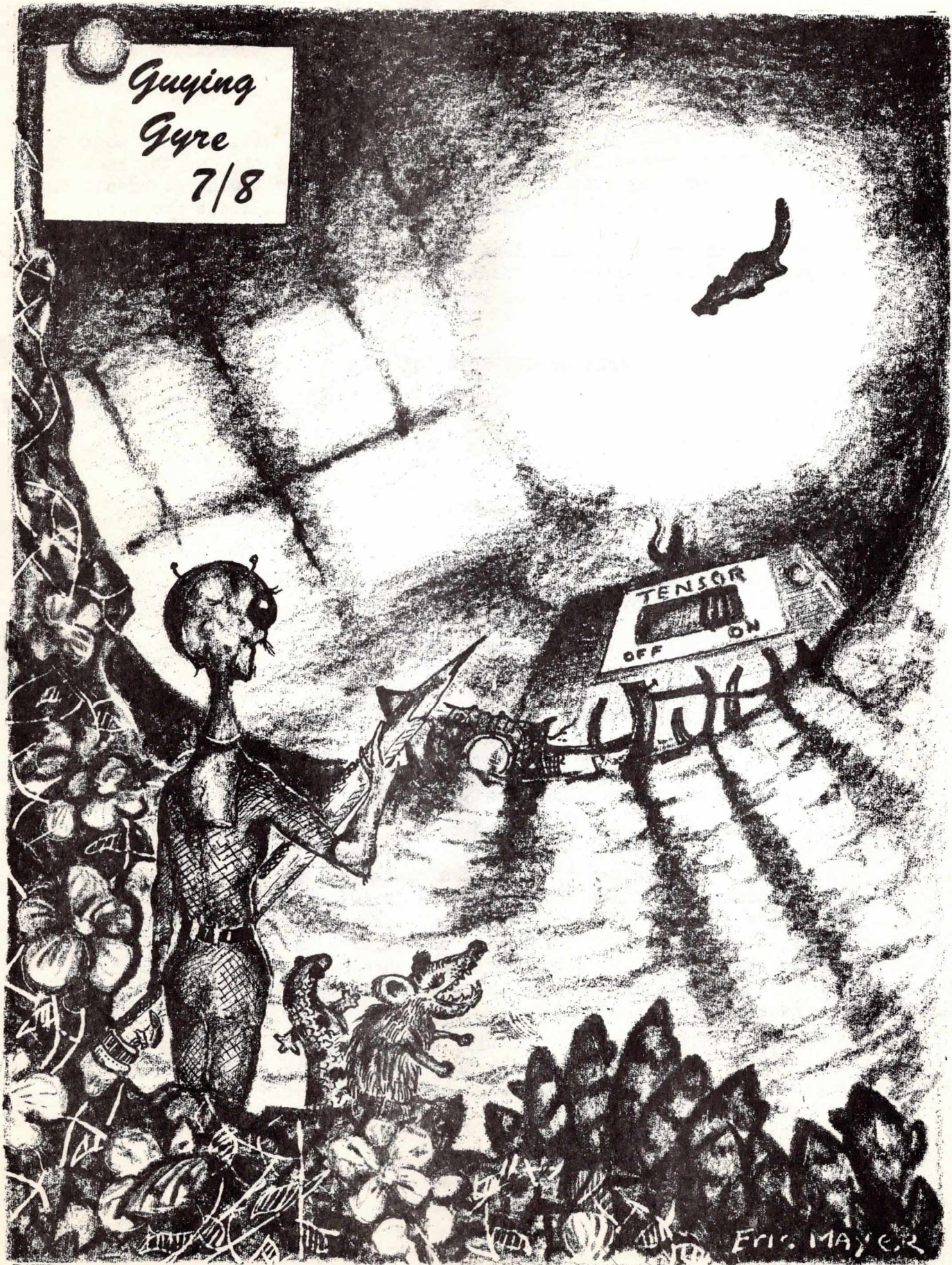


Guying
Gyre
7/8



GUYING GYRE is a fanzine of sorts written, edited, and published by Gil Gaier, 1016 Beech Ave., Torrance, CA 90501. This close-to-quarterly (ha!) effort is available for locs, art work, the usual, or 2/\$1.00. Trades are fine: all for all or one for one, whichever you feel proper/fair. This is CLASS PRESS PUBLICATION #15. (MAY '77)

This issue is dedicated to Thomas Swann, author and gentle man.

A special appreciation is owed to two of my students: Laurie Willis typed most of this issue and also mimeographed it; Pam Sledge correlated all the lengthy book evaluations and typed them. My gratitude is heartfelt. Several other students have contributed to this publication. It's beginning to look like a class project.

ART CREDITS: Once again Eric Mayer has done the cover. This time for the first section. The second is another of Lyle Tucker's efforts. (No title on the part. But you'll recognize it: two guys out on a joy-ride, I think.) If you find any illos inside, they're mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (OR TOC)

TALK/TALK	2, cont. on back of 2nd cover
Have I Got a # for You	3
The Numbers Game	4
Thomas Burnett Swann (1928-1976)	5-6
by Bob Roehm	
A SWANN BIBLIOGRAPHY by Bob Roehm	7-8
A Personal Retrospective: T B Swann	8-12
by Cliff Biggers	
Thomas Burnett Swann: An Appraisal of	13-20
his Novels by Robert E Blenheim	
LOCS	21-37
Article: The Nature of Science Fiction	38-39
by Ken Huff	
LOCS	39-58
Section TWO of GG contains PPEN listings and more locs.	

TALK/TALK

Ah, yes, it's been a while. Sorry about that.

At the beginning of the school year I decided to rely upon my students to do the typing. All has worked out fairly well, but it seems to have taken forever to get JUST THE MECHANICAL TYPING part done. Please forgive the changing type faces. Sometimes we had one machine available sometimes another. Finally I took my old Olympic to school for Pam to use on the lists of books in the second section. That helped. A few errors in omission and spelling have crept in; that's basically because the girls are unfamiliar with fannish writing. Please show forbearance. (I might mention that I ALWAYS make sure a student enjoys typing and says she feels she'll benefit from the practice before making the assignment.)

The likelihood is that another issue of GG will be out fairly soon--and will contain what didn't make it into this issue plus the locs and PPENs that do come in. Several times this issue I say that such-and-such will appear in GG #8. Of course I didn't know then that this would be another double.

GREAT NEWS: my school district has volunteered to ~~xerox~~ future issues of GG. And collate it. And pay postage for it. I've not seen their work yet, but it's got to be an improvement over what the current technique produces. Maybe I can now get GG back to a more regular schedule (and out of Double Issues). The District Office's only requests are that I drop off the price (no problem there), and use my school's address both in the colophon and on the cover. That may cause a bit of confusion, but as long as you keep sending trades and locs to me at home, there will be no problem. I hope.

HAVE I GOT A HOT LITTLE NUMBER FOR YOU!!

If your reading time is as limited as mine, maybe the books evaluated for THE PROJECT will prove of great value. Sometimes I stare at my wall of unread friends clammering for attention and wonder where to start. Being a speed reader would help, but I rarely manage to get through one every other day-even when I have time for novels. Relying on an author to provide me with consistently good reading is unrealistic. And the fan who believes the blurbs/cover of a book deserves what he gets. I can trust certain reviewers who have a balanced perspective or else my own taste in reading. But they are rare. (My students' recommendations are erratic; their lack of reading background tends to make them too easily sucked in.) So, where should I go to find some reliable advice on solid reading? To my many friends in fandom. To THE PROJECT's Personal Preference Evaluation Numbers (PPENs), of course.

I don't necessarily believe in consensus as a way of life, but when four different fen from various parts of the country/world write in saying similar things about a book they've evaluated (75, 75, 74, 76), I get a bead on that buck. Another that I recall goes something like 52, 32, 28, 32, 42, 26, 34. Hell, if I were looking for a recommendation, that is one: stay away. These negative numbers are as valuable as the affirmative ones. They give us the legs of the beast. Of course, the 40's 50's, and 60's comprise its great unwashed body. But unless there's a wide divergence of opinion used to gain one of these middle figures (see standard deviation under THE NUMBERS GAME), I probably wouldn't run panting to my local bookstore to get it--particularlry after 20 plus fen had said it was just okay. Of course my eyes are always on the lookout for books getting constantly high numbers. It doesn't happen often, but I'll bet that when the figures begin to appear in GUYING GYRE #8 there will be some surprises. How about a sample? My favorite Heinlein book is DOUBLE STAR. I'm inordinately pleased to note that of its 16 current evaluations none fall below 72 (the lowest good possible). A quick sight check says the mean will be about 85. If I had not read this book and saw such a high PPEN average, I'd make waves finding it. (My least favorite Heinlein, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, ought to average somewhere between 45 and 55. I personally would have put it in the middle 30's. BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER. Who in hell's going to read much of the 40's and 50's stuff unless they're stuck for reading?)

A recent letter expressed concern that more of the works of Ellison, Howard, and Lovecraft weren't being evaluated. Of course I only print what comes in. But these authors (plus several other greats like Bradbury and Sheckley) have written few SF/F novels. Evidently the emphasis of most readers has been SF rather than fantasy--although I'm working both sides of that street. So the PPEN responses to these writers have been regrettably infrequent.

My classroom copy of GG #4, the only issue which contains any averaged PPENs--it has two pages of the students' Own evaluations--is quite popular. Certain students--often the busy ones, or burned ones, or shrewd ones--get GG #4 and check the high numbered books against what appears on the classroom shelves. If they like the cover, subject matter, and the PPEN, they give it a try. All in all, that's not too bad a way of choosing what to read. I rather admire their grasp of a useful tool.

The points made: may I offer you, too, the same instrument in the form of THE PROJECT to aid your search for enjoyable reading?

(If you've not yet contributed and would freak out at the idea of TAKING without first contributing your Personal Preference Evaluation Numbers, contact me. Please.)

THE NUMBERS GAME

With each passing issue of GUYING GYRE I've become more eager to get ot the process of actually adding together all the numbers you've sent in and to committing averages to novels. But you've probably noted my restraint. One reason is my desire to be fair to a book. Using five or ten evaluations won't cut it. I've had advice from three informed sources: wait 'til you have 20 numbers on a book; wait 'til you have 30; wait 'til you have 100. WONDERFUL. The last might be most fair, but I may not live that long. If I use even the lowest number, there are hordes of books that will never get evaluated. (Of course the fact that few read a certain book probably indicates its lack of quality/readability.) Twenty will do as the "starter point." I'll arrange to have a reevaluation every time ten new PPENs (Personal Preference Evaluation Numbers) accumulate on a novel. That ought to keep things current.

Each book will have at least two figures: the mean (or average) and the standard deviation (which tells where the bulk of the evaluation numbers lay above and below the mean). I've had it explained to me like this: if a book received an acerage or mean of 75 and the standard deviation was (80-70), it would mean that apx. 57% of all PPENs used fell within the scope of those two numbers (80-70) around the mean.

I am far from being a mathematician, but from what I gather the advantages of knowing a number's standard deviation are numerous. Our primary interest, though, will be to discover the amount of contention surrounding a book's mean. For instance, if Koontz' DEMON SEED received 55 (60-50), we'd know that its PPEN average was 55 and that the great bulk of the evaluations fell solidly within a narrow range (60-50) around it. The opinions tended to be uniform about this novel. My expectations upon choosing the book to read or upon recommending it to someone else shouldn't be too far outside that ten-point perimeter. Let's say, though, that Delany's DHALGREN received 55 (90-20). Okay. Both books received the same PPEN mean but the spread of opinion on the latter one suggests that the reading enjoyment is such a matter of individual taste that the mean number may have to be disregarded and the book sampled. The wider the spread of the standard deviation numbers, the less accurate/dependable the mean probably is.

So. If the range of the standard deviation numbers about the mean reflects the extent of agreement about a book, that will indeed prove to be a valuable piece of data.

Issue number 8 (next in line) will contain the First Born. I'll try to have the mean and standard deviations for all novels with more than 20 PPENs. I'm not partial to the idea of incorporating the students numbers with those of fandom, but I think that the hundreds of numbers I've presumed from various book reviews might be fair additions. What do you think?

For those who suggested MODE and MEDIAN numbers as well: both figures would be a time consuming task to develop. One of my friends who teaches a class called Recreational Math during the second and fourth quarters has offered to ask his students whether any of them would take that on as a project. A MODE is the most popular score/number in a group of figures. In 62-68-75-75-75-92-98, the number 75 is the MODE. My friend thinks that the MEDIAN could be particularly valuable to THE PROJECT. It is the middle number in a group of numbers. In 2, 2, 6, 6, 9 the mean (or average) is 5, but the MEDIAN (or middle number) is 6. The MEDIAN gives you a number not thrown off by numbers of extreme range. To handle this particular problem, several people have suggested I lop off the top and bottom 10%. The case is strong for doing it; maybe after we have 40 or 50 PPENs for a book.

Thomas Burnett Swann
1928-1976

Thomas Burnett Swann, author of Day of the Minotaur and other classic fantasies, died May 5 of cancer at his parents home in Winter Haven, Florida. He was 47 years old.

Swann was born October 12, 1928, in Florida. He was fascinated as a child by the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs and, later, Planet Stories and Weird Tales. Oddly, however, these early loves did not influence his later fiction to a noticeable degree.

He attended Duke University and the University of Tennessee, and he received his doctorate from the University of Florida. He taught English literature for several years at Wesleyan College in Georgia and Florida Atlantic University, but he gave up his academic career in the early sixties in favor of full-time writing.

Swann's first published work was poetry, beginning in the early fifties while he was in the Navy; four collections of his verse were published. He also wrote several critical and biographical studies on such literary figures as A.A. Milne, Ernest Dowson, and Christina Rossetti.

In 1958 Swann's first fantasy, "Winged Victory," was published in Fantastic Universe, although he did not begin to sell regularly until the 1960s when the British Science Fantasy under the editorship of Ted Carnell became his main market. His first novel, Day of the Minotaur, was published by Donald Wollheim at Ace Books in 1966 to a favorable reception and including The Weirwoods (1967), Moondust (1968), and The Dolphin and the Deep (1968), which contained the classic medieval fantasy, "The Manor of Roses," which was also a Hugo nominee following its initial appearance in F&SF.

In 1973 Swann won the Phoenix Award at the DeepSouthCon in New Orleans for his novel Wolfwinter (Ballantine, 1972).

Swann's first bout with cancer came four years ago, although at the time doctors felt that the disease had been overcome. From that experience came How Are the Mighty Fallen (DAW, 1974), a Biblical fantasy based on the story of David and Jonathan. Critical reaction was favorable, and Theodore Sturgeon, writing in the New York Times, said, "He writes blissfully and beautifully separated from trend and fashion; he writes his own golden thing his own way..... I can see his works capturing some youngster today as the timeless beauty of William Morris enchanted me too many years ago."

Swann never married, and in a recent interview he said, "Some people, I think, are not meant to marry. They are meant to write. To be a writer, you have to be alone a great deal. My one and only engagement was a disaster. She was jealous of my writing. With me, it was either writing or the woman, and I chose the former. Somebody had to go and she went."

Ironically, 1976 will see publication of more of Swann's work than during any other year. The Minikins of Yam, a fantasy with an Egyptian setting, was published by DAW in March; Lady of the Bees, a novel-length version of "Where Is the Bird of Fire?" was

Thomas Burnett Swann continued

issued by Ace in May, although Swann never saw the finished book; Tournament of Thorns, an expanded version of "The Manor of Roses," will be published by Ace in July; The Gods Abide, in which Swann linked his two favorite locales, the Mediterranean and ancient Britain, will appear from DAW in November; a still-untitled novel, a "prequel" to Day of the Minotaur and The Forest of Forever, will be published as a serial in Fantastic; and finally Swann's version of the story of Dido and Aeneas, Queens Walk in the Dusk, which he finished from his hospital bed, will see print this summer from publisher Richard Garrison as a deluxe hardcover edition illustrated by Jeff Jones.

Besides appearing in England, Swann's work has also been translated into French, Dutch, and Norwegian.

In the introduction to a French edition of one of his books was written: "Instead of the macrocosm he prefers the microcosm; to an alien planet, an isolated forest; to grizzlies, teddy bears." This, I think, aptly characterizes the viewpoint of Swann's fiction. He was a gentle world, peopled by minotaurs, dryads, fauns, and other pre-humans who often found themselves in reluctant conflict with the encroaching civilization. There was no question as to where the author's sympathies were.

