55 STAR WELL
47 THE THURB REVOLUTION

reynolds

66 EQUALITY IN THE YEAR 2000
57 SECTION: UNITED PLANETS
53 GALACTIC MEDAL OF HONOR
52 LOOKING BACKWARDS FROM THE YEAR 2000
52 SATELLITE CITY

rotsler

36 TO THE LAND OF THE ELECTRIC ANGEL

schmitz

95 A TALE OF TWO CLOCKS
95 THE DEMON BREED
87 THE ETERNAL FRONTIERS
83 THE UNIVERSE AGAINST HER
83 THE TELZEY TOY
78 THE LION GAME

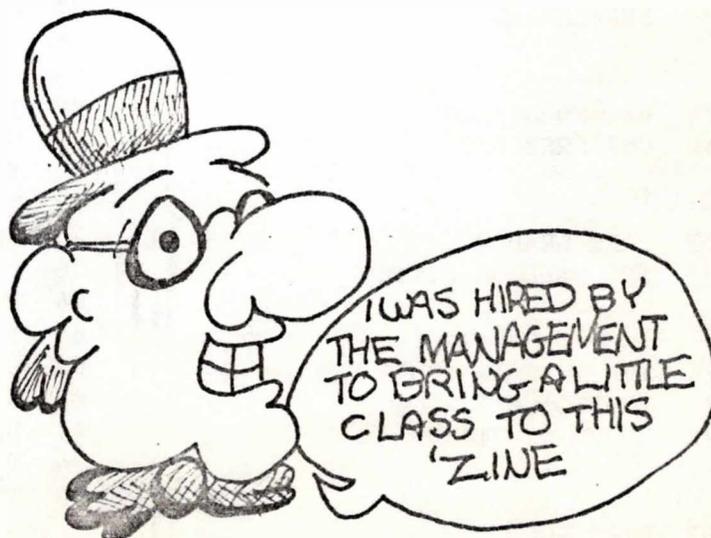
shaw

76 ORBITSVELLE
66 THE PALACE OF ETERNITY

sheckley

62 STATUS CIVILIZATION

I'll have more with the next loc.



Jim Mann, 916 South Aiken Avenue #3, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15232 June 27, 1977

I received GG 7/8 yesterday and I'd like to comment on a few things. The ratings were interesting in a way, but seemed to indicate an almost anti-literary trend on the part of the participants. Perhaps it isn't as much that as just a preference on their part for adventure fiction, and for Hugo winners, but I found the lack of good ratings for some of our finest authors to be somewhat disturbing. For example, Rogue Moon is a literary masterpiece, but only received 57-58-65-84-86-78. Perhaps the prose was just a bit too dense for readers who are used to that of Heinlein. Another annoying thing was Ian Covell's ratings of Barry Malzberg. Did he really try reading all those Malzberg titles in order to rate them, or is it just that he doesn't like Malzberg and therefore rated all the Malzberg with 0 without giving them a try? The ratings for Silverbob were equally bothersome. I guess the simplistic prose will always outsell the more sophisticated writing, but I had hoped that those who took part in your survey would do better. *(The zero rating was a copyist error.)*

I disagree with Don D'Amassa when he says that much of Delany's reputation rests on The Einstein Intersection. Delany had built up quite a reputation before this novel with things like The Fall of the Towers and Babel-17. I liked T. E. 1., but I think that it was a let down after the earlier Delany novels. However, I do think that Nova got Chip back on track, at least for a while. I'm looking forward to the October F&SF, which will have a new Delany story.

Richard Dey did one of the most intelligent replies to your survey, and I agree very strongly with most of his choices. It is interesting to see that he places The Trial in his list as SF (which of course it is). Hopefully more people will be like him and try to expand our views of SF in similar ways. (For example, Finnegans Wake is speculative fiction, and under a broad definition one might also consider Ulysses in this category.)

Actually, the entire business of putting things in categories is somewhat ludicrous. It does serve two purposes, however. One: it's fun. Two: it may help to get people to read more. Fans who read only SF may be "lured" into the mainstream and actually find out that there is a lot of good stuff to be found there.

Something else which I'm sending along is a copy of what I consider a science fiction course for the ideal situation. Meaning that you can only give it to someone who is willing to do an unGodly amount of work. As such, it will never work in an actual situation. But hopefully, if I ever get a job teaching English, I can use parts of it in my courses.

A COURSE IN SCIENCE FICTION

from Jim Mann

I. The limits and scope of science fiction

"Nightfall" (Asimov)
"Scanners Live in Vain" (Smith)
"Baby is Three" (Sturgeon)
The Time Machine (Wells)
"The Roads Must Roll" (Heinlein)
"'Repent, Harlequin!' Said The Ticktockman" (Ellison)
"The Nine Billion Names of God" (Clarke)
"Neutron Star" (Niven)
"Riders of the Purple Wage" (Farmer)
"The Deathbird" (Ellison)
"Reason" (Asimov)
"By the Waters of Babylon" (Benet)
"A Work of Art" (Blish)

On the basis of the above, define the scope of Science Fiction.

II. Compare and contrast the styles of Sturgeon, Asimov, Smith, Ellison, and Niven. Why is the style of each fitted to the particular piece?

III. Characterizations

- "Maturity" (Sturgeon)
- Dying Inside (Silverberg)
- "Who Goes There?" (Campbell)

The above three selections present different levels of characterization. Compare the above section with "Nightfall", "Neutron Star", and "Scanners Live in Vain". Does the depth of characterization fit the story? Why?

IV. Imagery

- "There Will Come Soft Rains" (Bradbury)
- "A Planet Named Shayol" (Smith)
- "The Dead Lady of Clown Town" (Smith)
- "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream" (Ellison)

Compare the above with the previous Ellison and Smith, and with the short stories by Sturgeon, Farmer, and Benet that you have read so far as a part of this course. How does each evoke imagery? What are some of the techniques these authors use to create images?

V. Social comment

- The Space Merchants (Pohl and Kornbluth)
- "Coming Attraction" (Leiber)
- Inferno (Niven and Pournelle)

Compare the above with "The Roads Must Roll" and "'Repent, Harlotin!' Said The Ticktockman". What tone and mood do each take in their comments on society? Which is most effective?

Part II:

I. Advanced stylistics

- "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (Tiptree)
- "Aye and Gommorah" (Delany)
- "A Rose For Ecclesiastes" (Zelazny)
- "Sundance" (Silverberg)
- "The Crystal Ship" (Vinge)

Compare the above styles with those of Farmer, Smith, Ellison, Niven, Sturgeon, and Clarke. Discuss the differences in narrative technique in "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" and "Neutron Star". How does the technique of "Riders of the Purple Wage" compare to these two?

Contrast the straightforward prose of Niven to the poetic prose of Zelazny. Discuss point of view in "Sundance".

Discuss the suitability of prose style to subject matter in the given stories.

II. Advanced characterization

- The Stars My Destination (Bester)

Look at the characters in Bester's novel (Gully in particular) and compare them with those in Silverberg's Dying Inside and with the Sturgeon you have read. What does the author do to present his characters to the reader and to make them human?

Look at the above characters in relation to the less well-rounded characters like those in "Nightfall". Do the ones in "Nightfall" fit the story? Are they human?

Are Sturgeon's characters human? Why? What about Gully Foyle?

In which of the stories that you've read so far do the characters seem to be simply vehicles to advance the plot? In which do the characters stand out on their own? Why do the authors make use of these two methods?

III. World building

Dune (Herbert)

Mission of Gravity (Clement)

How do Herbert and Clement go about constructing their worlds? Contrast their methods. What does each emphasize in his world building? Compare these worlds with "A Planet Named Shayol".

IV. Aliens and alien cultures

Ringworld (Niven)

Little Fuzzy (Piper)

"A Martian Odyssey" (Weinbaum)

Compare the aliens in the above three stories to those in Dune, Mission of Gravity, and "Sundance". Discuss the authors' methods of creating aliens and of setting up alien cultures.

Do they act human or alien? In the latter case, are they still believable? Compare these aliens with the one in "Who Goes There?" How do they differ?