--Bob Koehm
Supplement to FOSFAX
#29 May, 1976

THOMAS BURNETT SWANN

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- "Vashti" (Science Fantasy, May, 1965)
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- "The Stalking Trees" (F&SF), (January, 1973)

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The Minikins of Yam (DAW Books, 1976, cover and illustrations by George Barr)
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A PERSONAL RETROSPECTIVE:

THOMAS BURNETT SWANN

By Cliff Biggers

Thomas Burnett Swann has been described as a fantasy author who brings delicacy to a field that had almost forgotten what delicacy was. The point was a well-made one; Thomas Burnett Swann was an author who wrote outside the trends of fantasy, heroic fiction and science fiction, producing a product uniquely his own. His tales of prehistory, his melancholy stories of Biblical kingdoms and lost loves continue to be read and enjoyed by new fans, by new readers captured in the grasp of Thomas Burnett Swann's unique version of fantasy. But only the words live on, because Tom Swann died on May 5, 1976, succumbing to a cancer that grew within his body.

In St. Petersburg/Clearwater, the city where Tom had made his home, his obituary was very short and plain, as if the richness of words had been used for his fiction and nothing else was left to be said.

T.B. SWANN, SCIENCE FICTION WRITER

Thomas Burnett Swann, Jr., 47, author of science fiction and science fantasy novels, died of cancer Wednesday at his parents' home in Winter Haven. Mr. Swann received the Phoenix Award for the best science fantasy novel in 1972 and last year was cited as one of the country's ten best fantasy authors. He wrote 13 science fiction works and 17 science fantasy novels.

The first meeting I ever had with the worlds of Tom Swann's mind took place in 1970, when I bought a used, battered copy of *MOONDUST*, an Ace novel that had attracted my attention because of its Jeff Jones cover. I was unfamiliar with the author--I later discovered that I had read his novelette, "MANOR OF ROSES" and had been unimpressed with it due to a complexity of character and a wistful look into the past that was incongruent with my then-overwhelming concern with Conan and assorted blood-and-thunder fantasies--but I found myself bored, with nothing to read, so I began the book.

From the first chapter, I was not a passive viewer, but an eager audience, enraptured with the visions unfolding in each chapter. The entertainment that I gathered from that book was far more than its slim size would lead you to expect; furthermore, I found his unique view of the prehistoric past to be fresh and fascinating, and Tom Swann's delicacy of language sparkled in comparison to most authors in fantasy at that time.

I continued to buy and read his novels as they were published, and I took the time to acquire all the earlier works that had been published by Ace; the books were consumed too quickly though, and the wondrous worlds he created weren't followed by numerous other works. By 1972, I had read all the backlog of Tom Swann material I could find and, with no hope of locating other material, had all but forgotten the author. New books were published by Ace, Ballantine and DAW, and were eagerly read, but again, the broad vistas painted by the writing quickly faded.

In 1974, Susan and I drove to Atlanta for the 12th Annual Deapsouthcon and arrived in mid-afternoon. It was hot in the con hotel, and the con suite was stocked with nothing but a few bottles of liquor and soft drinks that Meade Frierson had generously supplied; I was hungry and thirsty and didn't feel like getting by on liquor and soft drinks, so we were gathering a group of friends for the purpose of getting something to eat. The con suite was at the end of a rather long hallway, and we were just leaving its doors when I noticed that a nearby room was being occupied by Louisville's Rivercon bidding committee. A friend was standing near the doorway, so we drafted him into our group as a guide and headed toward the elevator. We had just turned from the Rivercon room when someone stopped me.

"You wanted to meet Thomas Burnett Swann, right?"

I hadn't been all that hungry anyway, and I talked Susan into taking a few minutes for me to have a brief meeting with an author whose works I had enjoyed so much. The person pointed to the Rivercon room, and we walked in; Susan muttered something about having never read any of Tom Swann's fiction, and Larry Mason, a close friend, said much the same thing, so I left the both of them and headed to a small crowd of people. In the center of the crowd was a tall man with dark hair and a tanned face, in active conversation with a number of people. The first impression I got was one of size; Tom Swann was a tall man, and he looked large--not fat, but large. And, of course, Tom was wearing the bowtie that would be so much a part of his wardrobe at almost every meeting we had.

I waited for the crowd to disperse; finally Susan joined me and we both edged in through the remaining people, most of whom were now in private conversations. From appearances, I had concluded that Tom Swann would be abrupt, brusque and rather impersonal, but I was determined to take a moment to speak with him, just to satisfy myself that I hadn't passed up an opportunity to thank an author for some of the entertainment he had given me.

My expectations could have been no farther from the truth; rather than abrupt, Tom Swann was a talkative man, generous with his time, his opinions--generous, in fact, with many things, anything. We talked of unrelated items--new books, old books, movies art, conventions and the like--and I scarcely noticed that other people had joined us. Finally, the subject of food came up again, and Susan and Larry agreed that it was time to get something to eat. So a small group of us, perhaps six or seven in all, went down to the hotel restaurant/sandwich shop.

Tom Swann accompanied us, and the conversation continued, the primary emphasis being Tom's latest material. Tom told us of work currently appearing in FANTASTIC, of novels to be published eventually, of non-sf works that were taking so much of his time, of plans for future novels; I never noticed whether my food was good or not, and I doubt that many of the others paid much attention to what they ate. Tom's quiet, hesitant and somewhat shy voice was difficult to hear over the general noise of the sandwich shop, so our attention was riveted on him; at the end of the meal, he told some of us how self-conscious it had made him feel doing all the talking.

Tom Swann tried to pay for that meal; he told us that he owed it to us all, because we had read his books. And it wasn't

just a polite gesture; no, he was serious, and although I could never understand it, I knew that he really felt that he owed us a meal in return for our complimentary reactions to his writings. Instead, we took up a collection and paid for his meal, countering that we owed him so much for his writing the books. He seemed at a loss for a reply, as if he wanted to refute that, but didn't know how to do so tactfully.

We talked more that weekend, and at each meeting, it became more obvious that Tom was more than courteous; he was a man whose generosity could never be repaid, and whose friendship with the fans he met in conversation was so much more than a few briefly-spoken and quickly-forgotten words.

We were once guests in Tom's home; Tom had acquired a condominium in Clearwater, with a large picture window overlooking the bay, and it wasn't too awfully long after he had moved in and settled down that we found ourselves at his door. We had written Tom a postcard at almost the last minute, and I really expected him to have other plans; whether he did or didn't he never told us about them and he took four hours to talk with us, to entertain us, to share all he could with us. Tom's condominium was a showplace, filled with statuary and books and elegant furniture. Tom was working on a history of Republic studios--I later found out that he was fighting a deadline to finish the book, yet he still took the time to talk with us that evening--and the old movies was a predominant topic of conversation. It was a wonderful evening; he was able to choose a subject I knew nothing about and discuss it coherently, making the conversation both interesting and educational.

I learned a lot about Tom that weekend; for one, he insisted he was "Tom," not "Mr. Swann." "Mr. Swann lives in Winterhaven," he responded. "I'm Tom." Not Thomas Burnett Swann, he told us--that was a writer's name--simply Tom. And to make the point clear, he asked what book of his we needed, since I had alluded to having read all of his fantasy except for one missing novel. When I told him of my bad luck in being unable to locate a copy of DAY OF THE MINOTAUR, he pulled a copy of the book and handed it to me; then, on an impulse, he took the book back and wrote inside its cover, "To Cliff & Susan with Best Wishes--Tom." Furthermore, he proceeded to sign every other book of his that we had brought with us in much the same way. I never called him Mr. Swann again--and now, it's hard to think of him as anything but Tom.

Tom discussed one subject we had discussed in numerous letters; the artists used to illustrate his books. "I'm not a monster writer," he told us, "so why do I always get monster covers?" Tom had a harsh reaction to the penchant of publishers to put dragons, or ogres, or beasts on his covers; he felt that a light, delicate artist was called for, almost an impressionistic, arboreal type of picture, and the only artist he felt had ever done that well was Jeff Jones on MOONDUST. His one wish was to see all of his books reissued with proper covers rather than the unsatisfactory ones that decorated most of them. Before his death, he and Rich Garrison of HERITAGE Press were to get together and via the mail to plan the visuals for Tom's first (and only) American hardcover publication of a fantasy work, QUEENS WALK IN THE DUSK; honoring Tom's choice, Rich commissioned Jeff Jones to do the dustwrapper and interior art,

and Tom was ecstatic. Unfortunately, he never lived to see the paintings and drawings he had so eagerly wanted to accompany his book.

Tom acknowledged his fantasy backgrounds in our conversations; he told me that the one author he had an undying appreciation for was Edgar Rice Burroughs, and he felt that the adventurous aspect of ERB had given him so much joy in his younger years that he was writing as much to repay a debt as for pleasure or for financial reasons. Being a Lovecraft fan, I asked Tom about HPD; he had read many of his works, but had been impressed only briefly, he confided, and had never been truly moved to write a pastiche. Tom said that he had once started a work very HPL*-influenced in its style, but he found it so pretentious for him that he abandoned it and either reworked it or threw it away. The idea itself was intriguing, I'll admit, for one would never expect an HPLish story from Tom Swann; but the product would have been so uniquely Tom's that one would probably have been almost unable to recognize its roots.

The question of finances came up in a roundabout way, and Tom told us that on most of his books, a \$1000 advance had been standard, and he further acknowledged that he rarely received more than that. He also revealed some difficulties with Ace Books who had authorized a hardcover French publication of two of his novels without notifying him; he assured me that he had no hard feelings for Ace, though, because both Don Wollheim and Pat Lobrutto, who took over after Don Wollheim left to form DAW, had been fair to him--he felt that the less scrupulous financial deals weren't the fault of any editor, but of the departmentalized makeup of a large publishing company. Tom was very open about his payments and advances, and he promised to tell us if he ever received a larger advance than normal, so that we could all celebrate; shortly after, Tom found out of his cancer, and we heard from him only in very skimpy letters after that.

Tom spoke softly, always; perhaps this is why he avoided writers' panels often, and seemed uncomfortable in crowds. He had taught, at the college level, and that still seems incongruous for a man who avoided public speaking as much as Tom did. I recall one panel, in which Keith Laumer was expounding quite loudly and rudely upon certain editorial policies; Tom sat in the audience, right behind Susan and me. When I asked him why he wasn't up there, he replied, half-whimsically, "Oh, I wouldn't have anything to say; I've had a few problems with editors, but I enjoy seeing my work printed too much to get so upset over my editors." Again, that was a vital part of Tom's personality; he wanted to share his words with everyone, and he was grateful that writing had given him the opportunity--he had no complaints, all things considered.

Tom never seemed to carry grudges, either; he concerned himself with finding good points in people, and he eagerly listened to conversations for hours, often about topics he had no interest in, yet he always had a point to add, or a polite analysis of what had been said once the conversation ended. He always felt that every person had something good to offer, and he lived that philosophy.

Tom Swann died a quiet death; he died without a great deal of publicity, just as he had lived.

I feel the loss. Tom Swann was a special man, a gifted writer and an outstanding friend; his career was ended by cancer abruptly, and with much discomfort. Yet Tom remained courageous and hopeful through his life; had it been possible, I'm sure he would have written up until the time of his death.

I cried for Tom. I mourn his death, and I hope that, through his works, many others can become aware of how great the loss was on that May 5, when Tom Swann lost the battle he had fought for years.

(Small portions of this article originally appeared in FUTURE RETROSPECTIVE #7, (c 1976, Cliff Biggers, 621 Olive Street, Cedartown, GA 30125)

Karl Ploran; 111 Southampton Rd. Holyoke, MA 01040

Enclosed is another bunch of evaluation scores. I read most of them during the past month. Childhood's End took a couple of months to get through.

I just received my tickets for my vacation. Now all I have to do is get my clothes and other stuff packed.

I have no more books by the authors you mentioned. So I'll have to give you pot luck evaluations for now.

75/66--DICKSON--The Alien Way
77/76--TUBB--Eloise
77/76--ZELAZNY--Nine Princes in Amber
70/- --ZELAZNY--Four for Tomorrow
73/63--TUBB--Death is a Dream
67/58--LEINSTER--Doctor to The Stars
42/39--CLARKE--Childhood's End
65/69--OFFUTT--The Galactic Rejects
77/83--OFFUTT--Evil is Live Spelled Backwards
67/60--BULMER--The Hunters of Jundagai

Neal Wilgus:

55--Tierney--The Winds of Zarr	55--Mundy--The Nine Unknown
45--Leiber--You're All Alone	35--Reynolds--Amazon Planet

Haven't been reading much SF of late since I'm spending much time researching the American and French Revolutions for a book I'm working on. But I hunger and thirst for escape and will get back to it soon...

Karl W. Ploran, 111 Southampton Rd. Holyoke, MA 01040

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43/48--LE GUIN--The Dispossessed
67/75--SIMAK--Way Station
65/57--NORTON--Merlin's Mirror

THOMAS BURNETT SWANN

(1928-1976)

An Appraisal of His Novels

by

Robert E. Blenheim

INTRODUCTION

On May 5th we lost Tom Swann to cancer and we are decidedly the poorer for it.

To one who knows his marvelously written books (like Wolfwinter, Day of the Minotaur, Green Phoenix) there is a bitter irony in the death of this man for his books reveal him to have been perpetually preoccupied with life itself, gorgeously excited by all things human and by the extremes of human feelings of which Love (in all of its manifestations) strikes me as having been his chief fascination. Although never having married and seemingly having been rather reserved in really involved living (he was a teacher), with every breath he must have fought dragons, routed armies, built palaces, conquered maidens, he must have lived with all the stops pulled, and he must have certainly known what it was to have been completely alive. Although I was fortunate to have had a small correspondence with Tom Swann a few months before his death, I know nothing about the man first-hand but the gloriously tender and compassionate man he was is spread out before me, exposed, there within the pages of his books.

There is also irony in his passing when one considers the preoccupation of his books with ageless myths, the struggles and sweet-murmurings of centaurs, fauns, dryads, minotaurs and the like and the interplay of these immortal characters with mortal human beings. This interplay is perfectly culminated in the chief conflict of Wolfwinter (one of Swann's best): the tragic elements of the love affair between a satyr and a mortal. The contrasting of the human with the non-human, the real with the fantastic, the rustic life with the world of the dream. People sadly aging; creations of the mind--the myths--paradoxically immortal. The more I think about it, the more I find it impossible to believe that the teller of such richly sensitive and spectacularly eloquent tales could have left us, but his books are here with us, ripe for the immortality of which the literal man has somehow ironically been deprived.

Lately I have asked myself a question: in a time when Tolkien and Howard are lauded and ballyhooed to some silver pedestal of deification, why is it Swann's reputation seems to need nurturing? Perhaps it is because of his conceiving his novels narrow in scope. The reader today doesn't seem to want a continual sensory experience, a delving into the jewel-like details of the souls of the characters, as much as he wants the sheer weight of a work with an almost banal scope to it. One can stomp through

Robert E. Blenheim continued

Tolkien; one must step more carefully in Swann. One who reads Swann must search inward for the delicacies for Swann was like jewel-cutter in his writing or like a man who is piecing together the tiny parts of a Swiss watch. His books are for those who appreciate the subtleties, all the seasonings of living. And all this is tied in with his thematic purpose: the miscegnation of the mortal with the immortal, the common man with the grand myths of the ages. Here is the source of a large part of his poetic accomplishment.

However, the main reason Swann is still supported by selected cultists over the fannish populace who extol men of lesser artistic abilities is his particular lack of a real place to fit comfortably in as a writer; while Swann's works are part of the body of genre-fiction--a type ignored for the most part by serious "literary experts", his works do not fit snugly inside any particular genre at all and that is the reason for the lack of centralization on him. The fact he was alive and young also hindered his critical and popular growth, for he has always seemed to me, no matter how great his works, a writer of "tomorrow" rather than a writer of "today". There is something about his books which says "You have time to savor me, there is no hurry". Some writers blast their way to the top with a single dynamite blast, a fifteen-hundred-page trilogy or whatever. Others get there with a series of faint but undeniable breathtaking pulsations under the surface, the producing of a total body of work so distinctive, so beautiful, so accomplished that their own positions of importance also become inarguable. Swann is just the kind of writer who may receive his fame from some "re-discovery" in another time: a few decades, perhaps. Until then he will give countless hours of specialized pleasure to those readers who can appreciate his own rare and extraordinary wonderful distillation of wine.

Irony, again: his death may help bring about this "re-discovery". At once he is gone and will write no more. But maybe his works will always seem so fully alive, so eternally young, that he may never attain the stuffy position of dust-gathering on old shelves; he may instead be creased and dog-eared, stuffed in the pockets of Those Who Read for ages to come.

I am certain, though, his books will never be forgotten as long as men read, for--in the time of napalm, Erich Segal, and McDonald's hamburgers--books that can make a member of our cynical world feel as if he had reclaimed his green enthusiasm and lost innocence of youth, books that make him somehow feel lucky to have been born human, and books that manage to move him unabashedly to tears, are special books indeed and will never die. As long as Swann's books are with us he is as immortal as the myths he wrote about, and I am not going to shed one more infinitesimal tear over his death; when I feel one about to come I'm going to snap up one of his books with sincere gratitude in my heart and begin re-reading the special gifted prose of that wonderfully passionate artist.

Robert E. Blenheim continued

THE NOVELS

Whereas the above introduction was intended as a paean to the excellences of Swann and his writings I am attempting objectivity in discussing his novels; I would like to state, however, the flaws I cite here are relatively insignificant to a Swann buff like myself when valued against his poetic brilliance and unique style.

For purposes of discussion only, I am splitting up Swann's novels into three periods. There is otherwise no distinct division of his books into groups, and this is done under highly personal subjectivity.

His first period (three novels published from 1966 to 1968) is characterized by slight immaturity and the three books of this period display imagination, inspiration and drive without achieving complete unity. These novels indicate the Swann to come.

The second period (1971 through 1972) produced four novels which are, I maintain, his most unified and artistically accomplished books. They seem--of all his novels--to be the ones that took most planning, the ones with the most attention to structural meaning. They are closer to perfection than Swann had ever obtained and would ever obtain in the future.

The third period (books published from 1974 on) strikes me as the one which produced the most flawed works if one judges a novel by its mating of all literary elements into a single entity. Each of these books have many good points and much brilliance but mainly in its parts rather than in the whole. These novels seem to exhibit slight haste in their writing and less polish, and occasionally seem closer to outlines of novels rather than thoroughly executed ones. There is less description in these novels than ones from the second period and, I think, less depth. They seem slightly more trivial sometimes with less scope. Some could argue that the novels of this group are more entertaining and more fun to read due to their being faster-moving but I distrust that view because of its seeming blindness to structural and other more ambitious elements of novel writing. Quite simply, the novels of this group have superb details which can be admired, but do not add up to important, cohesive works of art in the sense the books of the second period do.

FIRST PERIOD

Day of the Minotaur (1966, Ace Books)

This novel--introducing Eunostos, the last minotaur--has rightly achieved great popularity since its serialized appearance in late 1964 and early 1965 in the British magazine Science Fantasy under the original title, The Blue Monkeys. Its fame

Robert E. Blenheim continued

is due to its incredibly atmospheric milieu, its wonderfully alive characters, and--of course--its superb writing. While imperfect, most of Swann's future characteristics can be found here: the interplay of mythological and human characters; witty dialogue, which--while anachronistic--brings a past historical period up close to us; the strong emotional involvement which compels the reader to love or hate with the characters. Upon contemplating the book after reading, faults are evident and it lacks somewhat a lasting impression as far as its plot is concerned. Swann later wrote a "pre-quel" to this and expressed a desire to re-write Day of the Minotaur to remove any inconsistencies. If he had lived to do this it might have been turned into the great work it had the potential to become. Still, it is an exceptionally entertaining and moving book.

The Weirwoods (1967, Ace Books)

I have been unable to find a copy of this book (also first published as a serial in Science Fantasy) but it was a novel Swann himself had little affection for. He claimed he ruined the ending.

Moondust (1963, Ace Books)

In spite of the popularity of Day of the Minotaur, I think this is the better book. For the first time Swann straddles the Bible Story, the novel taking place during the time of the siege on the city of Jericho. It employs the flashback: the sixteen-year-old Bard is trying to convince Joshua to attack Jericho and free Rahab. The very peculiar relationship of Bard and Rahab is one of the beauties of the book and involves a boy changing into a girl, but it is an unique novel with a highly imaginative plot.

SECOND PERIOD

The Goat Without Horns (1971, Ballantine Books)

This is perhaps the least ambitious of all Swann's novels. Indeed, it only slips into the genre at all due to the entire book's being told in first-person by a dolphin, otherwise it is strictly a non-fantasy book. I believe it to be, however, one of Swann's very best books, probably the closest to perfection of them all. It tells a very unusual love story: that of a young boy (Charles Sorley) and a dolphin named Gloomer; the last is one of Swann's finest creations, a character so rich and wonderful that he commands more empathy than most human characters in fiction. The beginning of the novel is exceptionally brilliant: the dolphin's introduction to the reader (he describes his own family and past) up until he meets Charlie. The perfection of Swann's relating the point-of-view of a dolphin staggers the mind for we truly become a dolphin, gliding through the ocean world, but without the banal pretentiousness of forcing us to experience mere physical duplication of a dolphin's journey; the novel instead has us in Gloomer's own mind as if we were born there, a mind so honest, so sensitive, so innocent that we as readers are in love with not just Gloomer himself, but with

Robert E. Blenheim continued

all the ideals he represents.

Not only is the book Swann's least ambitious in scope, but it also contains perhaps his fewest characters and takes place on an island refuge, Oleandra; except for Charlie, the story is focused on only a fifty-year old woman, the one who employed Charlie, and her beautiful tomboy daughter (who's enthusiastic about sharks, by the way). The relating of these three human characters together is done with such artistic precision and individuality that there is a special kind of unified form to the book, a brilliant simplicity and clarity that satisfies any criteria for literary merit. Of particular excellence is the way Charlie and the older woman relate together in their poignant love affair; somehow the two display the same distinctive writer's finesse by becoming slotted in the memory like Pip and Mrs. Havesham in Dickens' Great Expectations. In the sense of satisfying its own intrinsic narrative and thematic cords by a perfect weaving together of all elements in total control by the author, it is Swann's best book, and a feat few authors would ever have attempted, much less pulled off as brilliantly as Swann has. It is undeniable that some fans of the genre will be disappointed in this book's general lack of fantastic elements, yet if one uses the yardstick of literary value in measuring the quality of this book, its merits will be found equally undeniable.

The Forest of Forever (1971, Ace Books)

This is the first half of the story of Eunostos, the minotaur from Day of the Minotaur, but because this was written after the second half this novel can rightly be called a "pre-quel". This is one of Swann's best and one of the few of his that can be considered a definitive genre book. It has more scope than most Swann efforts but there is never a lag in the development or a flaw in the mating of the personal events with the grand scaled ones as displayed in many of the other Swann books attempting more than intimate scope. The novel is structured well and develops brilliantly to a sad but powerful ending, yet never hindered by or hindering the leisurely-paced personal sequences. It is told in first-person by Zoe, a dryad; it is ironic that Swann's best books seem to be those which are told in first-person by something other than a human male character, whether it be a child a dolphin, or a woman, and indeed Swann seems to show an empathy with a woman's feelings only approached by, perhaps, Alexei Panshin in Rite of Passage.

This novel has a sense of wonder that is unsurpassed by any of Swann's other books as well, a special kind of distinctive atmosphere perfectly capturing an almost surrealistic fantasy world while bringing all the characters into our minds vividly. Besides being one of his best, it is a book that will satisfy just about every reader, especially the genre lovers who found Swann's previous novel all-too-lacking in fantastic elements. Inadvertently, however, the high quality of this book all but obliterates Day of the Minotaur if (quite properly) read immediately after, for that book seems a monumental anti-climax to this one. It is unfortunate that Swann did not (apparently) live to re-write the earlier novel and build the two towards a more cohesive and ar-

Robert E. Blenheim continued

tistically balanced complete Eunostos epic, for I can't imagine anyone being satisfied with Day of the Minotaur after the superb Forest of Forever.

Green Phoenix (1972, DAW Books)

Structurally this book is the weakest of the four novels of this period for the latter half doesn't seem to be a natural culmination of the first half and its emotional alliances seem to shift without proper transitions; it seems slightly disjointed and lacks cohesion. Its first half, too, is superior to the second half. Moreover, the novel seems too trivial for the story of Aeneas and his son Ascanius. Nevertheless, these conceptual flaws aside, it is a rightly admired book and an excellent bit of writing. The characters are, as usual, wonderfully-etched, albeit one of the best (Boulder) is "out of it" all too quickly, and the atmosphere--although not as effective as in Forest of Forever--is a skillful blend of historical flavor and imagination. This is the first half of the story of Mellonia; the second is told in Lady of the Bees.

Wolfwinter (1972, Ballantine Books)

Except for a slight imbalance in its structuring, this is one of Swann's really special achievements and attains a loftier position artistically than most of his other books. Its special atmospheric flavor, sparser and more wintry than Forest of Forever, helps make this a book to remember. It is a gorgeous and moving story about the love of a human girl for a satyr, a love which is truly tragic in its incongruity for their separate time spans doomed their relationship to a fraction of the time love stories usually flourish. Thematically it is undoubtedly Swann's most important book, its conflict crystalizing some of the individual meaning inherent in all of Swann's writings. Although it too lacks scope as many of his books do, it encompasses this limited scope within its very conception, mating it to the theme itself, and is justified; in fact, it is one of the book's strengths. Another structural brilliance is found in the understated "framing" sequences, the prologue and epilogue, which are far more successful than the framing sequences in Moondust at complementing the inner "meat" of the novel itself. Swann's writing seems to avoid, too, the flaw of seeming too trivial except in the deliberate reserved way he chose to relate his plot. He succeeds here in a special sublime way of delicately enacting a basically small-scale story to achieve a universal and large-scale relevance. Swann's gifts are here in this novel at their highest level and it is one of his very best achievements.

THIRD PERIOD

How Are the Mighty Fallen (1974, DAW Books)

This is probably a poor book for anyone to read unless they have already read Swann's more fantastic novels for its slowness and unexciting plot would be for most a fatal introduction to Swann's works. Nevertheless it is a book certain selected read-

Robert E. Blenheim continued

ers will admire. It is a true Biblical novel this time, one which offers a fantasy explanation as to how David could have killed Goliath and--as in the best Swann books--it centers on a special kind of relationship: between two men. The novel, though, seems to cop-out in examining all the ramifications in the male-and-male relationship for Swann balks in stating the physical side of it.

Will-O-the-Wisp (1974, serialized in Fantastic)

This novel dissatisfied me when I first read it but I have discovered my dissatisfaction was more from it not being the kind of novel I expected from Swann rather than from any intrinsic inadequacies. The value of this book seems to grow in stature as time goes by.

It is undoubtedly one of Swann's most off-beat novels enacting the strange atmosphere of Post-Elizabethan England (its moods of mists and moors reminiscent of "Dr. Syn") with superstitions creating fear in the minds of men causing the burning of witches to take place intermittently. Swann skillfully weaves the fantasy element, the Gubbings (people with wings), into the historical setting and manages to comment upon the myths themselves. It is an excellent book, inspired, Swann says, "by the life of Robert Herrick--poet, vicar and pagan", who is indeed the main character. The only slight reservation I have is that the ending somewhat strains logic, but it is an impressive conclusion just the same.

The Not-World (1975, DAW Books)

This is very short, a novel telling the story of Dylan and Deirdre. Of interest here is the way Swann uses the character of Thomas Chatterton, utilizing Chatterton's fondness for jokes and the mysterious nature of his death imaginatively in a balloon, but other than managing to be a suitable divertissement to enjoy, it doesn't strike me as a very successful book. As with most of the books in this period, it seems too sketchy, not planned out beforehand as well as it should have been. There are memorable scenes but as a whole it is one of Swann's weakest and most unimportant books.

The Minnikins of Yam (1976, DAW Books)

With this, Swann takes on ancient Egypt. The first half of the book is interesting but the latter half seems to peter out, Swann seemingly at a nadir with his inspirational drive. It has good sequences, many well written parts, but as a whole it must be considered an unfortunate failure, albeit an admirable one, and one of Swann's weakest.

Lady of the Bees (1976, Ace Books)

This is the best novel of Swann's third period, movingly continuing the events of Green Phoenix and its main character, Melloni. It is an extended version of his earlier novella, "Where Is the Bird of Fire?"

It is a flawed book, reading sometimes like a rough-draft

Robert E. Blenheim continued

without enough description, and tendingslightly on the trivial side, but its characters and atmosphere make this a fine book and one worth reading. It narrates the story of Romulus and Remus and the events leading to the building of Rome and woven into the story is Swann's typically superb elements of mythology and his incredibly rich imagination.

EPILOGUE

There are a few Swann books to come: Tournament of Thorns (which will undoubtedly be in print before you read this--Ace Books), The Gods Abide (due in November from DAW Books), Queens Walk in the Dusk (a hardcover from Richard Garrison--the novelization of Dido and Aeneas), and an untitled "pre-quel" to Forest of Forever (to be serialized in Fantastic).

It is fitting I close this article with a quote by Swann himself from the introduction to Lady of the Bees concerning his own outlook in portraying historical events and periods in fiction. He says, "Poetry and fiction posses a truth which eludes history: to interpret rather than record." Thomas Burnett Swann's works are testimonials to this belief and I cannot imagine anyone preferring cold-blooded literal fact to his own poetic and beautiful interpretations!

Ayres/5707 Harold Way #3/Hollywood, CA, 90028

It's three in the morning and you ask me why I'm semi-coherent. I have no answer.

After all, I've just been gazing at the last "3" issues of GUYING GYRE and some other things of yours in an effort to work off my debts...

The ratings are impressive, useful if only as a bibliography of the major works of a given author and you have provided such useful information as the evaluator to increase the value of the work.

However, you do make a semi-mistake in the copy of the project instructions you sent me--You describe me as a reader, but the fact is that, like Glicksohn before me, I have become entrenched in the reading of fmz so as to 'repay' the editors who have, unsolicited, sent me copies of their zines in the hopes of a loc or article. My pile of unanswered zines is about a foot high and I receive, on the average, three new copies a week.

Yet here I am trying to embark on a writing career while holding down another job as well. Even if I follow the example of pro and limit myself to, say, a page or postcard, I still have to read the bloody thing, which means that I'm not reading professionally published fiction or nonfiction.

I sold my Westercon conrep to a local tabloid, LA PANORAMA. I seem to recall mentioning to you that I intended to try.

I don't regret the time I spend with fmz quite as much as the above might indicate, but I can easily see why some fans gaffiate to try to establish themselves as pros. I'm not receiving half the fmz of someone like Brazier or Glicksohn or Warner, but it all but monopolizes my spare reading. I haven't even proofed my thesis for publication. Ergo, I don't contribute to the Project. Come to think of it, I review virtually all of the novels I manage to squeeze in; Ghu knows how much I'd read if I didn't 'have' to.

RE: scratching someone else's palm: the line I always heard gave as the scratcher was "I'm a Martian and you've just been **ed."

Michael T. Shoemaker, 2123 N. Early St. Alexandria, VA 22302

GG #5/6 is fascinating reading since I'm a sucker for this kind of thing. Hayer's cover is, as usual, outstanding.

I agree with Boutillier that The Stars My Destination is vastly overrated. I also agree with him about The Sheep Look Up and have a high regard for The Lathe of Heaven. The only comments in Walker's letter which I must vehemently disagree with are that Simak is uneven and to skip Kuttner's novels. I consider Simak one of the most consistent of all SF authors, with no really bad novel. Most of Kuttner's novels are mediocre fantasies, but Fury is a classic, and The Fairy Chessmen and Tomorrow and Tomorrow are excellent. It's funny to see Blenheim dismiss Compton, since I consider Compton to be the most literate author in the field today.

I found Coulson's evaluations just about worthless because there is almost no discrimination present. After all, what is one to think when they look down his list of Silverberg and see every damn title rated 55? Whether I agree with him or not is beside the point. Such inability to draw finer distinctions makes all his

evaluations suspect in my book.

I hope you are keeping track of bibliographic information, such as I supplied you with last time. Esper by James Blish is a retitling of Jack of Eagles. In your Leinster listing: "Flight for Life" should be Fight for Life, Colonial Survey is a collection, Out of this World is a collection of three of the four Bud Gregaory stories. There are three titles listed by Coulson which don't exist according to my biblio, they are probably either typos or recent retitles or outright errors: Space Captain (does he by chance mean Spaceman, also known as The Other Side of Nowhere?), Hot Spot, and Unknown Danger (does he by chance mean "The Unknown" which is a retitling of a novelette called "Fury From Lilliput" which isn't more than 25-30 thousand words?).

Here's a correction that pisses me off because I already told you once. The name of Van Vogt's book is The Battle of Forever (that's of not for, however preferable that latter might be). Also Gutter Glitter should be Future Glitter (was that a typo or someone's lame attempt at humor?).

RE. this business about kids getting turned off reading because of HS english classes; I think it may have less to do with the books themselves, than the manner in which they are taught. What prompts this thought is D'Amassa's comment on Moby Dick. I read Moby Dick when I was 12 and enjoyed it immensely (no doubt, for all the wrong reasons), and have reread it twice since, at 18 and 20. I think the crucial factor is just the pressure & regimentation of reading under the whip, with deadlines and quizzes and a spoonfed, approved interpretation.