V. Advanced imagery

Look at the Ellison stories that you have read so far. What methods does Ellison use to create images? Why does he want to evoke the images? Do they work in this context? Are they effective as images? What are the most vivid images? Discuss the imagery of Harlan Ellison in depth.

Compare the imagery of Smith to that of Ellison. How do they differ in their methods of creating images? How are they similar?

Discuss the imagery of Cordwainer Smith in depth.

VI. After the fall, anti-utopia

A Canticle for Leibowitz (Miller)

"A Boy and His Dog" (Ellison)

Davy (Pangborn)

Compare the above works with "'Repent Harlequin!' Said The Ticktockman" and "By the Waters of Babylon". How does each point out the negative possibilities of the future? Is there optimism expressed in any?

How does each handle the subject? What is the mood of each?

See the movie Doctor Strangelove. Compare its negative future with those given. Does the movie show any optimism? Why?

What does each say about humanity and its future?

VII. First Contact

The Most In God's Eye (Niven and Pournelle)

"First Contact" (Leinster)

Rendezvous With Rama (Clarke)

Discuss how each first contact story with an alien race is handled in each of the above and in Little Fuzzy. How does contact differ? Do humans manage to communicate completely with the aliens they contact?

Why did the author(s) write a first contact story? What point was he (were they) trying to get across?

VIII. Surrealism in sf

Ubik (Dick)

"Under Old Earth" (Smith)

Using the above, along with other works by Smith and Ellison, come to some sort of definition of surrealism. How is it used in the stories? Which author makes the most use of it? Who uses it most effectively and why?

How does the extent of surrealism used by each author fit the story and style of that author?

Why does a science fiction author want to use surrealism? Can you give a

possible reason as to why surrealism wasn't used very much until the late 50's or early 60's?

IX. Symbolism

At this point you've read many science fiction stories. Which authors use symbols? In which ways? How obvious are the symbols? How effective are they? Pick one story and describe its symbolism in detail.

X. Sociology and society

The Left Hand of Darkness (Le Guin)

"Ticket to Tranai" (Sheckley)

"Mother and Child" (Vinge)

The City and The Stars (Clarke)

The above four works present four very different societies. Le Guin presents a sexless society, Sheckley a tongue-in-cheek Utopia, Vinge a primitive agrarian society, and Clarke a stagnant Utopia. Discuss the authors' methods of presenting their societies. How developed are the societies? Did you get a "feel" for the society?

How do each of these societies relate to our present society? By creating this society, what is the author saying about our present society in general?



Richard Brandt, 4013 Sierra Drive, Mobile, Alabama, 36609

Fred Jakobcic implies that I said Canticle was a drudgery. I don't recall ever saying of the sort, and it isn't something I would say. (Unfortunately, I can't locate Guying Gyre #7 to check it out.) I recall A Canticle for Leibowitz as one of the best books I ever read. Time Magazine, in a survey of sf, referred to it as "impressive even by literary standards"--so there, to anyone who doesn't think it "literary".

If Heinlein can tell a story, interestingly and well, then he can write. Maybe he can't WRITE, but that's a concept in Blenheim's head that has to do with his appreciation of style.

E. E. Smith: this man once managed to write of a very rapid-transit journey and failed totally to give me an image of what he was describing. Doc managed to write quite lucidly of the mingling of two galaxies, but he broke down when it came to specifics.

Haven't read any sf, really, since school started, but I can give a 95 to Sturgeon's Some of Your Blood, a book which has absolutely nothing to do with sf (tho it does touch on vampirism). It does prove that Sturgeon can write as well as Faulkner, however. (If this be heresy, make the most of it.)

I have a large shelf covered with unread sf books--some of which have been there almost a year--so you may hear from me again this summer, from time to time.

Martin Morse Wooster, 2108 Seminary Road, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910

25th April, 1978

Sorry to read that you won't be printing all of the PPEN's that you get. This was one of my favourite sections of the fanzine; it was always interesting to know what all the actifans were reading. And they were reading some odd books, what with the only 100 given to a novel by the constantly boring Michael G. Coney. Oh, well....

Dave Hulan has his reasons for why he gives fairly high PPEN's for his reading, so now I can give mine. Most sf fen have built into their minds after many years a junk detector that will steer them past most of the truly awful fiction. Thus scores tend to be high not because fen are lenient, but because this is really the best sf being published. Sf, after all, is superior to mainstream fiction in that an author with some merit will be remembered by his readers (if not by the publishers) and thus will not entirely disappear from the marketplace. I note that your two lowest ratings are for a novelisation (indeed, some claim that Asimov invented the modern novelisation As We Know It--something else with which to pillory the Good Doctor) and a book generally recognised as being the worst novel by a major author to appear in the last twenty years. (But why have so many people finished I Will Fear No Evil?)

You worry about alternate titles, so I thought you might like a list of all the alternate titles for Harry Harrison novels.

Serial:	Book:
<u>Deathworld</u>	<u>Deathworld (1)</u>
<u>The Ethical Engineer</u>	<u>Deathworld 2</u>
<u>The Horse Barbarians</u>	<u>Deathworld 3</u>
<u>Sense of Obligation</u>	<u>Planed of the Damned</u>
<u>The Time-Machined Saga</u>	<u>The Technicolor Time Machine</u>
<u>A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!</u>	<u>Tunnel Throth The Deeps</u>
<u>In Our Hands, The Stars</u>	<u>The Daleth Effect</u>

I can't remember the alternate titles for Plague From Space (except that it had the word Jupiter in the title) or Nova 3. One of your readers will be sure to tell me. (The serial titles, you will note, are usually better.)

Your comments on the student PPEN's were perceptive, but I find some of the numbers hard to believe. Eighty-five people read Hell's Gate? That's almost double the number of "regular" readers who judged Stranger In A Strange Land! At least they

enjoyed it.

Andrew Sigel, Windham College, Putney, Vermont, 05346

March 31, 1978

I'm glad you're going to continue publishing a few lists of PPENs. It is very interesting seeing what other people like and dislike, and how they rate in general. In particular, I was intrigued to note that Fred Jakobic only rated 14 of his books between 'pretty good' and 'very good', and none at all above 78, meaning (I assume) that he hasn't read any sf books that strike him as being excellent. On the other hand, he has read a large number that struck him as being average or a little above, but not necessarily recommendable. This out of over 125 books. If I was that unenthusiastic about a genre, I wouldn't be reading it at all.

Allow me to repeat, the PPEN list on pp. 3-8 was very impressive. I have a little trouble envisioning what it will look like in another couple of years. A few additions: Swords of Lankmar by Leiber is S&S (as are all the 'Swords' books), and I think I would call The Flying Sorcerers Fantasy. I have noticed some people sending in PPENs for various children's fantasy novels, A Wrinkle In Time being the one I have noticed most often. Are you actively soliciting PPENs for this area too, or would you rather stick with adult fantasy/sf for the most part? ((I've been evaluating what I've been sent.)) Some children's fantasy is much better than a good deal of sf I have read.

Don't let people write in and say, "Gee, Gil, why do you include all those standard deviations? Who cares about them? They're so confusing, and complicated, and besides, all us deviates in fandom certainly aren't standard, not by a long shot." They tell us, in one simple number, whether there is general agreement on the PPEN you're giving us, or a knock-down drag-out fight, with pages being ripped out and tossed all over the stage. It was very informative to see that Le Guin's Rocannon's World was rated 73.30 with a standard deviation of only 8.80, meaning that most people probably thought it was good, while her The Left Hand of Darkness received an 83.29 but had a standard deviation of 16.52, meaning that about a sixth of the reviewers thought it one of the best they had ever read, while another sixth rated it a mere fairly good or below. So keep the standard deviations. They're informative, important, and most crucial of all, I like them. So there.

Will you ever let us know what happened to those categories you propounded for all the sf novels way back in GG #4, of which you have since printed one listing of books in that style, GG #10, p. 64. Why only there, and what happened to the idea? I can easily understand if it turned out to be too much work when added to The Project, and the fights when people start arguing about which book belongs in what category. But do let us know in any case.