In my opinion (understand that what follows is purely polemical, but at least I'm backed up by the likes of Pound, Lewis, and Eliot) Stuart Gilson has grave misconceptions (all the more annoying for their commonness) about the purpose and value of literary criticism. The proper concern of criticism is not to point out what is bad (for in that case the reader may know what to avoid, but he still does not know what to look for), but to show what is good and why it is good. The highest function of criticism is to increase the reader's appreciation of a work by increasing his understanding of the work. I think the only persons who cannot be reached by criticism are either arrogant and narrow-minded or of dull sensibility. Criticism does not have to be a dogmatic witchhunt for obscure symbolism. Take John Ciardi's notes to his outstanding translation of The Divine Comedy. I consider these essential to a good understanding (and hence appreciation) of the poem. Besides providing detailed historical, theological, textural background, he is often of enormous help in elucidating the beauty of the style. For example, in Canto I of the Inferno he says of line 31: "each footfall rose above the last": "...Dante is saying that he climbed with such zeal and haste that every footfall carried him above the last despite the steepness of the climb...this device of selecting a minute but exactly centered detail to convey the whole of a larger action is one of the central characteristics of Dante's style." Or of line 59 in Canto XIII in the Purgatorio: "'each soul supported another': As they had failed to do in life..."

It seems that too often criticism is viewed as some kind of intellectual competition pandering to individual prejudices and conceits. Such an attitude, with its atmosphere of hostility is bad. Criticism should be approached from both sides as an attempt

to reach an understanding. One doesn't have to buy all, or even part, of some interpretation, but most people don't even give it half a chance. Also, a work can often work on more than one level so that many different interpretations can be equally valid. Also like Pound, I believe arguments about the relative merits of two great works is rather pointless, since what is important is that they are both great and being different, each gives something the other cannot give, regardless of their relative merits. This belief would seem to cast doubt on the value of some aspects of the project, but my point is not that such distinctions are worthless (after all, we all have our subjective favorites), but that arguing over what is the best of the best is worthless.

Here is an additional list of titles I did not include last time; I was going to alphabetize it, but just don't have the time so I'm typing them straight from my notes.

Earth Abides-Stewart-95 (best SF book ever, bar none.)	The Lord of Rings-Tolkien-95
The Demolished Man-Bester-94	The Hobbit--94
The Stars, My Destination--75	Camp Concentration-Disch-82
Deathworld-Harrison-68	Lords of the Psychon-Galouye-65
A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah--55	Space Viking-Piper-72
Sense of Obligation--55	Left Hand of Darkness-Le Guin-88
The Lion Game-Schmitz-55	The Lathe of Heaven--78
Options-Sheckley-54	Out of this World-Leinster-58
Goat Without Horns-Swann-38	The Last Spaceship--45
War With the Newts-Capek-75	Highways in Hiding-Smith G.O.-45
The Inverted World-Priest-78	Half Past Human-Bass-78
Interplanetary Hunter-Barnes-54	The Listeners-Gunn-78
Planet of the Apes-Boulle-65	The Immortals--65
Moderan-Bunch-77	Anton York, Immortal-Binder-52
The Midnight Dancers-Conway-55	Night of the Saucers--45
Eclipse of Dawn-Eklund-54	The Martian Chronicles-Bradbury-8
A Trace of Dreams--45	Fahrenheit 451--92
First on Mars-Gordon-93	The Illustrated Man--83
Utopia Minus X--55	Something Wicked This Way Comes--65
The Yellow Fraction--55	Flight into Yesterday (The Paradox Men)-Harness-75
The House on the Borderland-Hodgson-45	The Ring of Ritornel--74
Salaris-Lem-78	The Rose--73
Doomsday Morning-Moore-45	The Day Before Tomorrow-Klein-54
A Spaceship for the King-Pournelle-45	Out of the Silent Planet-Lewis-62
The Omega Point-George Zebrowski-78	Rite of Passage-Panshin-74
A Conn. Yankee in King Arthur's Court-Twain-92	The Blue Star-Pratt-35
1984-Orwell-92	And Chaos Died-Russ-75
Armageddon 2419-Nolan-58	Picnic on Paradise--75
Hell House-Matheson-92	The Spacehounds of IPC-EE Smith-74
I Am Legend--65	Skylark series--62
The Case of Charles Dexter Ward-HPL-65	Lensmen series--55
Lurker at the Threshold--56	Masters of the Vortex--45
Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath--55	Subspace Explorers--38
Of Men and Monsters-Tenn-74	The Killer and the Slain-Walpolean
	A Canticle for Liebowitz-Miller-84
	The King of Elfland's Daughter-Dunsany-55
	The Crock of Gold-Stephens-93
	Mars series-ERB-62
	The Monster Men--58
	At the Earth's Core--57

Pellucidar-ERB-56
Tamar of Pellucidar--"-55
Wine of the Dreamers-McDonald-75
The Sunken World-Coblentz-55

Professor Jameson series-Neil R.
Jones-73
After 12,000 Years-Coblentz-58
Paradise & Iron-Miles J. Breuer
-78

Chester D. Cuthbert, 1104 Mulvey Avenue, Winnipeg Manitoba, Canada

You have presented a staggering amount of work in GUYING GYRE 5/6, VERT #2, and your previous publications, and it is going to require a fair amount of work to assemble the results of the ratings and thus to know which books should be considered indispensable. I do not have the time just now to make use of the information, but you have made it available, and I am grateful to you for it.

Dealing with your request that I recommend some of the old books, in GUYING GYRE 5/6, p.1/5 my letter gives my favorite authors, almost all of whose books are quite worthwhile, so I shall list only books by others: ((So that there may be of use to THE PROJECT, I consider that these books are, in general, excellent (85)?))

Man's Mortality by Michael Arlen
The Image in the Sand by E. F. Benson
A Strange Story by Edward Bulwer-Lytton
The Slayer of Souls by Robert W. Chambers
The Soul of Lilith by Marie Corelli
Sturly by Pierre Custot
The Shadowy Thing by H. B. Drake
Ayesha by H. Rider Haggard
City of Endless Night by Milo Hastings
Flames by Robert Hichens
Sea Change by Barbara Hunt
The Collected Stories of M. R. James (s.B. Ghost Stories)
Strange Houses by Cora Jarrett
In a Glass Darkly by J. Sheridan LeFanu
The Haunted Major by Robert Marshall (also published under the title The Enchanted Golf Clubs)
The Clockwork Man by E. V. Odle
Hoonflowers by Margaret Peterson
The Living Mummy by Ambrose Pratt
The Purple Cloud by M. P. Shiel
The Edge of Running Water by William M. Sloane
New Lives for Old published anonymously, but by Charles P. Snow
Station X by G. McLeod Winsor
Cold Harbour by Francis Brett Young

Looking Backward 2000-1887 by Edward Bellamy
Can Such Things Be? by Ambrose Bierce
The Certain Hour by James Branch Cabell
The Talkers by Robert W. Chambers
Out of The Silence by Erle Cox
The Lost World by Arthur Conan Doyle
Child of Storm by H. Rider Haggard
The Dweller on the Threshold by Robert Hichens
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
R. James (s.B. Ghost Stories)
The Bridge of Wonder by Margery Lawrence
A Voyage to Arcturus by David Lindsay
Devil's Drums by Vivian Meik
Lud-in-the-Mist by Hope Mirrlees
Julia Roseingrave by Robert Paye (Marjorie Bowen)
When the Devil Was Sick by Charles Ross
To Walk the Night by William M. Sloane
Dracula by Bram Stoker
Lukundoo, and Other Stories by Edward Lucas White

The above listing is merely a selection, and I may from time to time think of others to recommend. ((Please do.))

I have never owned or driven a car, but one of the fans drove me to a couple of bookshops yesterday, and I am amazed at the prices now asked for s-f items. For instance, a Book Club edition of A

Touch of Strange by Theodore Sturgeon \$2.50; two 60¢ paperbacks by Merritt in only fairly good condition at \$1.00 each. These examples were from two different shops, so the demand for s-f must be tremendous; and from my point of view as Librarian-Treasurer of the Winnipeg Science Fiction Society, it is going to be impossible for me to purchase items or replace those I dispose of to our members. And if you are interested in the prices asked for early fantasy and science fiction, write for Catalogue #30 just out from Kaleidoscope Books, 1792 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA. 94709. Who has the money to pay such prices? I suppose I should be thankful that my collection is so extensive that I have little need to extend it further.

Robert Coulson, RT. R 3, HARTFORD CITY, IND 47348

I keep meaning to use your evaluation numbers for my YANDRO reviews, but I have never remembered to actually do it. It wouldn't be that hard, if I would get my memory in gear.

As a devotee of facts, I would definitely not recommend the use of any of Moskowitz's books in a school class. They aren't all that accurate. (For that matter, I can't imagine the average student being all that interested in either the biographies of authors or in a history of fandom. I wasn't when I was in school, and I read a lot more than most kids.)

Offhand, I'd say the best Canadian s-f author was Michael Coney, and his books are readily available.

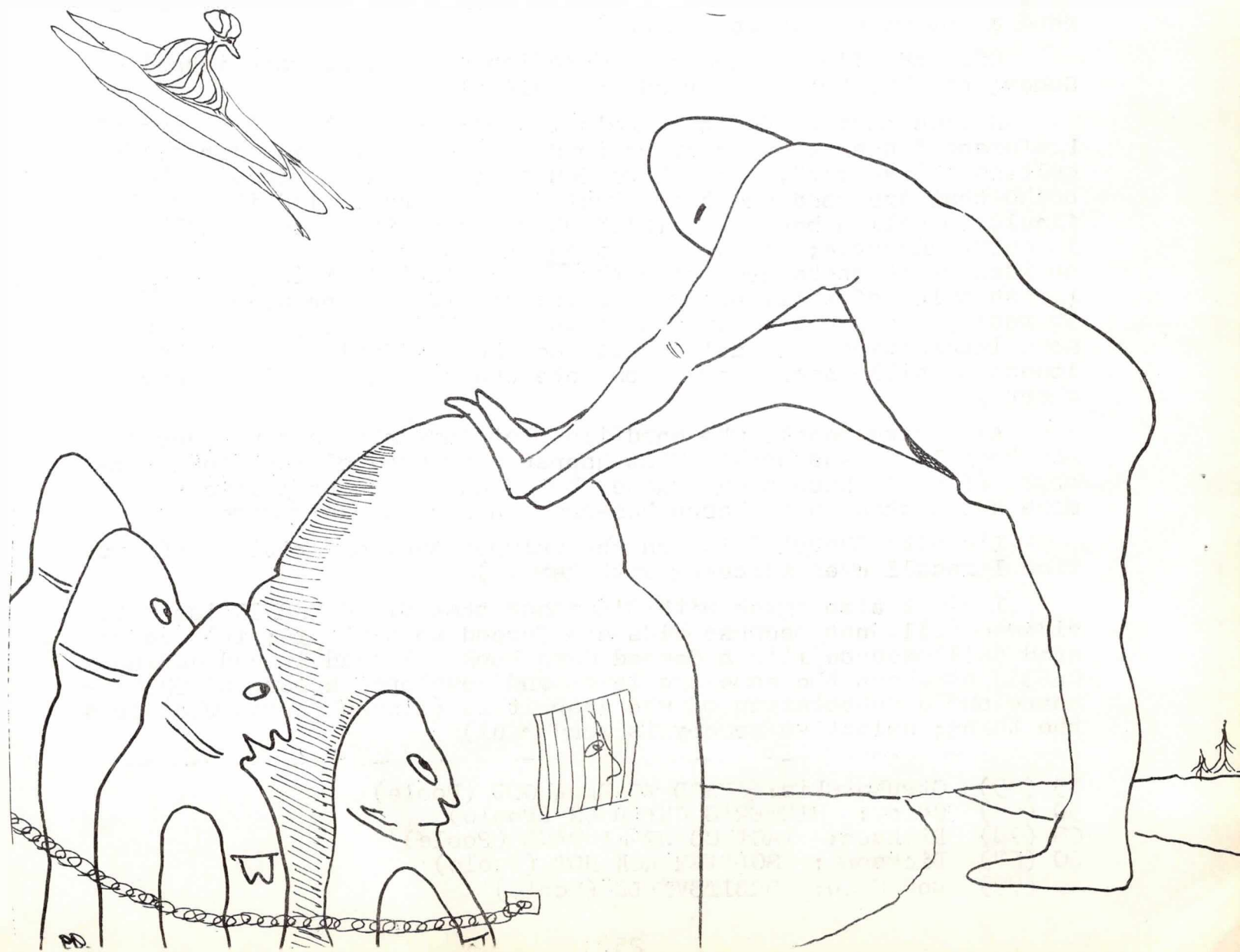
A side note to Denis Quane's letter; you call it a "Personal Preference" chart, but your ratings list objective standards; "excellent", "average", etc. Like Denis, I make a distinction between books that are good and books that I like, and I find it a bit difficult to call a book "terrible" when I know that, technically, it is quite adequate; it just makes me want to upcheck. (Also, I have no idea which books are those that I "couldn't" finish; I don't finish a lot of them, but that's because if they're much below a 50 rating I ditch them and go on to something that promises to be more interesting. I can't quite see the rationale of 22 being the lowest possible score for a complete evaluation, but it's your chart.)

All these people who cardfile plot summaries and whether or not they liked the book! What happened to good old-fashioned memory? (I don't know about Quane, but I know damn well I've read more books than Mark Sharpe has-and own considerably more.)

I'm with Sheryl Smith on the unimportance of critics. (First time I recall ever agreeing with her...)

I might also agree with D'Amassa that SILAS MARNER isn't considered dull just because kids are forced to study it; it's considered dull because it's a damned dumb book. I read it and JULIUS CAESAR at about the same age level and developed a love of Shakespeare and a detestation of who ever it is (I even forgot who wrote the thing; selective memory is wonderful).

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- 83 (85) Strukatskis: HARD TO BE A GOD (Poole)
 - 50 (65) Coney: WINTER'S CHILDREN (Poole)
 - 68 (73) Dickson: TACTICS OF MISTAKE (Poole)
 - 60 (69) Dickson: SOLDIER ASK NOT (Poole)
 - (79) Bob Shaw: ORBITSVILLE (Poole)



Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Drive, East Providence Rhode Island, 02914

Enjoyed most of GG 5/6, but I was particularly offended by Lester Boutillier's letter. Now obviously everyone has a perfect right to be annoyed by, bored by, or otherwise unhappy with a book, but to refer to anything as a filthy piece of new wave garbage is to react with one's own prejudices instead of common sense. Lester quite obviously doesn't care if his statements are consistent with reality in any case, since he alters reality to confirm with his own desire in any case. After all, his statement that all of the original anthologies are "very new wave" implies that Roger Elwood, Robert Silverberg, Terry Carr, Robert Hoskins, and Lin Carter all publish stuff that is new wave. Obviously the term doesn't mean anything. If Lester doesn't like it, it's new wave. This is the same reasoning that leads to Adolf Hitler's; if it isn't what I like, it's wrong. A little tolerance goes a long way, but it's awfully hard to find some times.

Similarly, he categorizes H.G. Wells as optimistic, one of the funnier statements of recent days. And his classification of LeGuin as a "kneejerk liberal" without being specific is mere name calling, and I'm embarrassed to read it in a letter from a fan. Lester would do well to look to his own prejudices and biases before he calls people out on theirs. None of us are perfect, and it behooves us all to be a bit tolerant of other points of view.

Robert Blenheim seems to believe that the ratings are supposed to be a measure of artistic merit. Mine weren't intended that way. They were a (rough) measure of how much I enjoyed the book. In most cases, I'd probably rate them pretty much the same way, I suppose, but I can think of entire groups of authors that I would rank far higher on a scale of enjoyability than on their abilities as writers. He's right though that Clarke's short stories are better than his novels, but he's wrong about Compton and STARSHIP. Wrong, of course, means that he disagrees with me.

I suspect Bill Breiding misrepresents the treatment given to SF by academicians. I also doubt that it takes more logic to SF reasoning, and sharper reading to read SF than mainstream. Some SF is more rewarding than some mainstream, and vice versa. But the bulk of SF is average difficulty escape fiction, no more difficult to read than westerns or mysteries.

I assume that Keith Justice put down "Morgenstern" as the author of THE PRINCESS BRIDE as a joke. The novel is by William Goldman, written as an "edited" version of Morgenstern's manuscript. There is no such real writer.

Sheryl Smith sets too narrow a definition on "criticism". When Jophan goes out and avoids buying a book by Lyle Kenyon Engel in favor of a book by Theodore Sturgeon, he is performing an act of literary criticism.

Ah, here's another section of GG 5/6. Ambitious, aren't you?

My reply to Jerry Lapidus would be the same as that to Sheryl Smith above. I was not rating quality but personal enjoyment. Let's see, it's like saying that I enjoy pizza more than chicken Wellington, even though the better is more artistic, better cooked, and better from a nutritional point of view.

I'm sorry that Malcolm Edwards is suspicious of my reviews. For all of those who question my reading figures, let me elucidate once and for all. From the time I was 14 until I was 18 I read at least three books per day on school days, 5-6 on weekends and through the summer. I am not a speed reader. But I was perfectly willing to read up to 18 hours per day.

Now, by the time I had reached college, I had pretty well caught up with everything that was in print. Now, using figures just off the top of my head, assume that there are 500 new paperback SF books each year. Of there, perhaps 200 are collections or anthologies. Now, since I'd read so much already, including the prozines, almost 80% of these books I'd already read. So by physically reading 340 books, I was effectively reading 500.

Now, obviously the quality and depth of my reviews fluctuates. Some reviews were designedly short, three or four sentence ones. I've recently been doing much more thorough ones for Richard Delap and Keith Justice. But that doesn't mean that I hadn't carefully thought out my opinion of a book before I wrote them. I said I could only properly "criticize" books that I like; I can "review" any of them. And I really should amend that to, I don't really enjoy criticizing a book I didn't like.

It's interesting that Hank Heath feels THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION didn't live up to Delany's reputation, when much of his reputation rests on that specific novel.

Richard Dey

I've put off responding to the GGs that have been going Clung! into my mailbox lately because I've come to feel that The Project has gone hopelessly far ahead of me & I'll never catch up. Also, I no longer understand the rules of the game. I know I'm leaving out something vital when I say I think I'm supposed to browse around in my science fiction collection & science fiction memories & select (& rate) novels & stories ranging from Best I've Ever Read (95) to Couldn't Finish (15). Comments on the Don D'Amassa ratings seem to indicate that these are more than his opinions, but some kind of yardstick against which I am supposed to measure my opinions.

In my case, I'll start with novels I've read within the science fiction genre that I'd rate from a 95 on down, based initially on sheer recollection. And when I rate a book as Best I've Ever Read, I'm thinking of work that has become part of my communication vocabulary writing that had enough insight & entertainment for me that I've come back to it a number of times, recommended it to others, & made use of it in a number of ways. These are the sf or sf-flavored books I would definitely place in the 95s.

1984 by George Orwell. The most powerful extrapolation of the "If this goes on" motif ever done-the most remorseless study of the voluntary surrender of identity ever put into words.

BRAVE NEW WORLDS by Aldous Huxley. The reverse side of the coin-the tyranny of freedom.

THE TIME MACHINE by H.G. Wells. Generally speaking, the most satisfying all-around sf-adventure I've ever read. It has everything from Victorian flavor to sweeping flights of imagination.

FIRST AND LAST MEN by Olaf Stapleton. A novel so far unsurpassed in scope, concept & soaring imagination-how many writers could make mankind itself the hero of a novel which culminated in a solid metaphysical speculation about our destiny-to seed future systems, future planets, when this one becomes too tired to support us. Blish's cities in flight comes close in concept but not in execution.

OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET & THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH by C.S. Lewis. As a child, I was stunned by this account of Mars & other planets populated & controlled by creatures I had relegated to Sunday School superficialities-angels & demons. As an adult, I read THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH & was utterly captivated by its account of the systematic overwhelming of naive Goodness by hard-core, demonic evil, & the depths of folly to which good people can sink in the service of Progress.

THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND by William Hope Hodgson. Great science-fiction/nightmare horror. This 1907 novel ranges from a man in a remote rural house besieged by black pig-men from beneath the earth to projections of the astral self & a journey to the end of the universe & the creation of cosmic matter itself.

THE TRIAL by Franz Kafka. Most New Wave writing is an unconscious imitation of this cautionary novel warning us to resist our desire to assume guilt in the face of paranoid authority. I can think of at least 10 fine sf novels I could trace back to what Kafka began in this novel.

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA by Jules Verne. I've lost track of the number of times I've re-read this novel. It's not just full of prophetic gadgetry, not just a rousing imaginative adventure-it presents Capt. Nemo as the embodiment of the counterculture-the ecologist who fights back, who preserves & defends the balance of nature, and who advocates the kinship of all life.

WHO GOES THERE? by John W. Campbell. One of the finest examples of suspense, imaginative thinking & classic story form in any genre. I rank it with "The Lady of the Tiger?" & "The Most Dangerous Game." I wish it could be filmed as written some day-"The Thing" was a sleazy piece of Chintz compared to the Campbell original.

Since I'm starting a new page, I think I'll take advantage of this pause to say a little more about my criterion for selections on this Best I've Ever Read level. My prime consideration in anything I rate as Best, is that it entertain me enormously, that it stimulates me to share it with others, to go back & enjoy it all over again, to find something new next time thru it, or to find that it means something new to me this time around. Profound ideas don't mean much to me if I'm not entertained & I don't have fun with them. And I can't have fun with imaginative writing if the style isn't splendid, fascinating, vigorous. If the characters don't tie in with what I think I know about other people & then surprise me once in a while, then while it may be delightful and/or engrossing, it's not Prime Cut reading. Lots of sf reading I've done can comfortably fall within the 75-94 range, & I'll get to those titles later. Right now, I'm recalling novels that have given me deep & sustained satisfaction, novels like Joyce's ULYSSES, Beckett's MOLLOY, Laurence Sterne's LIFE & OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY, GENTLEMAN, Melville's MOBY DICK, & many others that have given me great pleasure, right on down to THE NAKED & THE DEAD, CATCH-22 & SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5.

Another thing-I'm against mere laundry lists. I'm not going to list anything I don't have anything to say about. If it wasn't worth a remark, then it wasn't remarkable-even remarkably bad. If I give you some index as to my assessment of a given work of fiction, then you have an index for assessing my evaluation. You know what entertains me, what gives me pleasure, what disappoints me, what aggravates me.

Most science fiction is modeled after the magazine fiction it sprang from-immediate, fast entertainment with some imaginative tickle. The finest has set it's own standards, as has the finest of any other genre. Therefore, when I drop down to the excellent-readable level, I'm talking about the bulk of my sf reading, since I read for pleasure, & am not really too demanding about most of the sf I read-I favor lively, well-plotted sf, ranging right down to typical PLANET STORIES yarns. They satisfy my sense of wonder, but are not sustained experiences. I don't believe in comparing apple to caviar. One should snack on whatever one is in the mood for, & I want my moods to be as wide-ranging as possible so I don't miss any more than I have to this time around.

So, these are the handful of sf novels I'd rank among my finest reading experiences. There are many more that I've enjoyed enormously but due to the light entertainment nature of the genre, I wouldn't rate as Shaping Experiences.

Jon Noble, 2/208 Hereford St., NSW 2037, Australia

I have been meaning to write to you for some time concerning The Project. I am not only interested in this from the point of view of a fan, but also from a professional viewpoint as next year I hope to be a librarian in a NSW secondary school, & while I know what sort of SF I like, and can even vaguely remember what sort of sf I liked when I was in high school, I am less sure of what others, newer to the field, and with less jaded tastes would appreciate.

My eventual aim is to produce some sort of "basie" (ha ha!) listing of "juvenile" SF and fantasy, from to point of view of not just getting the kids to read SF, but to read anything. My experience from practice teaching was that the novelizations of the TV series STAR TREK and DR. WHO, and books with movie stills of SF films were particually popular, but this was in a school where a great number of the students have trouble reading anything in English.

I'll try to do you some Personal Preference Evaluations if you want, but it is far to early to promise trying to get my students involved in the Project, for although I'm trained as a librarian, the NS Dept. of Education is quite likely to post me as a music teacher of something, when my appointment comes up early next year.

Van Ikin, Editor, ENIGMA Department of English University of Sydney, NSW 2006 Australia

I think The Project is an excellent idea--really excellent. And certainly, in the Australian context at least, a necessary idea. Over the last couple of years ENIGMA has been receiving review copies of some sf titles. Since Australia tends to import nearly all its sf, these titles come from the distributors and agents rather than from the publishers themselves, and usually those distributors have neither much interest in sf nor much understanding of the genre. One of the local distributors, the ones acting for Ballantine, Signet, New English/American Library and other imprints--are a bit more enlightened. They're trying to promote, and so they have been using ENIGMA and its reviewers to try to assess the schoolroom suitability of some of their titles. The Project, of course, is just the thing that is needed to speed up this process and make it more reliable and consistent.

Incidentally, I devoted a four page spread to the Project in the most recent ENIGMA (copying out your flyer on The Project) and Kevin Dillon paid us to print off an extra 300 copies for distribution, so in due course you may start to get a trickle of responses from Australia. You'll certainly get some from me personally, and I tend to do a lot of sf reading. ((Wonderful))

95 LeGuin--LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS-(Neal Wilgus)

85 Shea and Wilson--ILLUMINATUS-(Neal Wilgus)

75 Leary--WHAT DOES WOMAN WANT?-(Neal Wilgus)

65 Gerrold--THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF-(Neal Wilgus)

Robert Whitaker, P.O. Box 7649 Newark, Delaware 19711

Got your GUYING GYRE #5/6 and thank you. I haven't responded to The Project earlier, mostly because I wasn't too sure if my comments were useful or required. (I haven't any excuse other than that, so be it...)

Anyways...I kind of agree with Sheryl Smith. The material I enjoy is not going to be accepted with readiness by someone who is 15-19 years of age. I'd love to infect people and have them read something as Compton's SYNTHAJoy or Delany's NOVA or Lafferty's PAST MASTER. As Sheryl says, there is a line one must draw, as these works are more likely to distract than attract.

The sort of material which profoundly moved me then, I bring up and put forth now as "proven" examples of material of what made me an SF freak:

THE LIVES AND TIMES OF ARCHY AND MEHITABEL by Don Marquis--95--basically this is a comic strip adapted to "free verse" from (it varies--it is all types of poetry), and if you could get the kids to accept its joke, you'd have a hell of a time discussing all the philosophy and metaphysics and humour and satire in it. I'd rate it a 100%, except there are a couple of dated lines within it and obscure references which are cleared up only if you know Don Marquis work (which I do).

WAY STATION--Clifford D. Simak--95. Direct, though complex (plot structure) the emotions involved are understandable for that age group.

"He Who Shrank" Henry Hasse--a short novel--90. Awe inspiring.

"Mechanical Mice"--"Maurice A. Hugi" (actually written by Eric Frank Russell, though he let it appear under his friend's name. Hugi needed the money...)--ss 90.

Sheryl is right as far as Bradbury's short fiction goes. I like the man still, though I don't read as much of him as I used to. He has paled on me, and his type of stories belong to the age group under discussion.

I would dearly like to settle down and clip away at this typewriter and tell you by %es how much I enjoyed so and so, but I am quite afraid the thing/end result would not be quite honest. You see, some of the books I enjoyed long ago have loomed large in my mind as fond remembrances, and I might unfairly overestimate them. I wonder if anyone else can honestly say they remember a certain book as 65! "Ah yes," says Don Keller, "I recall giving 22 to Colin Wilson's THE MIND PARASITES." Though, when I knew Keller back here some years ago, he might have given it a 2 rating, since he ranted for some ten minutes in front of me once on how much he hated that book. He hated it to the extent he gave it away and that is quite unlike Don (it was given to Jeff Smith, who read the book and enjoyed the footnotes, claiming that was the book's sole entertaining feature...). So I wonder. ((A 22 is the lowest number he can give a book he has read!))

I rated the above nostalgic pieces because--A) I read ARCHY & etc, constantly, and it continues to unfold and enlarge in my mind. B) I've read the other things within the past six months and found them to hold up very well. Bradbury will move me if I don't find fault in the emotional/mental logic of the story's construction. Bradbury can be so illogical in his thinking its

funny. (Wait until LEVITHAN 99 comes out. It is "Moby Dick in Outer Space" A blinded man who chases a comet...)

WAY STATION, in particular, brought tears to my eyes. It is, quite simply, a great novel. The writing is quite easy to understand, and once someone gets caught in the gentle persuasive narrative flow, it is very hard to pull oneself away from it and put the book down. I read it in the bathtub. Ever sit in a bathtub for two hours?

Marty Levine, 1023 Elizabeth Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221

I've been thinking alot about Delany's writing lately (last week) and I've tried to reason out exactly why I like it so much. I read other people's comments on individual authors in conjunction with their PPENs, so I guess I have something to add about why I gave Delany the scores that he got. What follows are actually excerpts from my diary that I've been keeping since '73.

* * *

A certain word of explanation must be given as to why I like Delany's writing overall. First of all, the reason anyone likes any writer's works is because he likes the way he writes what he writes about. That's my simple definition.

Since I am only modestly able to comment on the literary worth of what I call an "artist's" (as opposed to a "writer's") writing, I will concentrate on why I like what he writes about.

Besides, of course, the general wide enjoyment of his works, it is the elements of mysticism, mystery, obscurity, entirely new and unheard of speculation, the fantastic; the scenes, characters, and places that are extravagantly fanciful, terribly beautiful, delightful, even wonderfully odd, yet so real! The vivid imagery, the fantastic imagination it must take to write like this, and still it is all so real! Even when the short stories or various parts of some novels verge on fantasy, I cannot emphasize enough how real it all is.

Perhaps by giving examples of the fantastic elements I can show what I mean.

THE FALL OF THE TOWERS-The war, the "you are trapped in that bright moment where you learned your doom" phenomenon, the encounters with the Lord of the Flames.

THE BALLAD OF BETA-2-The Destroyer and Children.

EMPIRE STAR-The brass claws (sometimes referred to as 'orchids'; a recurring "device" or "element" in Delany's writing), Jewel's crystallization, the Lll, Lump, the "end".

THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION-The Kid's and Green-eye's abilities, mutants in general, dragon herding, Lobey's instrument/weapon.

NOVA-The Syryn timer, the city Mouse was in the Beginning (Hell?) Much more.

DHALGREN-The whole mysterious novel, specifically kid's origin and notebook, the sun and moon's behavior, the prism and lens chains, scorpions, The Bellona Times, Bellona, Lanya's party dress, the whole thing-even, of course, the damn title!

TRITON-vlet, micro-theater, others.

DRIFTGLASS AND OTHER STORIES-Again to many to name, though the last story stands out as having the most fantastic elements. (This is "Night and the Loves of Joe Dicostanzo"). There were Joe and Max's "powers", the party, the one-eyed boy, Max's secret job, the clocks, and a thousand others. The imagery/writing of the entire book impressed me SO MUCH. "The Star Pit"'s ecologariums, the Golden, the star-pit and the world-wind over the Edge, Corona"'s song, "Aye, and Gomorrah"'s spacers and frelks, "Time Considered..."'s passwords, fading fabrics, Hawk the Singer...I could go on.

I just finished BABEL-17. There's Rydra Wong and her crew of Slug, Brass, a triple, Eye, Ear, and Nose, and the rest, cosmetic surgery and discorporates, the Baron's weapons, and all the language tricks: having to switch 'you' and 'I' for four pages, and having Jebel command his fighters with psychological terms like 'Neurotics advance, Schizoids disperse' things like that. I think it really blew my mind when Jebel said, "Neurotics proceed with delusions of grandeur."

God knows what "The Jewels of Aptor" is like! And Don Keller of KHATRU mentioned THE TIDES OF LUST. When did that come out? I never saw that. Wonder where I can find it?

Forget plot. DHALGREN neither has one nor needs one-neither does "...Joe Dicostanzo", "Time Considered..." others. Of course one could use a good plot-this is the main attraction for most SF novels-but plot is not necessary. What is facsinating are the scenes/worlds Delany's characters wander through/live in/run from, and how fantastic Delany describes them and writes about what happens in them.

In 3 words: SENSE OF WONDER.

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Names and recurring things: Several recurring items-brass claws, fading fabrics, Bellona (it's on Mars in TRITON, "High Weir", on Earth in DHALGREN, "Time Considered...", of course, it's probably just a physical setting for Delany's metaphysical ideas. Like you said, it may just be heaven.), alot of metal, light, and earth element imagery. At least one Main or minor character per novel is a poet, writer, author, or musician.

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Characters in Sf are named in 3 different ways.

- 1) Earth names-recognizable noises we use for names today.
- 2) Future names-un-recognizable noises they might use for names tomorrow.
- 3) Labels-Things like Lump, Dragon Lady, Nightmare, The Kid.

Looking at Delany's 'labels': Animals, elements, color, and the fantastic are emphasized. There are 4 HAWK's: HAWK, THE HAWK, and HAWK THE SINGER, the latter 2 in one story. There are KIDD, THE KID, and KID DEATH. There are SILVER DRAGON and DRAGON LADY, and two SPIDERS. And of course 3 BRIANS and a BRON in TRITON, which makes 4 BRONS in one story if you've got a certain British accent I once heard. (Wait a minute. Do people read in their accents?) I have a long list of all the labels that I could remember or look up, if you want it. 68 in all, but I'll spare you now.

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Delany says on/p.339 in the first appendix of TRITON that SF allows the writer to present the hyperrational. I believe it's because Delany has a fantastic ability to present the hyperration-

al that I love his writing so much.