((The SF Categories presented in G. G. #4 was only a works-in-progress piece informing everyone of the various classroom approaches being made. I'm still changing it around so I don't want contributions...just criticism/comment.))

Peter Presford, Ty Gwyn, Clwyd (Wales)

3rd April '78

I should think your listings contain only a small percentage of folk from the U. K. I wonder what sort of response we would get over here to such a scheme, and to what extent the final outcome would be? Would we see E. F. Russell jump from a 78.45% to an 82%+? Would we see Bob Shaw and Jim White appear in 80s and Brackett vanish to...?

There is no way we can foresee such trends; But it would be interesting to see how home-grown writers compare against the U. S. influx. Although we can't grumble, taking the top two places. Then five out of six lower down.

I must admit I was surprised to see The Hobbit in at no. 8. And a book like Thorns way down the list. Not surprising that The Hobbit is up there, but that it was placed there by S/F. fans. Perhaps it shows that fans are ruled by their hearts, and not so much by their heads as they try and make out?

Richard Bartucci, D. O., Saddle Brook General Hospital, 300 Market Street, Saddle Brook, New Jersey, 07662
27 May 1978

Robert Adams: Coming of the Horseclans (55) Well written but somewhat weak
Swords of the Horseclans (40) Post-Holocaust novels. Adams seems to deny the possibility of anyone rediscovering gunpowder, something that bellicose humanity wouldn't be likely to ever lose in its technological backsliding. He also exhibits a poisonous phobia of homosexuals.

S. Kye Boulton: Solo Kill (85) A collection of some excellent short stories from Analog, with some of the most fascinating characters (all non-human) I've ever read about.

F. Paul Wilson, D. O.: Healer (50) The only osteopathic physician presently writing SF has written a pretty poor book, especially in the light of his past work, notably "Wheels Within Wheels" in Analog a few years ago.

Frederik Pohl: Gateway (90) This book should win the Hugo at IguanaCon this year; it certainly got my vote. It's the most mature piece of SF I've seen in a long time, and the best thing that Pohl, one of the best SF authors, has ever done. Excellent plot, characterizations and writing.

Poul Anderson: The Man Who Counts (85) The former introduced the redoubtable Nicholas van Rijn and was originally titled War of the Wing-Men when first published in paperback; it now has the title it was born with when it appeared in Astounding, with a few insignificant deletions replaced. The latter is one of the classics of science fiction, too long out of print, which gave us Hugh Valland, a gentler and more human Immortal than ever Heinlein's Lazarus Long could be.

Brian Daley: The Doomfarers of Coramonde (80) Despite a cover that would turn off anyone but a Sword-n-Sorcery fanatic, Doomfarers is an excellent bit of SF/fantasy, something in the tradition of de Camp's and Pratt's The Incomplete Enchanter, and Ballantine Books would have done better to illustrate the cover with a scene from the book's prize section, in which a conjured-up M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier fights it out with a fire-breathing dragon. White phosphorous grenades against phlogiston--Whee!!!

Dave Wixon, Box 8600, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55408
28 June 1978

Congrats on a sort-of finished produce: The Project. Interesting that I Will Fear No Evil came in last on this list, although with one of the larger deviations. I've often been appalled at the strong emotional reactions that book arouses in so many. (And yet, I note that it had the highest number of readings on its page, and rated in the top 15 or so most-read....)

((Well, he is Heinlein.))

I also note that you published my PPEN list; this makes it occur to me that such a listing by person evaluating can be of some interest to others--that is, seeing a list of my evaluations tells other people about me, and so on--and vice-versa.

Pat Peterson's letter raised my eyebrows a little--and I think I need a clarification on the subject of slow readers. I have always assumed that people were slow readers either due to some mental incapacity, or (and I'm tempted to call this a sub-set of the same category) lack of interest in reading, and/or lack of practice in reading. So my reaction to an "easy reading list" question--particularly when phrased (as you said): "for students with interest in the genre but a problem in reading"--is (Beep-beep: non-sequitur)--or else to recommend comic books. Care to comment?

((Yes.))

As for Robert Blenheim feeling that Heinlein would fail as a writer out of the genre: bullshit! I suggest Mr. Blenheim knows not whereof he prattles. Heinlein is the author I have gone to read most of all. And I find it interesting that the one author who most reminds me of RAH, in terms of enjoyable, easy readability--involving, grabbing, flowing--is Louis L'Amour, who happens to be at the top of the western genre. It may will be a matter of taste: but as far as I can tell, RAH is a better writer than most, in the sense that he writes things I want to, and have, read over and over.... (And let me add something to further discredit Blenheim: I manage a bookstore, and I know that Heinlein's books continue to sell amazingly well, after all the years they've been around. Why? Not because the SF genre fans are still buying the same books over and over--but because the mass market public buys his work when they will pass over many other authors. It is for this reason that a large number of active SF fans will tell you that Heinlein was a major factor in leading them into the reading of SF. In short, Heinlein has demonstrated over and over that his work is immensely popular, as well as immensely influential--but then, perhaps Blenheim has something more esoteric in mind as an index of failure as a writer--perhaps failure to please Robert Blenheim is a category....)

Michael Kalen Smith, 533 Highlands, De Soto, Texas, 75115

26 July 1978

I'm going to be teaching an evening course in science fiction (adult-type) at the University of Texas at Dallas this fall--a six week course (I worked them up from three weeks), with two gen-yoo-ine sci-fi-writers on exhibit: Buddy Saunders and George Proctor, both of them friends and near-neighbors. I wanted to call the course "The Farther Vision: An Intelligent Introduction to Science Fiction", but the Extension Office people seem happier with something like "Monsters and Space-ships"...og. Anyway, six weeks is too brief a time to really do any class reading and discussion of novels, so I'm using one of Buddy's stories, "Back To The Stone Age", which is archetypical of several basic themes in sf (I hope you've read it; it was a Hugo nominee last year). I want to provide some handout lists of consumer-tested sf novels, however, and the best source I know is The Project. Some months ago, you sent me an issue of Guying Gyre (no. 7? 8?) which had the first computed results for, like Top Twenty novels and authors. Well, I've turned my office upside-down and my file cabinets inside-out and I am forced to confess I can't find the damned thing. Would it be possible for you to send me another copy of the relevant pages? Or updates, if you've done any? I'd like to repro the lists with explanations of the sample base (and credit, of course) for my class.

Secondly, I'm open to suggestions from your own teaching experience, although yours is high school--and therefore possibly with students more knowledgeable about sf than the adults I'll be dealing with. I get the impression that UTD's extension students tend to be repeaters who dabble in this and that each semester. Maybe I'll get a few hooked on the big sf....

The other project is a monograph I'm doing for the American Library Association (I'm a public librarian of some 11 years standing), tentatively titled "A Farther Vision: Where To Begin In Science Fiction Criticism" (hence the title I wanted to use for the course). The first draft I sent them was about 12,000 words, much of it heavily annotated bibliography. They liked it but they want it expanded to around 40,000 words--another six or eight months of work. But the reason I'm telling you all this, is that I'm very much in the market for suggestions of book titles in sf and fantasy criticism--especially if published by obscure or organizational presses (NEA, for example). I've hit all the trade presses (I think) and the 15 or so most active fannish presses (though I keep discovering new, small operations I never heard of which turn out to have been in business numerous years...). I deliberately excluded periodicals and journals from the first draft, but these too are being added--and here again, any critical articles of even middling significance in unindexed serials which you might come across would be of great use. I'll be combing through all the H. W. Wilson indices and suchlike, of course. Any ideas?