Now, "hyperrational" isn't in my "American College Dictionary" but through the context it was used in (Delany listed it with the "dazzling" and exceptional") and by knowing what the prefix means, I take the hyperrational elements to be those parts of the story or aspects of a story's world that exaggerate and extend the rational, yet are still rational.

There you have it---wonderfully imaginative yet real, hyper-rational yet still rational.

And beautiful.

But then of course I don't claim that any of the above diary excerpts are either very original or useful, but it explains my position. Since I just discovered and/or wrote them down, they are original for me.

.....

I didn't realise how busy you are. I just remembered reading somewhere that you get 150 fanzines (I think in PHOS), so you have at least 50 times as many people to write to each month as I do!

You're an English teacher, huh? God, mine would tear this letter apart-he HATES dashes. Speaking of him, all we read were the 'classics'. One SF book, last year, was all. It was CHILDHOOD'S END. So I read it again for the class. So all we do is spend one period on it, and get a quiz asking 'What was the color of Karellen's tail?' and other dumb things. This is what I get asked in the advanced English class. Sometimes I think it's only worth it 'cause of the de-emphasis on grammar. Every student must hate grammar. It must be ingrained in you from birth; that, and cafeteria food.

Well, this year we read Fitzgerald (I wrote in my diary "THE GREAT GATSBY"-bah! I understand what's going on, but nothing is! I quit reading it after that. MOBY DICK I liked. There were some other good ones, but I guess the other classics were probably so ancient that they kept them on as a tradition.

I know, I'm getting sarcastic here, but when I think of what the average person thinks of science fiction, I can't really believe anything labelled as "classics". We read some very good 'classics', and some bad ones.

And my teacher had to find deep meaning in every poem we read. One called "The Waterfowl" he really tore apart and stuck back together again. It was an obvious allegory of a duck's life symbolizing a man's life. But the whole class thought he was reading too much into it, so we played along, thinking up wild meanings for it. We put that poem back together sideways and made it into a revelation on the true meaning of life.

The next poem we did was Sandburg's "The Skyscraper". We told him it was about a duck.

He got the message.

I'm down on English teachers-I think you've got a fabulous thing going-but the ones I seem to get don't want to stray from any established methods.

Robert Whitaker, P.O. Box 7649, Newark, Delaware 19711

I'm afraid I can't put books on a scale like someone else-- it sounds too simple, when it involves several dozen items of consequence. I find the rating system interesting, but find it far too pat. It might make things simple for someone who cannot critically analyse something, or state actual reasons for something being likeable or disliked, but I prefer detail. Also, the bit I mentioned about time and several hundred books I've already read and the way my memory works plays into this. I'm not going to go down Don D'Amassa's list and rate the one's I've read, simply because my memory isn't fair. Sometimes a good writer often leaves no visible trace of how excellent a story was to me unless I peek at a couple of pages, or relive the entire story by re-reading it. (Happens with Sturgeon a lot--can't really identify story and titles sometimes. Sturgeon gives his stories such lousy titles. Right at this moment I'm running a Sturgeon story through my head that I read last night, recall names, details, events and dialogue, but I cannot recall its title.)

Richard Brandt, 4013 Sierra Drive, Mobile, AL 36609

I never seem to agree with Lester Boutillier, but I don't share his astonishment at A CANTICLE FOR LIEBOWITZ being termed "literary". I mean, the book has vivid and accessible characters is written in a fluent literary style, and reveals a strong knowledge of and familiarity with Catholic tradition and Christian theology; that book is my idea of Lit, lemme tell ya. (Ratings for THE PROJECT follow in good time.)

Later in GG 5/6, Malcolm Edwards is astonished that Don D'A claims to have read what amounts to more than two books a day for 14 years. Well, personally, I can reveal that in High School I went through a period where I read two books a day, after school. The feat is by no means incomprehensible, but I found it hard on the eyes, however, if I hope to overcome my embarrassment while checking how many books I've read on Don's list, I may have to resort to such tactics.

Good idea on getting kids to read what they want; I believe my older sister taught me to read from the GIRL SCOUT HANDBOOK. In school, tho, I always followed my interests; in the second grade, I was a bona fide expert on paleontology, and in the fifth grade I could have mapped out for you just about every footstep of the Normandy invasion. First sf book was a battered pb of Sheckley stories at my piano teachers; except for my years-long Verne period, next sf I read was ROCKET SHIP GALILEO when I saw the name Heinlein on an assigned booklist around fifth grade (I knew the man's name before his work, see.)

And now, finally, for an indication of where I've been since then, my contribution of evaluations (all personal) to the project; some of these having been read many years ago, they are all based primarily on emotional reactions to the book; then, I respond most satisfyingly to a well-written book, especially if it's conceptually exciting sf. Have fun.

95 Miller A CANTICLE FORE	(95 will be my top ratings)
LIEBOWITZ	85 Brunner STAND ON ZANZIBAR
80 Aldiss FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND	70 Brunner STONE THAT NEVER CAME
83 Aldiss EIGHTY MINUTE HOUR	DOWN
65 Anderson BRAIN WAVE	55 Brunner DRAMATURGES OF YAN

65 Anderson PEOPLE OF THE WIND	65 Heinlein BEYOND THE HORIZON
15 Anthony MACROSCOPE (After a while, I just couldn't maintain interest)	85 Heinlein GLORY ROAD
85 Asimov I, ROBOT	65 Heinlein LETHBRIDGE'S CHILDREN
85 Asimov CAVES OF STEEL	85 Heinlein STRANGER IN STRANGE LAND
85 Asimov THE REST OF THE ROBOTS	85 Heinlein ROLLING STONES (excellent for a class)
80 Asimov FOUNDATION	55 Heinlein ROCKET SHIP GALILEO
85 Asimov FOUNDATION AND EMPIRE	45 Heinlein FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD
80 Asimov SECOND FOUNDATION	75 Heinlein STARSHIP TROOPERS
85 Asimov NAKED SUN	55 Heinlein I WILL FEAR NO EVIL
70 Asimov END OF ETERNITY	75 Heinlein REVOLT IN 2100
75 Asimov THE GODS THEMSELVES	85 Herbert DUNE
75 Ballard DROWNED WORLD	55 Hoyle ROCKETS IN URSA MAJOR
65 Ballard CONCRETE ISLAND (packaged as mainstream)	55 Koontz BEASTCHILD
75 Blish A TORRENT OF FACES	80 Laumer WORLD SHUFFLER (good fun)
75 Blish CITIES IN FLIGHT (but awful long if taken as a whole)	35 LeGuin LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS
65 Blish MIDSUMMER CENTURY	35 LeGuin LATHE OF HEAVEN
65 Blish BLACK EASTER	55 LeGuin PLANET OF EXILE
55 Blish JACK OF EAGLES	75 Leiber SPECTRE HAUNTING TEXAS
60 Brackett GINGER STAR	65 Leiber THE BIG TIME
50 Brunner THE JAGGED ORBIT	80 Leiber CONJURE WIFE
50 Brunner TOTAL ECLIPSE	65 Malzberg BEYOND APOLLO
50 Brunner WRONG END OF TIME	55 Malzberg THE MEN INSIDE (aha!)
65 Christopher NO BLADE OF GRASS	55 McCaffrey THE SHIP WHO SANG
65 Clarke AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT	75 Niven RINGWORLD
75 Clarke CHILDHOOD'S END	65 Niven NOTE IN GOD'S EYE
65 Clarke THE SANDS OF MARS	75 Norton OPERATION TIME SEARCH
55 Clarke PRELUDE TO SPACE	85 Silverberg DYING INSIDE
70 Clarke 2001	55 Silverberg TOWER OF GLASS
70 Clement CLOSE TO CRITICAL	55 Silverberg TIME OF CHANGES
55 Compton CHRONOCULES	55 Silverberg TIME HOPPERS
55 Davidson URSUS OF ULTIMA TH.	45 Silverberg SECOND TRIP
75 DeCamp INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER	55 Silverberg LOST RACE OF MARS
78 DeCamp FALLIBLE FIEND	35 Silverberg STOCHASTIC MAN
75 Delany BABEL 17	55 Silverberg MASKS OF TIME
60 Delany DHALGREN (Wouldn't have minded the mystery if his style had remained coherent)	85 Simak CITY
85 Del Rey NERVES	85 Simak WAY STATION
45 Del Rey MOON OF MUTINY	65 Simak CEMETERY WORLD
65 Del Rey TUNNEL THROUGH TIME	75 Simak ALL FLESH IS GRASS
65 Dick DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF...?	80 Spinrad BUG JACK BARRON
55 Dick SIMULACRA	65 Spinrad IRON DREAM
55 Dick WE CAN BUILD YOU	80 Sturgeon MORE THAN HUMAN (center section alone would rate higher)
55 Dick GALACTIC POT HEALER	75 Tucker THE LINCOLN HUNTERS
65 Dickson THE PRITCHER MASS	55 Vance TRULLION: ALASTOR 2262
55 Farmer FABULOUS RIVERBOAT	65 Vance ANONE, BRAVE FREE MEN
70 VENUS ON THE HALF SHELL	
55 Gerrold WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE	
55 Harrison TUNNEL THROUGH DEEPS	
55 Harrison STAINLESS STEEL RAT SAVES THE WORLD	
75 Heinlein MOON IS A HARSH MRS.	
75 Heinlein DOUBLE STAR	
85 Heinlein DOOR INTO SUMMER	

65 Van Vogt SLAM	55 Benford JUPITER PROJECT
65 Van Vogt WORLD OF NULL-A	85 Bester THE DEMOLISHED MAN
85 Vonnegut SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE	85 Bester THE STARS MY DESTINATION
85 Vonnegut CAT'S CRADLE	95 Bradbury THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES
75 Vonnegut PLAYER PIANO	85 Bradbury FAHRENHEIT 451
65 Vonnegut BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS	80 Burgess CLOCKWORK ORANGE
75 Wells WAR OF THE WORLDS	55 Burroughs GODS OF MARS
85 Wells THE TIME MACHINE	55 Burroughs WARLORD OF MARS
75 Wells THE INVISIBLE MAN	65 Crichton ANDROMEDA STRAIN
75 Wells ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU	70 Eklund BEYOND THE RESURRECTION (picks up halfway through)
55 Wells WORLD SET FREE	80 Garrett TOO MANY MAGICIANS
75 White LIFEBOAT	70 Geston OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON
75 Wilhelm THE FOREVER AFFAIR (packaged as, of all things, a Romance; do I have you, D'Amassa?)	75 Goulart SHAGGY PLANET
55 Williamson MOON CHILDREN (good ideas, & characterization, but shares problem of Wyndhamesque narrator who sleeps thru crucial event)	75 Hersey MY PETITION FOR MORE SPACE
45 Wylie AFTER WORLDS COLLIDE	95 Huxley BRAVE NEW WORLD
45 Wylie GLADIATOR	75 Knight A FOR ANYTHING
80 Wyndham REBIRTH	75 Laubenthal EXCALIBUR (ahem)
75 Wyndham DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS	55 Lem SOLARIS
65 Wyndham OUT OF THE DEEPS	45 Levin THIS PERFECT DAY
75 Zelazny TODAY WE CHOOSE FACES	75 Levin ROSEMARY'S BABY
75 Abe INTER ICE AGE NINE	85 Lewis PERELANDRA
65 Anvil PANDORA'S PLANET	85 Matheson I AM A LEGEND
75 Russ AND CHAOS DIED	65 Nolan SPACE FOR HIRE
85 Russ PICNIC ON PARADISE	85 Panshin RITE OF PASSAGE
65 Siodmak THIRD EAR	45 Pendelton 1989: POP. DOOMSDAY
85 Shelly FRANKENSTEIN	75 Shute ON THE BEACH
85 Tolkein HOBBIT, LOTR	55 Smith FIRST LENSMAN
85 Verne JOURNEY TO CENTER OF EARTH	85 Stewart THE CRYSTAL CAVE
85 Verne VOYAGE TO BOTTOM OF SEA	75 Stewart EARTH ABIDES
85 Verne FROM EARTH TO MOON	85 L'Engle A WRINKLE IN TIME (a perfect intro to "sci-fi", and a marvelous book besides)
	75 L'Engle VOYAGE TO THE MUSHROOM PLANET (which I remember as being good, and not much else)

Dave Haugh:

Please excuse my note using a typewriter and making you puzzle out my handwriting. First for some numbers: "Imperial Earth" Arthur Clarke 85, Shudik (didn't finish), "Epoch" short stories edit Silverberg & Grwoud 92, "Where Late The Sweet Birds Sang" Wilhelm 53.

Now for comments, G.G. 5/6. In this olympic year I give you the gold medal for marathon achievement. Myself I give a new pair of glasses for reading everything! It was strange to see all the titles I'd forgotten, and even more I'd never seen. I'll be sure and put G.G. 5/6 in my reference pile. (Gee! I ment to write file-hmmn!)

The Nature of Science Fiction

by

Ken Huff

That's an ambitious title. We've probably all, at one time or another, engaged in that age-old controversy of what makes science fiction what it is, and how it relates to the mainstream. Fans often go overboard in displaying contempt for what has been labeled "message fiction." They claim to enjoy action-oriented literature much more than the mainstream, which is too tedious and "prosy".

To begin with, science fiction as a genre-heading is misleading, for much sf deals little or not at all with hard science. It deals mainly with the future, with people confronted with what the future may bring. Generally, sf tells us what hasn't happened yet, while mainstream literature seeks to tell us something about ourselves through past or present events.

Why all this talk of sf "proving" itself? Do we have to prove something the genres of western, romance, or detective stories have not already proven, or accepted? I've never heard a peep out of them. Don't they want this literary-liberation also?

Science fiction, as literature, is almost worthless. Where do you find the type of conflicts which make good literature? William Faulkner said the only thing worth writing about is fear, the "truths of the heart in conflict with itself, which alone can make good writing." We are not always "afraid" something will happen, but when that fright does occur, it is what makes a good story. Let me put this into the perspective of science fiction: spaceship pilot Bradley crashes on an unknown world, has possibly been shot out of space by an unseen ship. Apart from his conflict with the new environment around him, Bradley is concerned with the problems of: survival, repairing his ship, wondering if the aliens will come after him, concern that he may not be able to repair the sub-space radio to warn Earth of this unexpected threat. Fear.

But so often this is played down 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. Faulkner also tells of authors who write "not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and, worst of all, without pity or compassion." His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. "He writes not of the heart but of the glands."

No, not all science fiction needs to be this way. But until we produce more authors like Arthur C. Clarke, and Ursula LeGuin, we'll never amount to much in the big literary scheme of things.

This brings me to phase two of my approach to the nature of science fiction. That being that sf need not compare in any other way to the mainstream other than that quoted from Faulkner. All authors have their cheap written-to-pay-the-rent stories, and they have (in far fewer cases) moments of brilliance. I will use Larry Niven as an example. Remember Faulkner's statement; "victories without hope...defeats in

handling of s-f will encourage students to read independently and enjoy themselves in the process, but I don't think you're treating s-f with the seriousness it deserves. It seems to me the course you teach is designed to help poor readers, regardless of what it is they're given to improve their skills; it's nice that the emphasis is on s-f, but I can't believe that your students will end up appreciating or understanding it more than they would if subjected to the rigours of a normal English course. I realize most of us read s-f for entertainment alone (and use that as a guide by which to rate what we read), but so are your students reading s-f for the fun of it, and in that sense, what you teach isn't really a s-f course at all; it does sound like one damn fine way to improve reading skills, and for that you're to be congratulated, but the s-f is there by chance alone. I'm sure the same thing could be accomplished with any type of literature other than s-f, and perhaps more effectively too. At least you're popularizing the genre, though, and in that sense doing something worthwhile; why, you're performing a service.

I have read neither DHALGREN nor TRITON, and frankly, haven't the least inclination to do so. From what letters and reviews I've read that in some way concern Delany's two books, both (and DHALGREN in particular) are successful because interpretation of them differs so widely; controversial books are those which raise the greatest number of questions, which explains why the Classics remain popular because they contain so many timeless questions. This does not, as far as I'm concerned, make DHALGREN a great book. For it, like many other new-wave works, raises questions which are unanswerable, and as a result the message it tries to convey does not reach the reader (though there are those readers who like to think they have all the answers). That's why I found the author's afterwards in DANGEROUS & AGAIN DANGEROUS VISIONS so valuable; the brief explanation at the end of a story many times threw what was a cryptic mess into clear focus. I only wish Delany would come forth and throw some light on his stuff, though I suppose that would be like a magician revealing the answers to his tricks.

Arthur D. Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Ave. New Rochelle, NY 10801

Thanks for GG 5/6. I found the evaluations interesting, though I can't help suspecting that a final average would be as valid as the statistic proving that the average American has one breast & one testicle. I don't think that the ratings (mine anyway) are even reliable, in the statistical sense; i.e., if you asked me to rate the books again, without looking at my original ratings, I suspect that I would give some of them different numbers. (But I do have one correction. I think I gave STAND ON ZANZIBAR a 95, and if I didn't, I should have.)

I suppose it's more useful for your purposes to have all the evaluations of one book together, but I personally would have preferred it if you'd arranged the lists by evaluator. Since I already have a pretty good idea of my own tastes, the only way an evaluation would affect my reading choices would be if it came from someone whose reading preferences are similar to mine. (There don't seem to be many of those.)

Ursula LeGuin hardly needs "defending" by likes of me, but I feel I must protest Lester Boutillier's reference to her as a

"kneejerk liberal." It should be self-evident that her political & social philosophy is a carefully thought-out whole, rather than a set of conditioned reflexes. To take the most obvious example, "kneejerk liberalism" would include the belief that the only answer to poverty is bigger & better intervention by the State, which is hardly the point of view in THE DISPOSSESSED.

That was a truly inspired retitling (intentional or otherwise) on HADON OF ANCIENT OPAR (yellow p.7). It's the sort of thing I send in to the F & SF contests (and lose, because of their good-taste fetish).

A loud cheer for Don D'Amassa's comments on education. Many people believe that school not only is oppressive & boring, but should be (to prepare the kids for Real Life). This is a major rationale for continuing to teach the Old Math (spending hours of drill work that can be done faster & more accurately on a \$20 machine), along with the argument that if you teach the New Math, parents can't help the kids with their homework, which really means that the parents would have to learn something themselves-- a prospect many adults regard with fear & loathing.

Eric Mayer says that THE SCARLET LETTER is not a good book for HS because "what do HS kids know about adultery?" Actually, when I had the opportunity to read it, the class' unanimous opinion was that they'd left out all the good stuff.

You want more evaluations? You got 'em (enclosed).

Bayley: Garments of Caean-75	Bova: The Starcrossed-75
Clarke: Imperial Earth-75	Davidson: The Enquiries of Dr.
Delany: Triton-35	Esterhazy-75
DeWeese & Coulson: Now You See	Dozois & Effinger: Nightmare
It-45	Blue-45
Eklund: Serving in Time-45	Effinger: Those Gentle Voices-
Goldin: Herds-65, Scavenger	65
Hunt-75	Gotschalk: Growing Up in Tier
Koontz: Night Chills-65	3000-65
Lornquest: Moonlovers-25	Lupoff: Crak in the Sky-65,
Malzberg: Gamesman-45,	Triune Man-85
Guernica Night-65	Niven & Purnelle: Note in God's
Nelson: Blake's Progress-75	Eye-65, Inferno-75
Pohl: Man Plus-35	Reynolds: Ability Quotient-45,
Simak: Shakespeare's Planet-65	SectionG-65, Day After Tomorrow
Zebrowski: Star Web-55	-35, Rolltown-65

Jeff Clark, 2329 Second Ave San Diego, CA. 92101

With a sense of not-too-solemn duty I must side with Don D'Amassa on the issue of literary criticism's value. Sheryl Smith's (repeatedly voiced) views I once held, but hold now only in a limited way. Science fiction--and literature in general--cannot do without criticism, whether or not you happen to like reading it. More and more I find myself agreeing with Stanislaw Lem's perception that the disaster our culture (specifically literary, here) is courting is due to the fact that criticism can no longer keep up with the printed output, can no longer perform its function adequately, preserving and directing attention to that which is vital and valuable. Without this function, things tend toward an arbitrary meandering in a sea of effluvia. Sheryl's examples for showing that the necessity of criticism is "tommyrot" are, unfortunately, less than pertinent. Historical context must

be observed. Our civilization is not in the "oral tradition" phase, nor in the phase of Shakespeare's time. Special considerations intervening in his case include the state of the (English) language and of literary forms, besides the new outlook of the Renaissance in general. I think it was Wells who made the off-hand comment that, sure, we got a Shakespeare and an unprecedented number of great writers--but the language was in such a rich, malleable shape that you could hardly strike it without sending out beautiful sparks....Why not the whole truth, this can be admitted without doing injustice to Willie the unique artist. And he, among others, was at the time breaking away from a limited set of stale forms and rules, heading into supple new areas. But there's been a helluva lot of written literature since his time, and a helluva lot of diversification of form in that bulk. We've got genres coming out our ears. And at the same time many of the most sensitive writers and readers are no longer innocent or innocently satisfied about the (prodigious?) capacities of the verbal/fictional art. Metafictional dynamics, the aesthetics of silence--that's all part of it. All part, too, of a ferment as critical as it is creative (in the usual sense). Matthew Arnold spoke of great art as a function of the man and the moment--the "moment" being the critical, intellectual situation or atmosphere. Think of the really challenging, exciting sf writers: do you think Delany, LeGuin and the like aren't significantly in touch with the "moment" or whatever you care to call it? (Recall the LeGuin quote you included on page 16 of GG 5/6 part II.)

No--criticism is necessary; certainly to our socio-cultural context.

Where I do tend to agree with Sheryl and slight its worth is on the matter of sf criticism as it now exists, by and large. Most of it isn't that valuable sort I mean in my comments above. It may be personally valuable, but not much more. And when I say this I'm including the efforts of people like Don, Sheryl and myself. Of all the sercon material, what's really worthwhile will only be apparent with time, and probably not by us. (And, of course, such criticism's value or influence may be indirect, incomplete--the critic's work not much remembered for itself....What can you expect? Who can take the stuff seriously in this best of all possible genres?)

Stanislaw Lem:

98--THE CYBERIAD

95--THE FUTURALOGICAL CONGRESS

Mike Shoemaker, 2132 North Early St. Alexandria, VA. 22302

I just filled a long-standing gap in my reading by reading Ward Moore's Bring the Jubilee. I rate this novel a 93. It has some of the best characterization I've ever seen in SF. Another I've just read is Jack Williamson's The Legion of Time which I give a 64, mostly because of its originality for when it was written. Historically, this is a very important novel, but also very pulpish. I just read Fritz Leiber's Destiny Times Three and I judge Don's low rating of it to be the most astonishing single stat. Yet in The Project. I rate it a 93. It's a novel of Van Vogtian complexity, adventure and imagination, but written with Leiber's ability for creating atmosphere. Very well-written and suspenseful.

Lynne Holdom, P.O. Box 5, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

I work at a bookstore which gives me quite a perspective on what sells and what people are actually reading. First of all most of the mainstream best sellers are from TV shows (Happy Days related books sell well), are about plantation life in the ante bellum South, are set during WW2, or are by Harold Robbins and/or Taylor Caldwell. So called classics sell very slowly and when we get a run one, you can bet some teacher assigned it. Gothics are big sellers especially those by Barbara Cartland which are all so much alike that they are numbered so people can tell them apart. And if you think SF has too many happy endings, well the average Gothic should be avoided by anyone with even borderline diabetes. SF does very well and our sales patterns would tend to back up your class's choices rather than those of most fanzine critics. Series books--- the Gor novels, the Scorpio novels, ERB books, Lin Carter books all sell like mad. Personally I rather deplore this as I don't like this sort of SF but we're probably going to get more of it as publishers want stuff that sells. The well known authors like Asimov, Heinlein, Anderson, Clarke and Niven all sell well as does Ursula LeGuin but Delany doesn't. DHALGREN sold well for a while but now we couldn't give it away and TRITON is doing very badly. A lot of fen said they didn't like DHALGREN and weren't going to buy any more books by that author. However the area where fen seem to be most ready to try new authors is in that borderline area between fantasy and SF. The DERYNI books sell well as do the Dragon books by Anne McCaffrey. Leigh Brackett and M. Z. Bradley's books sell well also. Andre Norton is a perennial favorite. Swann sells slowly but steadily. Based on this Kuttner and Moore, Moorcock, Hamilton and Kline probably would too if their books were reissued. Readers want escapist adventure and heroes who triumph at the end--at least the majority of those who actually buy SF do. About the only down SF that sells is the disaster novel. The latest one I've read is THE ST. FRANCIS EFFECT by Zach Hughes (62) in which the mosquitoes are coming. They'll probably make a movie out of it. Even a mediocre adventure SF novel sells better than an excellent literary one and publishers have to live too. So Silverberg gets annoyed with his publishers and quits SF. Well I don't want to be too nasty but I'm turned off by his self pitying heroes. Why don't they do something besides moaning about their plight. I don't like self-pity in people I associate with and I certainly don't want to pay to read about some other slob that does the same. I've got problems of my own and I won't inflict mine on you if you'll refrain from inflighting yours on me. Sure a person sometimes needs understanding and a shoulder to cry on but all the time? I've known people who wouldn't be happy in heaven and Silverberg's protagonists strike me as being that type. I'm evidently not alone in this feeling as Silverberg's books don't sell that well. Were I teaching an SF course, I'd recommend NIGHTWINGS (78) and that's about it. Other Silverberg novels that I've read but you forgot to list for me are: COLLISION COURSE (55), THE WORLD INSIDE (68), RECALLED TO LIFE (53), THE STOCHASTIC MAN (65), and THE MASKS OF TIME (77).

I hated book reports too. For one thing it never seemed politic to say what I really thought of a book as that was the easiest way to flunk the course. I found the Scarlet Letter boring but could I say so? Then too that clergyman (I've forgotten his name) was a real self-pitying type who couldn't get up the moral courage to do anything about his problem. I'm also very suspicious of writers who can't write three words without putting in a symbol. Then my American lit teacher used to test us by asking two or three nit-picking questions about a novel---never mind plot or characterization---so that even if I had read or understood a novel, I had only a 50/50 chance of passing his tests. I read somewhere that French children are exposed to more classics during their school years than the young of any other nation in the free world and no where do adults read less. This is probably why the literary scene is dominated more by intellectuals; ordinary people don't read---not even sports magazines. I just wonder if childhood exposure to nothing but classics, turns most people off reading. So I disagree with Mike Gorra most emphatically. I think the most important thing

is to teach kids to enjoy reading which your course does better than most.

To D. Gary Grady---I'm appalled that 20% of people can't read either but it has nothing to do with being a Republican. My brother has a masters degree and reads two or three books a week---mostly history or sports--and he's a Reagan fan. Actually the illiterate tend to vote Democratic as do those with advanced degrees. What higher education has done is produced more independents and ticket-splitters. The problem is that too many people are willing to overlook a politician's faults as long as they get theirs. Reagan and Carter are popular because they're not connected with Washington. Personally I'm fed up with all politicians.

I'd echo Eric Mayer's statements about Laser books. Sure a lot of them are terrible but some are worth reading. INVASION is a type of story I don't like but it is suspenseful and chilling in more ways than one. SEEKLIGHT is an excellent first novel but has a weak ending. Jeter's second novel isn't nearly as good (THE DREAMFIELDS 48). Laser books I'd recommend are SERVING IN TIME by Eklind (65), BLAKE'S PROGRESS by Nelson (78), SPACE TRAP by Juanita Coulson (65), A LAW FOR THE STARS, by Moressey (73), THE HORDE by Joseph Green (75), and THEN HORSES COULD RIDE by Nelson (75). Since you didn't record my ratings for RINGWORLD (83) or THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE (92), I'll add them here. Also here are some ratings of books I read and enjoyed recently.

WANDOR'S RIDE by Green (75)	A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS by Pangborn (78)
BLOODHYPE by A.D. Foster (78)	
GATE OF IVREL by Cherryh (76)	RUN, COME SEE JERUSALEM by Meredith (78)
THE SHATTERED CHAIN by Bradley (78)	
INFERNO by Niven and Pournelle (77)	A WRINKLE IN TIME by L'Engle (78)
THE VIRGIN AND THE WHEELS by de Camp (78)	IMPERIAL EARTH by Clarke (77)
THE LADY OF THE BEES by Swann (78)-This is an expanded version of WHERE IS THE BIRD OF FIRE (76)	

I'll be editing TIGHTBEAM for the TNFF come July so probably won't read as much. But you will be hearing from me anyway. I hope to get TB back to some semblance of a regular schedule. Therefore the July issue will probably be mostly articles as I won't have time to respond to the May issue and John isn't announcing that I'm taking over until that issue anyway. He has run it off and hopes to mail it Memorial Day weekend. I haven't gotten it yet though and it takes almost a month to get from East to West anyway. I do intend to publish whatever letters I get. So far I have one article and lots of artwork. Well I can always fill in with book reviews.

I noticed that you didn't include my ratings of Bester's works. Since I don't want everyone to think I'm a clod that never heard of Bester, here they are again:

THE STARS MY DESTINATION (TIGER, TIGER) 88 THE DEMOLISHED MAN (87)
THE COMPUTER CONNECTION (35) As you can see I was most disappointed with that last.

Will send a lot of other ratings that you didn't use when I get time to type them up. Also I must be one of the few that didn't like DUNE. There is something in Herbert's style that puts me to sleep. I gave up on him after trying to read five different books and not one did I finish except for DUNE.

I agree with Buck Coulson that very few books can be all time favorites which is why most books I like a lot are rated in the 70's. Only ten or so are rated higher. Most SF should be rated 55 average. Most books I'd consider reading or reviewing are 55 and up. Anything below 52 is crud.

John Blackburn:

92--Children Of The Night

88--Bury Him Darkly

87--A Scent Of New Mown Hay

Mike Bracken, P. O. Box 7157 Tacoma, WA 98407

I've just finished reading the latest GUYING GYRE(s) which arrived three, four?, five?, days ago, and I've found that I read every word in the issues I've received except the ratings, and I haven't quite figured out why. The reason probably is the same one that keeps me from actually rating/evaluating a half dozen books myself.

The whole thing has gotten me to think back to my high school years (which weren't all that long ago, since I graduated in 75) and think over the reading, writing, and other English classes I took. I find that I wish I'd paid more attention to my Folklore/ Mythology class (a college prep course), but I didn't find anything of value in my Historical Fiction class (a non-college prep course), and the latter also goes for my sf course (also non-college prep).

If I may, I'll try to elaborate on the above. My Folklore/ Mythology class introduced me to a form of literature that I'm sure I'll return to someday in the not too distant future. In the class Beowulf was required reading, and I enjoyed it--especially when I got to read it aloud. That led me to, about a year latter, read Grendel, which is the Beowulf story from the creature's viewpoint. If a class I take gets me to continue reading outside of the classroom, it has done it's job. Even so, I wasn't very fond of the other work involved in the class (the papers with footnotes and bibliographies and all the other stuff).

In my historical fiction class, all I had to do was read for one hour a day, any historical fiction of novel length. I came out of the class with a "B" grade but I hope I never see one of those books again. In short it did the opposite of what it was supposed to do--at least in my case.

The science fiction class sits somewhere in between the two other examples, though. For a teacher I had a music major (what the hell was he doing teaching English?) who had read a little Vonnegut and a little Bradbury. The reason he was teaching the course is because the other teachers who at least had read sf works by a few different authors, had to teach other classes (and the only teacher who knew anything at all about sf was the head of the department and burdened with all the things that go with that status). All we had to do was read for one hour a day in class. I found that I skipped class as often as possible, but I still received an "A" for the simple fact that I read three or four times as many sf books as were required. If I hadn't liked sf before I went to class, I wouldn't have liked it coming out of the class. So in that case I managed okay despite the teacher's ineptitude.

When I came up here to Tacoma I enrolled in a few courses at Tacoma Community College. One that I took was American Literature I dropped out of the course because I couldn't handle it; the instructor moved much too fast for me to keep up. However during the reading, one of the books was The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck. About halfway through the novel when I stopped reading it because it was required and started reading it because I wanted to, I found that I enjoyed it. In fact, I think it is one of the best books I've read. But I probably never would have seen it without that course, and I probably never would have liked it if I'd stayed in the course. So, for some reason, the two seem to

counteract themselves. Sure, I could see the symbolism in the novel, and the other things, but I couldn't appreciate them with an instructor parading around in front of the room trying to sell the book like a used car.

I guess it's all in how you look at things.

As for reading, if I had to learn to read from what the school system taught me I'd never be there. My mother taught me to read before I entered school and by the third grade I was reading at a lated high school/early college level. Even so, I still read "trash". In fact, I read almost anything with words on it, from cereal boxes to science fiction to newspapers to Steinbeck to fanzines. Everything is relative.

Someone mentioned the IQ test and its effects on a student. I took one of those stupid things in seventh grade and scored a 132. To me it didn't mean a thing then, but because of it, everytime I got a grade lower than a "B" I'd have all sorts of people telling me all about how I could do much better and how I was destined for greater things and the whole load of bullshit. I finally gave up the rat race and let my interest decide my grades. I came out of it happier even though I did fail a class and got a few low grades, but I don't think it made my teachers and my counselors happy.

There is a split in high school where the system breaks you up into two groups: college bound and non-college bound. The college bound students they try to teach their senior year, everything they should have already learned. The non-college bound students are nearly forgotten, and a number of teachers and administrators (at least as far as my experience goes) take the "show up, keep quiet, and I'll be happy" attitude, and then they leave the non-college bound students floundering off someplace on their own.