MICHAEL KALEN SMITH'S POPEN'S
(with his comments)
(and not in any particular order)

- 68 Asprin The Cold Cash War
- 75 Adams, Robert The Coming of The Horse-Clans
- 70 Anderson Long Way Home
- 40 Anderson & Kurland Ten Years To Doomsday
- 58 Kurland Transmission Error
- 44 Brunner Interstellar Empire
- Budrys
- 89 Michaelmas
- 80 Some Will Not Die
- 51 Carr Warlord of Kor
- Cherryh
- 65 Gate of Ivrel
- 63 Well of Shivan
- 76 Brothers of Earth
- 95 Hunter of Worlds
- 91 The Faded Sun: Kesrith
(I've developed a great enthusiasm for Cherryh's stuff--maybe because I think so highly of Le Guin's aliens.)
- 66 de Camp Hostage of Zir
- 57 de Camp & Pratt Great Fetish
- 75 Katz The First Kingdom (graphic)
- 50 Dickenson King and Joker
- Foster, Alan Dean
- 45 The End of the Matter
- 50 Orphan Star
- Foster, M. A.
- 52 The Gameplayers of Zan
- 58 Warriors of Dawn
- 60 Goulart Emperor of the Last Days
- Lake
- 45 Right Hand of Dextra
- 38 Wildings of Westron
- Lee, Tanith
- 70 Volkhavaar
- 50 Vazkor, Son of Vazkor
- 45 Quest For the White Witch
- 80 Leinster The Best of Murray Leinster
(One of the best in the series.)
- McCaffrey
- 66 Dinosaur Planet
- 65 To Ride Pegasus
- 55 Get Off The Unicorn
- 69 Myers Cloud Chamber
- Offutt
- 59 Sign of the Moon
- 77 My Lord Barbarian
- 60 Demon In The Mirror
- 89 Ryan Adolescence of P-1
(A program designer friend tripped out on this one completely.)
- 60 Sturgeon Starshine
- Wagner
- 60 Bloodstone
- 75 Dark Crusade
- 80 Darkness Weaves
- 65 Dark Angel's Shadow
- 29 Barbet Joan of Arc Replay
- Hogan
- 75 Inherit The Stars
- 79 The Genesis Machine
- Bradley
- 50 Stormqueen
(She's slipping.)
- 60 The Forbidden Tower
- 55 Shaw Wreath of Stars
- 65 Spruill Keepers of the Gate
- 70 Varley The Ophiuchi Hotline
- Donaldson
- 60 Lord Foul's Bane
- 66 The Illearth War
- 60 The Power That Preserves
(I may have missed some of this the first time around; I plan to reread it again in a couple of years.)
- 88 Anthony A Spell for Chameleon
(Best thing he's done in years; wonder if he stole this one.)
- 25 Bayley Grand Wheel
- 90 Benford, Gregory In the Ocean of Night
- 41 Bova The Multiple Man
- 85 Bryant Cinnabar
- 30 Chester Kioqa of the Wilderness
- 60 Compton Missionaries
- 50 Cooper Far Sunset
- 55 Cover Sound of Winter
- 91 Daley The Doomfarers of Coramonde

55 Darney <u>Hostage for Hinterland</u>	40 Davidson <u>Peregrine: Primus</u> (Very disappointing.)
65 Dick <u>A Scanner Darkly</u>	50 Dickson <u>Time Storm</u>
70 Dick & Zalazny <u>Deus Irae</u>	
Farmer	Haldeman, Joe
40 <u>The Lavalite World</u>	80 <u>Mindbridge</u>
39 <u>The Dark Design</u>	85 <u>All My Sins Remembered</u>
89 Kangilaski <u>Seeking Sword</u>	60 Lafferty <u>Apocalypses</u>
51 Laubenthal <u>Excalibur</u>	60 Laumer <u>Bolo</u>
86 McIntyre <u>Dreamsnake</u>	70 Moffitt <u>Jupiter Theft</u> (A "5" for the cover.)
Pohl	77 Pournelle <u>The Mercenary</u>
95 <u>Gateway</u>	69 Simak <u>Mastodonia</u>
80 <u>Man Plus</u>	
58 Robinson, Spider <u>Callahan's Cross- time Saloon</u>	Tiptree
35 van Vogt <u>The Anarchistic Collosus</u>	70 <u>Up The Walls Of The World</u>
55 Wilhelm <u>Where Late The Sweet Birds Sang</u>	80 <u>Star Songs Of An Old Primate</u>
(I wasn't that impressed.)	72 Watson, Ian <u>The Embedding</u>
	72 Biggle <u>Silence Is Deadly</u>

UNIT OUTLINE FOR SIX-WEEK COURSE, INTRODUCTION TO SCIENCE FICTION
prepared by Michael Kalen Smith

- 1.) General introduction: What science fiction is, what it isn't; various attempts to define SF. Distinctions (valid?) between "science fiction" and "fantasy." How SF is perceived (popular stereotypes, academic hostility, etc.); adult vs. "children's" literature. Basic types of SF and fantasy ("hard" vs. "soft" science, sword & sorcery, etc.), and basic recurring themes. How much of the class has read SF before? At what age? Pre-judgements?
- 2.) Historical survey: When did real SF first appear (conflicting opinions)? 19th century precursors (Verne, Haggard, Conan Doyle, etc.), early 20th century (Burroughs, Eddington, etc.). Beginning of "modern" period with H. G. Wells, appearance of pulps, Hugo Gernsback and Amazing. "Golden Age" of SF, 1930s, to watershed year of 1940. Major authors, types of writing, influence of pulp medium on style and form, popular attitudes, ghetto-ization. Suggested reading list of best works pre-1940.
- 3.) Survey since 1940: Appearance of the Big Names--Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke, Sturgeon, Kornbluth, numerous others. Role of John W. Campbell and Astounding in up-grading SF as literature. Post W. W. II: Collapse of pulps, shift to book publishing (effects on the genre), paperback explosion, appearance of major authors who started as fans. "New Wave" and British influence in the U. S.; "out of the ghetto." Rediscovery of SF by college students via Heinlein and Tolkien. Suggested reading list of best works since 1940.
- 4.) Guest: George W. Proctor, author and editor of Lone Star Universe (anthology), among others. Where is SF going? Best new authors, etc. Special problems faced by writer of SF and fantasy not common to other literary forms; appearance of new themes, new influences on the genre. Lengthy Q. & A. by class. Assignment to read "Back To The Stone Age" by Jake Saunders, for following week. Discussion of what to look for in the story.
- 5.) Guest: Jake Saunders, author of "Back To The Stone Age" (which first appeared in Lone Star Universe), among others. His views on where SF is going, etc. Detailed dissection by the class of his story, his discussion of it; how class members interpreted it, how Saunders reacts to that, etc. (NOTE: This story is a good "lab specimen" as it displays a number of basic SF themes and styles.) Lengthy Q. & A. by class.

6.) Provisional quest (if available): Mike Presley, professional SF and fantasy artist. Miscellaneous topics--special relationship of SF with art and film; impact of big-box-office SF films (as compared to B-pictures of the 1950s) on the genre; new respectability. Overview of science fiction "fandom" and its unique characteristics; SF conventions and organizations. Fringe groups and related activities--Society for Creative Anachronism, comic book collectors, shaky relationship with occultism, etc. Suggestion to class that subsequent course dealing in more detail with selected major authors and works might be useful....

NOTE: Emphasis within each weekly unit may depend on specific interests and previous experience of class....

Nick Polak, 213 Arricola Avenue, Apartment A, Saint Augustine, Florida, 32084
Income Tax Day, 9 p. m.

Many things to say on Guying Gyre 7/8, even if it is a year old. One of the main reasons I like it, I think. The topics under discussion are pretty timeless--literary criticism and the like. I'll include some ratings on a separate sheet.

To comment on several aspects of your editorial...the rating system, at least to the best of my limited understanding, seems to be based more on personal like/dislike than literary merit. ((True!)) If this is the case, than I can't see any major objections to lumping your students' evaluations in with fandom's. It seems to me that knowing what one likes is not limited to fandom, further: I don't feel that, by and large, fans are better read than your students. Many fans are in high school. Most, judging by the criticism that most often appears (obviously excepting D'Amassa, Whitaker, and the literate minority of fandom), wouldn't know good, literate writing if it fell on them, beyond being able to differentiate between Gor and Wonderland.

This, I think, is what bothers me most about the rating system (although I praise you highly for attempting it, believe me, it's a hell of a job). I don't know where the individual reviewers are coming from (to use a dreadful phrase). It's all well and good to say that Pangborn's A Mirror For Observers is one of the best books I've ever read (as I did), but what good is that judgement going to do someone whose idea of great literature is (to use a mundane example) Irving Wallace?

Even if twenty people review a given book, how do I know that nineteen of them didn't put down Beyond Apollo, a book I consider amongst the best ever written, in the middle, saying "This book is terrible (because) is't depressing."?

I would also take exception to your statement, "Of course the fact that few read a certain book probably indicates its lack of quality/redability." C'mon, Gil. How many people have actually read Proust's Recherche du Temps Perdu? I haven't, yet, tho I hope to, but that is one of the classic works of literature. More often a lack of ratings would indicate to me (at any rate) that a book was somewhat inaccessible (o. o. p., for instance, or in translation), or that the reader was lazy (as with me and Proust, or Flaubert, or Anais Nin, to name just three great writers whom I haven't the discipline to approach). How many people who rated Dhalgren poorly did so because they hadn't the diciplin to finish it? God knows, I'm no Constant Reader, but I've made ti through four times with only a minimal amount of difficulty. I don't think the book is a masterpiece of literature: Joyce and Donleavy have both written more successful stylistic attempts. However, it is one of my favorites (which accounts for my high rating) and, I feel, one of the most powerful, well-thought-out, deeply-developed, harrowing and moving books written within the genre.

((Which great SF books are not available or not in print?))

A couple of quick asides to Buck Coulson: I read a lot. Generally 3-6 books per week, depending upon the length. I also go to school. This requires a good deal of reading. I have been doing both for quite a while. While he may have a phenomenal memory, for which I envy him, I couldn't, if asked, recall more than a

very basic plot from anything read more than six months ago. With the exception of certain, very good, very important books, most of which I've re-read, (DHALGREN, for example, or ULYSSES, or FEAR OF FLYING). I find reading a very ephemeral thing -- pleasure for the moment, to be forgotten if not moving. I don't think I'm alone in approaching reading this way, so if one wanted to be able to recall plots/characters etc on demand, I would think 3x5s a very good idea.

For the sake of history, George Eliot wrote SILAS MARNER (along with THE MILL ON THE FLOSS). Although an accomplished woman of letters, she will probably go down as one of England's dullest writers. However, (as Don D'Ammassa will no doubt agree), she belongs to a school of writers hardly known for their thrilling adventure tales, eh wot? (But to forget who wrote SILAS MARNER, and then criticize people with ailing memories is a bit gauche, isn't it, Buck?

Don (the sage of Providence) makes some very cogent points which bear repeating. Particularly: "Some SF is more rewarding than some mainstream, and vice versa. But the bulk of SF is average difficulty escape fiction..." Absolutely. And let's try to remember that. SF is no better (as a whole) and no worse, than mainstream fiction. It has its experimenters and its hacks. It has its great novels and its dreck, just as does mainstream. This constant image of ghettoization and/or superiority really gets me aggravated. Those who criticize the 'new wave' (though God knows there's been at least three in the past ten years) are the same that attacked Dos Pasos in the thirties, Mailer and Salinger in the fifties, and Plath and Sexton in the sixties (just to pull isolated examples out of a literary hat), or the ones who criticised Miles in the fifties, and the current British new wave in the last two years (to resort to my home territory, music). People can be afraid of change and reality inside or outside the field with equal ease, regardless of whether their name is del Rey or Smith.

I'm trying not to laugh too hard at Ken Huff's "treatise." I'm assuming that he has not read much, either inside or outside the genre, as certain of his statements are so non-sequiturish: "Science fiction, as literature, is almost worthless" ; " (In science fiction) the author is more concerned with getting the story done as soon as possible, and in writing a story the reader won't have to think about" ; etc.

I would suggest that Huff read some of the following, and then reconsider his statement on the 'value' of science fiction:

BRAVE NEW WORLD by Huxley
1984 by Orwell

WAR WITH THE NEWTS by capek
V and GRAVITY'S RAINBOW by Pynchon
THE DISPOSSESSED by Le Guin
BEYOND APOLLO by Malzberg

A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS by Pangborn
DHALGREN by Delany
CAMP CONCENTRATION by Disch
THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE by Dick
THE FEMALE MAN by Russ

and that's just a dozen or so. All novels of significant value, both as literature and as entertainment. All fulfilling the Aristotelian precepts of art. (And I could go on and on, and so, Gil, could you, I'm sure.)

As to the second statement, it's so laughable that it's unnerving. A hack is a hack is a hack, and SF has just as high a percentage of them as the mainstream, as does detective fiction, as does western fiction, although perhaps not as high as romance fiction.

Further, he then proceeds to call for more Le Guins and Clarkes. How he is able to lump these two together as "much, in the big literary scheme of things" is beyond me. I'll grant that Le Guin is a fine writer, but Clarke? Give me a break. With the possible exception of "Against the Fall of Night," the man has consistently failed to portray real human emotions and character development. What about Delany, Disch, Ellison, Silverberg? Christ, even Jerry Pournelle (*ack*) writes more believable characters than Clarke.

And speaking of fuggheaded comments, we can't skip Stu Gilson...I have read his paragraph on Delany (p40) three times and still can't make sense of it. Is he saying great literature is great because of its intricacy, the quality he condemns in DHALGREN?

"For it, like other new-wave works raises questions which are unanswerable..." What? Thought-provocation is now solely a new-wave quality? I suppose the moral dilemmas proposed by Dante, Swift, Shakespeare, Milton, to name a few, were all quite pat.

And what supposed unanswerable questions does DHALGREN raise, Stu? Where is Bellona? Should I read the narrative or the diary first? Oh, that's right. I forgot...you didn't read it. But how nice of you to dismiss it for us. God forbid we should be forced to think for ourselves. No Stu...don't read DHALGREN (or TRITON, or, for that matter, anything) you'll be much happier.

I hate to upset Lynne Holdom, but does she realize that only 5% of all Americans read anything besides newspapers and magazines?

To Dennis Jarog: TRITON was not a sequel to DHALGREN. It was written during the writing of DHALGREN, and has little in common with it, besides a place name. And I resent your use of the word perversions to describe the sexual nature of DHALGREN, most strongly.

To Craig Anderson: Have you read THE SHINING? It's even better than 'SALEM'S LOT and CARRIE, and soon to be a movie directed by Stanley Kubrick.

((Later on I received this letter from Nick dated 5/6/78 regarding GG 9/10.))

It's funny how radically different my listing of 'favorite authors' would be from the ones on p 9. I notice that Malzberg, Disch, Russ, and Pangborn don't even appear, and they would be four of my top five (with Delany), and I could go on and on, but let's not fool ourselves: fandom, taken as a whole, is no better read than the American public, no matter how they may pat themselves on the back and profess to superior intellects.

To Robert Blenheim: c'mon...If Heinlein is not a good writer out of the genre, then he is not a good writer within it either. You can't have it both ways. Good writing is good writing, and sf has its share of it in equal proportions to any other genre, or to writing as a whole. Saying otherwise is 'ghetto'-izing the genre, and, for god's sake, we've stopped that by now, haven't we? (As an aside, I consider Heinlein to be a gifted writer of juveniles, and a generally mediocre writer of adult sf. He has had his success of course: MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS, DOUBLE STAR, and TEFL come to mind immediately, but by and large mediocre.)

To Fred Jacobcic: You've got to be didding!!! "Classics remain classics because of the tradition to keep calling them classics." If you really believe that, Fred, then I feel sorry for you. Classics remain so because of their universal appeal. They truly speak to "all people." They contain universal emotions, problems, dilemmas and their possible solutions. The qualms Hamlet, (to choose a very simple example), feels about committing himself to a given course of action, whether it's avenging his father, killing himself, or professing his love for Ophelia, are the qualms we all feel when called upon to make a serious commitment, for which we are not prepared. Still Jacobcic: "You cannot enjoy literature if you have to think you way through it." Oh, good grief.

ED CHANBERS, 140 Edgewood Ave., Audubon, NJ 08106

3/16/78

((after an excellent list of PPENS:) Notice that I considered THE DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN one book and Amber and Darkover many books. Reason: I thought all the pern books are basically the same book, telling a continual tale. So are the Amber books, but I wanted to rate them separately. I feel that NINE PRINCES IN AMBER ((ZELAZNY)) is a little slow in the beginning where Corwin is beginning to remember some things at Fiona's place. GUNS has most of the good action in it, and most of the major characters are introduced. Everything happens there. Dara is met and then she leaves by the end of the book. SIGN OF THE UNICORN comes in at a close second. That's when they bring brand through. Hand of Oberon is next after Nine Princes and way down at the end is Courts. If you have read the serialized version in GALAXY, Zelazny is losing his touch. The writing style was completely different and didn't come close till part three. And the end was not enough. I want more.

It's about time i replied to GUYING GYRE #7/8.

Yes, i look forward to your averages and standard deviation numbers in GG #9. These numbers could be used as guidelines by other SF instructors around the country. And fans will be interested becuz THE PROJECT is like a refined Locus or Analog Poll.

I enjoyed the stuff on T.B. Swann. And the material proves that GG WILL have a life after THE PROJECT.

The letters were absorbing as usual, and i can see i stirred up a hornets' nest with my LOC in GG # 5/6. I realize my views on many things are eccentric, but Don D'Amassa's comparing me to Adolf Hitler really took me for a loop! Let me try to clarify some things, for Don and everybody else.

I admit to subjectivity and gut-reaction in my statements in GG #5/6. I'm NOT a critic. I don't have the background to BE one. And my interest in the "sercon" side of fandom has been steadily diminishing over the last two years. I know the value of criticism. But i've come to the point in my OWN life at which SF's chief value to me is entertainment. I react almost passively to the growth and change of the field. I read what i like, pass over what i don't like, and rarely talk about SF at cons or in apas and zines. I admire people like D'Amassa. In fact, i envy D'Amassa's far-reaching familiarity with the field. But that kind of criticism that he brings to his fan writing just isn't where I'M at at the present time. I don't discuss or analyze in my LOCS anymore. I natter; i generalize; i grouch; i elate; i let my immediate consciousness spill out onto paper with no justification, no argument to back it up. The ultimate end of this trend is terrible. But i'm hopeful at least that i'll stop myself and maybe turn around a bit before THAT happens.

But even without that, D'Amassa draws uncalled-for conclusions. The fact is that Elwood, Silverberg, Carr, and Hoskins DO publish new wave stuff. At least, it's new wave to me. My definition of new wave may be broader than D'Amassa's however.

HG Wells was pessimistic for the near future, true, but he was ultimately optimistic for the long haul in most of his fiction. Note how the survivors of the holocausts in "The War of the Worlds" and "The War in the Air" gained great wisdom and were able to start off on the right foot to build a potentially more viable and worthwhile society.

Yes, i have biases and prejudices. I admit it. I doubt that D'Amassa is completely free of such things himself. Some people may be. But i don't think that's necessarily a good thing. As for calling Ms. LeGuin a "knee jerk liberal," i didn't think any specifics were necessary. Whether one agrees that knee jerk liberalism is good or bad, i thought that it was obvious that i was referring to. Apparently i was wrong however.

To Arthur Hlavaty let me say that. By "kneejerk liberalism" i wasn't referring to her politics but her symbology, the way she presents types of people, groups, and the milieux of cultures and lifestyles. Her stories are filled with noble, self-sacrificing environmentally-concerned "hippies" and villainous, power-hungry establishmentarians. Perhaps "kneejerk liberalism" was a poor choice of words. "Radical chic" would have been more precise. I don't condemn this. I'm prone to it myself to an extent. But i often laff at the way Ms. LeGuin sees and presents people and groupings. She takes all these stereotypical symbols so seriously. But it's one of her few faults as a writer and a minor one at that. Did D'Amassa and Hlavaty not notice that i generally praised Ursula LeGuin and her writings? She's one of the finest SF writers of the decade. And i've long said so.

To Bruce Arthurs let me repeat that yes i HAVE heard of Carr's UNIVERSE series, have READ more than one book in the series, and DO consider it to be weighted in favor of the new wave. I haven't yet had the guts to pick up a Lin Carter anthology, but i like the STELLAR series that debuted since i LOC-ed GG #4. I don't consider IT to new-wave-oriented. And i hope it continues.

In short, i stand by all my statements in GG # 5/6.

Notice that the general level ((of the PPENS I sent you)) is pretty high -- up in the 70's. This is an artifact, for the most part. I've become a bit more selective, and will simply drop a book if it looks too bad. The jump in price of paperback SF books may have something to do with it. I buy fewer books and read more from the public library, which means that I drop a higher percentage after a chapter or two, returning them to the library for the next sucker to unluckily pickup. Thus the expected 30's and 40's are under-represented on the list. I could run a long list of bad fantasies, atrocious sword & sorcery, or incoherent occult/horror, all under 45. But I don't like to give a rating on a book I haven't finished ((you can give that kind a 15 -- and I'll just forget it)), and I was not really impelled to complete THE OMEN, or STAR FIRE, or about five recombinant DNA plague medical disaster novels.

Two disappointments on the list, Russ TWO OF THEM and Tiptree's UP THE WALLS OF THE WORLD. Both writers are capable of so much better work. One really pleasant surprise, McIntyre's DREAMSNAKE. Solidly constructed world, strongly developed characters -- better than I expected.

Some of the books I've liked didn't have much in the way of character, but the background world is so well-done and interesting that it carries the story by itself. I don't really care what happens to the protagonist, but I'd like to see more stories set in that particular -- locale. This emphasises the "game design" secondary universe aspect of generating SF stories. Examples: David Lake's WALKERS ON THE SKY (terraformed Luna surrounded by layers of force-field skins to hold in the air); Vernor Vinge's THE WITLING (genetic trait for teleportation widespread among not only humans but almost all higher-grade mammals on the planet -- social structure of a nation in which teleportation is accepted and customary). Notice, McIntyre's DREAMSNAKE also has a well-done and believable world (genetic manipulators in a post-nuclear world- PLUS people. ((Jack Chalker seems to have written some books you'd enjoy.))

The sort of story I usually reject is one in which the characters die, literally or figuratively, about the middle of the book and their souls all go drifting up to join some oversoul or great glowing black cloud in the lanes between the galactic arms. This is surprisingly common among writers who can't seem to think of a better resolution. You find it in CLICKWHISTLE, or Hayden Howard's ESKIMO INVASION, or Dann's STARHIKER, or (also) Tiptree's UP THE WALLS OF THE WORLD. Sometimes the writer can get away with it, but it's tricky, shifting from earth to heaven, and a whole new set of rules, when a story is well underway. Gordon Dickson didn't pull it off in TIME STORM. On the other hand, David Lindsay did pull it off spectacularly in VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS. Richard Lupoff reverses the pattern in SWORD OF THE DEMON: descending from the heavens to the mundane earth, as gods descend to avatars; and he makes it work. Question of mood, question of style.



ian covell, 2 copgrove close, berwick hills, middlesbrough, cleveland,
england, ts3 7bp

1/7/78

received today the combined issues 9 and 10 of GUYING GYRE, much food for thought and a lot of anguish it caused too. am i so very very different to so many others? is LORD OF THE RINGS such a fantastic book instead of the insipid, boring, shallow and unrewarding juvenile crap i adjudged it? i will not accept that WATERSHIP DOWN is a good book. by no stretch of the imagination is this prissy, sententious and bathetic crock of shit a worthwhile work -- that damn rabbit with the halo turned my stomach; i agree with a critic, it is brand-names that count nowadays, not quality. WATERSHIP DOWN if some kind soul hasn't spewed the plot onto your lap by now is this teeny tiny tale of real cute bunny rabbits who are really quite neat-o and much much nicer than nasty humans and their killer pets and they have this like quest, yeah, just like the old ones used to be, only this is like real rabbits, man, with a real keen leader who is this like genius and...bugger it.

anyway, there is no way my mark scheme is going to equate to this set of statistics, i know that one of my favourite books (MURDER IN MILLENNIUM VI) hasn't been read by more than a few hundred people and there's little chance many taking part in this survey have read it. it appears this is biased toward the mass-market books, at least for the top two places, quantity not quality.

sad to see LATHE OF HEAVEN not adjudged as good as DISPOSSESSED -- which should have been in the nineties but then...anyway, i could go on commenting on this rather disheartening chart for many many pages, but i will try to stick to various comments made in the mag. this letter should include a list of 'corrections' and addendums that you may already have, plus a list of my own recent acquisitions and comments on them (books i have bought in the last nine months or so...). i am fairly certain i haven't sent numbers on any of these. i hope not, anyway.

your student PPENs look much more to my taste, though realistically, no GOR book should be near the top and the total absence of DISPOSSESSED is sad...and how in the world koontz enters the list -- especially with those two potboilers...far rather his best book ever, THE CRIMSON WITCH....

p21: buzz dixon does something with THE STARS.../TIGER similar to my own view on bob shaw's ORBITSVILLE. i wrote a review -- published in robert whitaker's THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK some years back --that proved in some pages that bob shaw had done at least two things with this work: first, that he had produced a work that functioned on two levels, orbitsville was not only an artifact but also a symbolic womb-eye that took in races and people and adapted them for evolution by wiping out aggression and competition, having taken the galaxy's children back through childhood, birth and down the evolutionary ladder, it turned out an incomprehensible new life form. shaw was saying something: secondly, shaw was for a long time obsessed with the poem "the golden journey to samarkand" by james elroy flecker, something so powerful in him that he used one of its lines (misquoted) as the title of one of his stories (the line is '...and isles where good men rest', his title was '...and isles where good men lie' and as i once said to him, that freudian slip said something else about the story), he also quoted bits in other stories; anyway, if looked at in a certain way, ORBITSVILLE is actually the poem written large, as the direct similarity of the paraphrased last lines in the novel hint; i think that is why this poem no longer appears in his work, he wrote it out of his system.

buzz seems to have used something quite like this -- and also like knight's look at blish's story 'common time' (reverse orgasm, said knight). the actual analogy of THE STARS MY DESTINATION to a growth from birth to adulthood and beyond gets tenuous at times and may in fact only exist by reason of the fact that someone must develop in a story, and that is always analogous to a change of state. but he makes some intriguing points about the possible layers that may exist. be interesting to know what bester thought of this review...

p 29: robert blenheim: I somehow agree that heinlein would probably not succeed if he was forced into the mainstream, but here i would like to point out that moorcock calls le guin a 'pre-intellectual author' and declares that she writes out those

things an intellectual writer figures out before he starts to write. we need several kinds of authors, i fail to see why every author must fulfil various concrete criteria. so he could not fit in the mainstream, so what?

and if he loves zelazny i trust his teeth curdled on BRIDGE OF ASHES, a potboiler if ever there was one and a bad bad bad potboiler at that. zelazny should have taken a sabbatical at some point and left the field, perhaps, for a short time to determine just what he could do and what not. then he should have written less but better.

p 31: jakobcic: i went through this letter nodding sagely, glad to find i wasn't the only nut who could see virtues in 'traditional' sf. i never put down a book till i have read it, at least, that is, i try always to read a book without delving into other areas of fiction; i could not, eg, read two novels at once, and i think it is a fair insult in some ways to adapt such a practice...his reply to levine: true about classics, also, it is like the current state of law in the u k at the minute, everyone is so damned scared of appearing to be not actively against what appears to be any threat to the established order that they either stay silent or yell support for repressive measures; h r t brandt: the best work by miller was his novelette length work and it is a terrifying shame that more of his short work isn't collected -- even against miller's wishes if need by... and why is not the superb collection 'conditionally human' listed among the top twenty books of all time? why have extravaganzas of taste and humanity like 'dark benediction' (with an incredible joke on farmers and salesmen inserted) and 'blood bank' and 'dumb waiter' and the delicious 'big joe and the nth generation (it takes a thief'. marvellous work all overshadowed by that bore-in of a book, 'canticle';...hrt arthurs: how odd, first he declares that -- in a very nicely turned phrase -- each genre should be judged in the same way as an individual is judged against society-at-large -- then he uses a phrase like " i don't have sufficient appreciation of dick, either..." at least, that is what i think he means, it is rather confusing at that point... the dickson book is 'outposter' not either 'the outposters' or 'the outworlders'... he doesn't exactly come up with any books he considers 'classics' whatever he says, going by the listing; his highest marks go to space operas and he assigns 'dispossessed' only 62 points, and somehow i know that no pournelle book can be better than any le guin, even such a klutzy nothing as 'left hand of darkness' but when it beats even the champ...well, i figure jakobcic can talk it but he somehow don't listen to his words.

p 40: I don't see how cox can reconcile his own admission that bug jack barron' is 'intimidating and calculatedly offensive' (even if his confused sentence referred more to 'the men in the jungle' i think it suits barron anyway) with his objections to 'filthy piece of new wave garbage'. personally i think the book was just garbage on a strictly plot/character level: the evolution of the story was contrived, the ending bathetic and unreal and melodramatic, the general tone that of someone playing around with the typing keys with one eye on the increasing page length (more money) and the other on a random dictionary (that's a dictionary which tells you when to slam in one more plot-coincidence, the people in barron are badly drawn, their relationships portrayed in hack style, and aside from its fuck scenes and dirty words, the book is just plain bad.

p 41/ d gary grady's comment about the applicability of standards of worth against those of entertainment make good sense, they should be condensed and engraved on the foreheads of all rigid teachers around, and all critics too. p44/ after his masterly summing up of stupid attitudes, gary then proceeds to come out with the phrase 'i read a lot of crap for entertainment' which just about negates his whole argument. now there'll always be the counter-argument that if entertainment means crap, who wants entertainment? (and yes, you're right, i can't stand books like 'crime and punishment')

dan dankovic/46: i will not take the attack on cullen's book without rebuke. dankovic is an idiot who mistook what the book was going to be and misunderstood cullen's point. the book (which i intend to comment on in my lists further on) is a virtual masterpiece of the erotic imagination; it has bestiality, true, and its foibles sometimes verge on the insane, but it is all part of a package that is a complete imagined fantasy world, a strong plot, neat character and brilliant ending. it

is all love, and i guess that's why some people hate it. anyway, he then lowgraded 'akers' and highgraded the hack 'howard' so i don't put much trust in his judgment anyway. he also likes goulart, so that must seal his doom. he also likes john norman and lem. if i had to characterise the basic difference -- seemingly-- between my own view and that of mr. dankovic it is that i prefer romance, joy, happiness, equality, involvement, and the dissemination of pleasure against his own narrow bigoted hate-filled world of violence, crude character and purple prose.

rick knoblock/50: firstly, i think rick is unfortunately up the creek about his views on men and women, and secondly his remarks about dead artists and their loss unhappily recall that only after a lot of reticence did i manage to pen a letter to james blish, and then found out that he had died three days before i sent it. i have never been so confused as at that instant. no more chances, no more possibilities, no more anything at all.

maness/57: from what i gather, space opera sells because it is virtually indistinguishable from so many other genres. adventure, spy, westerns, romances, graustarkians, etc. this is, thinking quickly, the wrong attitude to take to sf. all sf should be outer-oriented, not pulp hackwork. if adventure sf is the most accessible, that is probably why we are still judged by 'flash gordon' analogies by the mainstream -- our predominant output then is lowlevel star trek stuff and the critics were always right. personally, i have this mental division that somehow differentiates between 's f' and 'scifi' and 'specific' and 'science fiction'. grades. i (want to?) believe that anyone who appreciates 'the dispossessed' on his first entrance from the mainstream will like sf, if he doesn't, he never will. anyway, i plan to use it as an introduction...

maness also proves in his listing something i meant to mention earlier: that when people get to listing an author's output together with points, these points tend to cluster within a very narrow band of numbers. perhaps 10 or 20 difference at the very very outside. in such a situation maybe the most interesting thing to discover would be those works which do not conform to such a general pattern. are authors so very stereotyped in their output that is, do they have a certain standard that varies very little?

65/ hank heath: exactly one comment on that 'porn' thing. be wary you do not confuse 'pornography' --(defined in our country as 'that which is likely to deprave and corrupt', which in my estimation includes such thing as religious training in schools, wrestling and boxing on tv, and war stories in children's comics) and 'erotica' which i define as that which depicts sexual activity in a joyous or enhancing way, ie promotes the establishment of a more open attitude to sexual matter masturbation is not pornography, even though hank hints some might consider it so. violence is the ultimate pornography, that's all.

i agree with paul meyer also on parts -- i like those works which give me pleasure. i know too many which expect me to take pleasure from pain (reasoning: a book produces an effect. this effect is either pleasurable or painful. i would have thought people wrote works designed to promote a sense of well-being. either way, no-one ? reads a work in order to extract pain from it. thus the contents must be designed to promote pleasure and the need to read on. somehow i can't see sadistic torture -- john norman's pornography; or the depiction of a slow and painful death -- russ's 'we who are...'; or etc as fiction which should appeal to anyone) and i won't. not for anyone.

7/boutillier: "i don't have the background to be (a critic)" ye gods, what are we doing to ourselves, what background do you need to judge a book. are only those who can put down high-faluting words with myriad references to swift, shakespeare and the 'neo-classicist school of modern authorship' (etc add nausea) to be considered 'critics'? a critic is someone dissatisfied with a situation, or at least 'not entirely satisfied'. an idealist is an opinionated critic and a cynic a failed idealist -- well, maybe not failed, just another stage of it. but by god, critics do not need backgrounds like some sort of degree in psychology. all they need is an emotional reaction.

((selections from)) covell listing: 24.vii.77 on:

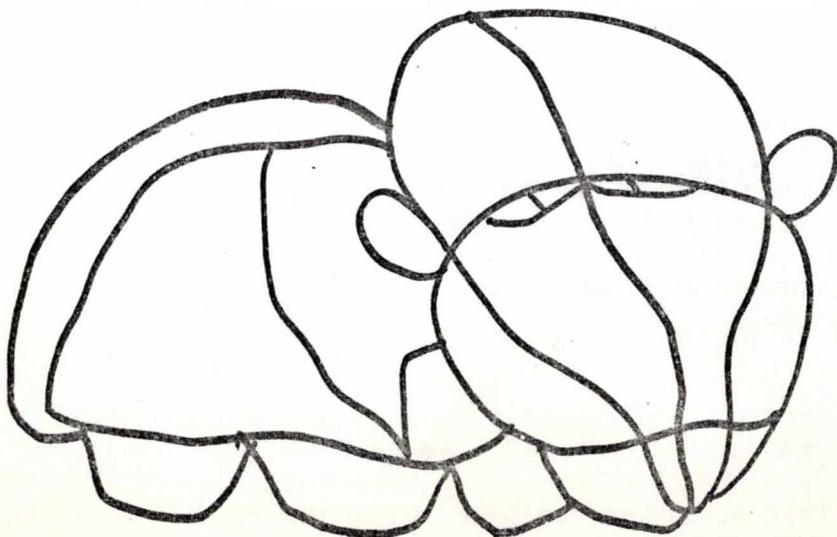
- mz bradley: forbidden tower (45) -- how are the mighty fallen. a vignette extruded to unmanageable length and full of preachy sections that enhance nothing in the book since they are designed to example present-day attitudes. when she gets off the feminist schtick she may get back her old form but not with this bit of fluff.
- j brunner: catch a falling star (72) -- the closest thing to a vance novel i have ever seen, until the situation overpowers the characters and the ending almost mars it all.
- cj cherryh: hunter of worlds (52) -- a lot of background, but a poor plot and a disappointment to those of us invigorated by 'gate of ivrel'.
- seamus cullen: astra and flondrix (96) -- a splendid, emotive, involving and joyful tale of lustful fancies both male and female, bestiality, group sex, etc etc. complete with really WEIRD dwarves, an enchanted princess and prince, curses galore, daemonic bargains and humour by the bucketful. touching. splendid. marvellous in every sense and so full of love you walk away smiling, blinking tears at the final scene. great great, not a book you'll hear more than a few comments about but a classic of fantasy -- erotic or otherwise.
- eric ericson: the sorceror (88) -- another you'll hear little of. black magic in present good opening, good development, well characterised and well presented. scary sometimes, pleasant, others. one of the best near-horror books i have ever read.
- curme gray: murder in millenium vi (100) -- i donate this mark for several reasons. first, it is the most totally committed sf books i have ever read, it makes no compromise whatsoever, the reader has to read every line to get its meaning. it is humorous (when they try to carry the body while simultaneously keeping their eyes on the leader), it is passionate, it is perceptive, it is intriguing and involving and realistic in every degree. it has a lightness of touch and a feeling for language that is beautiful, it engages every sense and fulfils every hope i had. brilliant. (and now a plea: i had to borrow my copy off bob shaw to read it. would any kind american like to donate -- or whatever -- his copy of this superlative work, reading copy only or not to this bereft englishman?)
- joe haldeman: mindbridge (96) -- a deceptively slim book with a message that could rock the world if only people will listen (perfect communication brings perfect peace). the amount of work done in background is staggering and it comes across with ease and grace. only the slim character spoils it a little but there's enough to satisfy.
- f herbert: children of dune: (45) -- an incredibly poor climax to the sequence. everyone acts unreasonably, situations predominate above character. a nothing book with a nothing set of characters doing nothing actions. The deaths are easy and the lays and the stupid destruction. silly for the most part.
- cecilia holland: floating worlds (25) and i give it that purely for its size. somewhere in this morass of gothic stupidity and padding there must be both story and character. but i didn't find it and having an ambiguous ending after wading through 500 pgs of the morass of kinky rubbish in this (actually non sf) work really put the mockers on. i do not want to guess what happened, i want the author to take enough trouble to work out the problem for herself.
- l niven: a world out of time (86) -- the best niven novel i ever read. bitty but has good rationale.
- f pohl: man plus: (29) -- an incomprehensibly popular book, even winning awards. the bit about picking the new man at last minute is as reasonable now as it was when they yanked the extra neighbour's kid into the garden-built rocketship for a quick trip to the moon. everyone acts in the most stupid way possible even though this is supposed to be an up to date right-on establishment. they have psychologists who are so dumb they don't check on the stability of this indispensable man. ((There is so much more, but no more room.))

CATCH-UPS AND THANK-YOUS

You've no doubt noted that there are very few individual listings of PPENs in this issue. Their omission was not due to my lack of desire to include them. But the locs this Time were so interesting and the material to be included so diverse, it just wouldn't all fit. I did use every PPEN which arrived. Afterwords, I placed them in a humongus pile and asked students (who didn't feel like reading on certain days) to count up the numbers each person turned in and merely list them. After I got the letters refiled and THEN rechecked the listings, I realized that many "errors" had crept in. First names were missing, last names were written so poorly I couldn't figure out who they were, some names appeared two or three times (because of several contributions or double countings) etc. Most of this had been straightened out. I have decided to list all that remain (except those which only list one PPEN contrib) which have arrived since GG 5/6 and have not since appeared in a subsequent issue. Please let me know if you were inadvertantly left out or...whatever. THANK YOU ONE AND ALL FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. MORE, PLEASE!!

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Karl Ploran 124	Christine Kulyk 84	Bliss 3
Marty Massoglia 425	Lorna Toolis 21	Noble 9
Wooster, MM 9	Michael Lee 33	Bartucci 9
Allan Chen 165	Robert Runte 42	Lyle Tucker 119
Joanne Burger 170	Steve George 28	Wally Stoelting 166
doug barbour 259	Robert Weir 17	M M Keller 3
Glenn Garrett 60	David Stuart 4	O'Donnell-Ballon 15
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		Bud Webster 113
		David Shank 2
		JR Christopher 10
		Van Ikin 23
		Dave Wixon 9
		BT Jeeves 7
		Keith Justice 49

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