I happened to cross the line and attend both types of classes since I took what I wanted to learn (except for the required stuff), and tried, as best I could, to ignore the dividing line.

Anyhow, back to sf. What I'd like to see done is a class similar to yours for the first year, and after the year long introduction to the genre, a second course. One in which, now that the students have a fair idea as to the written portion of the genre, concentrates more on the history of sf, the "literary" aspects of the genre, etc, etc (like a college prep course would have--with the term papers and the footnotes and the background learning etc.)

Well, I think I ramled in and around the topic long enough.

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- 75 Norton: THE BOOK OF ANDRE NORTON (Dave Haugh)
 - 79 Gordon: THREE-EYES (Dave Haugh)
 - 85 Anderson: THREE WORLDS TO CONQUER (Tony Cvetko)
 - 100 Dickson: DORSAL (Gordon Garb)
 - 76 Bester: THE COMPUTER CONNECTION (Roger Sween)
 - 74 Niven & Pournelle: INFERNO (Roger Sween)
 - 83 Haldeman: THE FOREVER WAR (Roger Sween)
 - 70 Silverberg: THE STOCHASTIC MAN (Roger Sween)

Dennis Jarog, 7325 W Howard, Chicago, IL 60648

Enclosed herein is an assortment of additional evals, concentrating mainly on those you are stressing in 5/6. I could give you some more if you like, but those would be mainly one title per author sort of the bits around the edges. ((Wonderful))

Did you ever get the feeling the more you try to be a completeist at least for a few authors the further you get from your goal. I was thinking at one point if I maybe generally eval'd (I think I creating a whole new lang here) a little too high-then I came to the conclusion that the way I read most books I either like them or I don't thus making a seperation between those I really liked and those I didn't.

To tell the truth there has been one book I have read recently that I would give an especially high eval-the Hugo nominees are as a sorry lot as I have ever seen. Three plainly trash and a couple decent-THE SCHOCASTIC MAN and THE FOREVER WAR but nothing that I consider a very good book. Though I would think the two above are important as works in the field. Perhaps my tastes are getting more selective and then again maybe the field has just had a lean year. Certainly when the time comes for next years awards both CHILDREN OF DUME, IMPERIAL EARTH and the new Silverberg novel are possible contenders-though as to the last the first installment of the serial arrived just today so much more I can't say.

GG 5/6 is incredible; it took me a couple of days just to read through it. The project seems to be more than thriving, followed rather quickly by Vert so if you don't mind this will be a combo loc.

Re the DEALGREEN-I almost hate to bring the damn thing up again-it's a lot like kicking a man when he is down but the sequel TRITON was a much better book-not to say that it was a good book-it was not but a least it was readable-had something approaching a plot and had characterization worth something more than vechicle for his sexual perversions.

I have given a good deal of thought into what for me makes a good story and I have come to the following semi-conclusions. It must have a plot of some sort-not to lead me by the hand but something that does provide a guidepost for the reader to grasp the authors intent. Decent characterization-they must be real. Finally I read SF and Fantasy for enjoyment therefore I don't care for lectures on societal sins-I can read the paper for that. That's why I didn't care for the New Wave, nor for some of for ex John Brunner's books. Does that make any sense.

Last Sunday I saw LOGAN'S RUN at the theater and an off the cuff eval is that it wasn't the greatest nor certainly the worst Hollywood attempt. The music was atroucous pure and simple and it seemed that more emphasis was placed on scenery but the parts were well played. Whether it was true to the book I can't say but I am looking for the book. I will remember for a long time the remark I heard on walking out of the show-gee I love those sci-fi films-remember when Godzilla attacked.....

There is no ghod but D'Anamassa-well I don't know for sure

never having sacrificed mundanes in his temple but throw a little incense for me anyway.

I take that back about there no being any recently read the book that I really loved but this maybe a purely personal bias--one of the very rare original works to come of out of the original Ballantine Fantasy series was Katherine Kurtz's DERYNI Chronicles--the fourth book in the series was pubbed this month--CAMBER OF CULDI. These are among my most favorite books but for some reason generally neglected. I would recommend these books very highly esp if your tastes run into fantasy--though her work doesn't have to have an acquired taste as for ex Walton's Mabinogi Books do.

This year marks the first I have really become a devoted confan and plan on extending my reach still further next year. I look forward to meeting you at MAC. One of the earlier enjoyments was meeting Brazier at Autoclave.

One point brought up in one of the letters was interesting. The obvious problem--probably to become worse what to do when you know more than the prof. Should you stay away from them because you are not likely to gain anything save maybe some easy hours which are always desirable. On the other hand you could probably contribute a lot again if the prof is receptive.

I think we should begin a crusade against art in SF--not in the sense of illos but rather in the misguided belief that everything should be revelant. Relevance should be the curse word of the coming generation. SF of old was escapism pure and simple--why now do we need to make it in the image and likeness of the mainstream--after all what purpose is there if we are all alike. Do we need to impress the literati? I think not--not to escape the ghetto until we know what is beyond the walls--like the ss by Clarke--the title escapes me--there may be nothing beyond.

Anderson:

Fire Time--82
Day of Their Return--78
The Byworlder--65
Dancer From Atlantis--65
Star Prince Charlie--45
(with Gordy Dickson)

Brunner:

Shockwave Rider--75

Delrey:

Nerves--84
11TH Commandment--77

Dick:

Flow My Tears--66

Brackett:

Sword of Rhiannon--85
Starman of Llyrdis--92

Bradley:

The Shattered Chain--88
Hunters of The Red Moon--83

Clement:

Mission of Gravity--80
Cycle of Fire--76
Close To Critical--75

Delany:

Triton--65

Bruce D. Arthurs, 920 N. 62nd St., W-201 Scottsdale, AZ 85257

Okay, okay, I'm responding, finally. Only...I'm not responding to the entire issue of GG #5/6 (arrived today). I can't! My chod there's just too much information and data packed into all those pages; if I tried to respond to all that, my damned brain would overload!

Nope, I haven't even read more than a few pages of it, and skimmed the rest. And I don't have the time to do all the number jazz, so what I will do is go through all those novel evaluations and give my own comments where I see something to comment on.

But first: A comment on Lester Boutillier's letter, which I did read before deciding to type this up. Dismissing all the original anthologies except STAR as "very new wave" is just plain silly; hasn't he ever heard of Terry Carr's UNIVERSE? On the other hand, Lester does like THE LATHE OF HEAVEN better than LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, so he can't be completely silly.

To the novels:

ALDISS: Oddly enough, have never finished any of his novels, and very few of his short stories. In fact, the only one I ever began was FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND, and I guess that'd have to be rated 15, since I gave up on it less than halfway through.

BRADLEY: I note Lynne Holdon (*) give LEB fairly high scores. I'd agree with most of them, but a 70 for PLANET SAVERS? Uh uh, I'd give that one about a 57. And SEVEN FROM THE STARS a 76? Ghak, that's one of the poorer books LEB has written; give it a 43.

BRUNNER: THE PSYCHIC MENACE, George Ferrus to the contrary, was extremely bad, and if I'd had anything else to read at the time, I'd never have finished it. Give it a 22 at most. THE ALTAR AT ASCONEL, though, was fairly good, and I'd give it a 55. (What was that I said about not having time for this number jazz? Oh well.)

BUDRYS: Just finished ROGUE MOON last week; an 82.

BROWN: THE LIGHTS IN THE SKY ARE STARS is rated too high by most people; I found it below average for Brown. Give it a 48. The same goes for ROGUE IN SPACE, which suffered from overexpansion from the original novelette; a 52.

CHANDLER: THE BIG BLACK MARK isn't on your list. Finished it a few days ago; based too closely on the Bounty's history to be believable, a 42.

DAVIDSON: No rating listed for ISLANDS UNDER THE EARTH? Try mine 31 (a very confusing book, and I'm still not sure what the hell was supposed to be going on).

DICK: Buck Coulson doesn't have sufficient appreciation for Phil Dick.

DISCH: The PRISONER--93. CAMP CONCENTRATION--88. MANKIND UNDER THE LEASH--45.

FARNER: Lovely typo there; HARDON OF ANCIENT OPAR, indeed!

LEINSTER: Oddly, another writer whose books I've never read (though I do remember starting SPACE CAPTAIN many years ago in high school during a free period, but having to give it back to the owner before finishing).

SILVERBERG: ONE OF OUR ASTERIODS IS MISSING--15, never finished it.

STABLEFORD: Buck Coulson couldn't finish any of Stableford's books? Gee whiz, compared to a lot of the crap Buck reviews for YANDRO, Stableford's a very entertaining writer; Buck should try again.

SWANN: Another writer I've never read. This is starting to get embarrassing....

TUBB: Gee, you don't have a listing for E. C. Tubb. Well, I picked up a complete set of the "Dunarest" novels last month, and have read the first, so you can start one. THE WINDS OF GATH--52; workmanlike and fairly interesting, but nothing outstanding about it.

VANCE: THE FACELESS MAN is the magazine serialization title for THE ANOME.

TED WHITE: Why do I get this impression that Buck Coulson doesn't think much of Ted White's writing...? I like ANDROID AVENGER anyway; give it a 62.

WILHEIM: LET THE FIRE FALL should be rated higher, at least a 92.

And that's it for now. Someday when I have time (he lied) I'll go back through and make a more complete listing of which books on the list I've read and try to give ratings on them.

PS: Just came across Hank Heath's comments on teaching and test-giving, and I too am made agast by how some tests are made "fail-proof." I just finished an Art History course where the final exam was so damned easy that I actually felt ashamed to have taken it, because it barely tested my knowledge and posed absolutely no challenge to me; my cumulative grade point average may go up a few decimal points because of the good grade I know I'm going to get, but I also know that I didn't really earn that grade. Feh.

Samuel S. Long, Box 4946 Patrick AFB, Fla. 32925

Fred Linck's comments were very interesting: I'm glad he, like you, sees through "Education." But I'm surprised that he thought that kids liked school. I did, usually when I was in high school, but then I'm a scholarly type, and have got a decent education despite the efforts of school and college (and I had a few really good teachers along the way, too.) A lot of kids hate school with a passion, often because they want to learn, the school doesn't teach. The comments by and on the students and their reading were highly informative, and nearly all of them seem to have profited by the class. Good on yer, Gil. It's curious how popular the Gor books were. The first two or three were in fact pretty good, but they deteriorated fast after that. I'm glad to see Ianier's Hiero's Journey do so well. Sterling's a good friend of mine. He's a sculptor too, did you know? He lost-wax-casts animal and stfnal figures (usually rather small, but some three or four inches high) in bronze and sometimes silver which he sells. I can't really add too much to the Project, at least no at this stage, but I enjoy reading about it, and I hope you'll one of these days make a compendium of your findings available to the fannish and mundane world.

Listed a bit further on in this tone are my contributions to THE PROJECT. I think that it is a bit unfortunate that the listing is restricted to novels as there are zillions (almost as many zillions of anthologies as there are novels) of anthologies which could serve the purpose of introducing folks to sf. That last sentence is somewhat...convoluted...to say the least. Anyway, anthologies should be figured into the system somehow; I can't think of a good system to integrate anthos so...heh,...heh,...I'll leave that up to you; you did come up with THE PROGRAM after all. Notice how subtly I shift the burden of work to your shoulders?

Some of my selections will probably appear to be more than a bit obscure. I belonged to the science fiction book club when they were issuing such classics as THE EGG SHAPED THING and OSSIAN'S RIDE so a few of my selections/listings will be virtually unknown to those only recently involved in sf.

I read a great deal of sf/f; probably 30% of my reading is in the field. I get tired of it at times (overkill perhaps) and then I strike out into Faulkner, Thurber, Solzhenitsyn and the like. I honestly feel that many fans become too involved in both reading, writing and participating in exclusively sf/f activities to the exclusion of most everything else. Admittedly, we're deeply involved in fandom, but as far as I'm concerned, when it ceases to be fun, I'll get out; when it becomes a job or a way of life, then it's time to cool it for a time.

I participate because I enjoy sf and honestly consider the field to be the last bastion of free expression and new ideas that our society enjoys. A sweeping statement; a pontifical generality certainly, but I still feel it to be true. But onward to other matters. Here is my contribution to THE PROJECT. I did not alphabetize the listings because...well, because it was a definite pain in the ass to do so; after all, just typing all of this is horrendous enough. So, please forgive my un-organized bent and bear with the listings; besides, it's the list that counts, right? Uh huh. Here it is:

NOVELS READ 1975, PRECEDED BY THEIR RATING.

52-The Day of Their Return-Anderson

66-Total Eclipse-Brunner

78-Orn-Anthony

98-Rendesvous with Rama-Clarke

78-Midworld-Foster

78-Ice and Iron-Tucker

55-The Fall of Colossus-Jones

02 (that's right: 02!)-The Left Hand of Darkness-LeGuinn

A brief aside here re LeGuinn: I just cannot get behind her writing. She is too aloof, cold, and just plain DULL for my tastes. She writes well, but her stories are...blah! I've tried and tried to get going with Ursula, but it is impossible. Perhaps I am nuts, because everybody else goes bananas over her stuff, but I just am at a loss to appreciate her writing. I feel that deep down inside, I am a normal individual, but this aversion to an author whom everyone, critic and fan alike, considers to be a

giant of the field sets me to wondering sometimes.

75-The Note in Gods Eye-Niven/Pournelle
67-Patron of the Arts-Rotsler
87-Macroscopic-Anthony
82-Sherlock Holmes' War of the Worlds-Wellman/Wellman
75-Who?-Budrys
88-Starman Jones-Heinlein

As you can see, I didn't read a hell of a lot of novels in 1975, probably because I am a great anthology freak. Also, I hadn't yet taken the Evelyn Woods Reading Dynamics course. And yes, Gil, before your eyebrows lift off entirely, it does work, I can read 3000-5000 wpm with the greatest of ease and with 85/93% retention. Now, because of this course, 1976 (novelwise) is a difference story. Read on:

NOVELS READ 1976

88-Ghost Boat-Simpson & Burger
07-The Hopkins Manuscript-Sheriff
56-The Black Cloud-Hoyle
72-Mindswap-Sheckley
77-No Blade of Grass-Christopher
75-Plague of Demons-Laumer
73-Ox-Anthony
68-The Shockwave Rider-Brunner
52-The Dispossessed-LeGuinn
77-Dune-Herbert
82-Where Last the Sweet Birds Sang-Wilhelm
55-Logan's Run-Nolan & Johnson
32-Shakespeares' Planet-Sinak
77-Starmother-VanScyoc
65-The Dark Light Years-Aldiss
88-The Wanderer-Leiber
85-The Boys From Brazil-Levin
98-The Stars My Destination-Bester
78-The Dragon and the George-Dickson
78-Necromancer-Dickson
75-Children of Dune-Herbert
63-A Time of Changes-Silverberg
58-Rogue Ship-Van Vogt

NOVELS READ AT ANY OLD TIME (Nation Guard drills, hospital stay for football knee operation, honeymoon, etc...)

72-All the Colors of Darkness-Biggle, Jr.
72-Watchers of the Dark-Biggle, Jr.
75-Fahrenheit 451-Bradbury
76-The Great Explosion-Russell
77-The Time Hoppers-Silverberg
82-The Power-Robinson
72-Slaughterhouse 5-Vonnegut
62-Psychogeist-Davies

72-The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch
75-Unwise Child-Garrett
77-Tunnel in the Sky-Heinlein
85-The Puppet Masters-Heinlein
85-Farmer in the Sky-Heinlein
77-Between Planets-Heinlein
75-The Door Into Summer-Heinlein
63-Fifth Planet-Hoyle
68-They Walked Like Men-Sinak
68-Battle for the Stars-Hamilton
73-The Killer Thing-Wilhelm
62-Shoot at the Moon-Temple
68-Orphans of the Sky-Heinlein
62-Farnhams' Freehold-Heinlein
78-Time for the Stars-Heinlein
84-The Star Beast-Heinlein
65-October the First is too Late-Hoyle
63-Ossians' Ride-Hoyle
55-Element 79-Hoyle
88-Colossus-Jones
88-Beyond the Barrier-Knight
88-The Man Who Couldn't Sleep-Maine
88-The 27th. Day-Mantley
85-Doomsday Morning-Moore
78-The Winds of Time-Oliver
77-The Possessors-Christopher
68-The Main Experiment-Hodder-Williams
68-Andromeda Breakthrough-Hoyle
58-The Egg Shaped Thing-Hodder-Williams
82-Ringworld-Niven
75-Dinosaur Beach-Laumer
82-Starship Troopers-Heinlein

93-The Time Machine-Wells	72-After Doomsday-Anderson
95-The War of the Worlds-Wells	55-The Terminal Man-Critchton
85-The Long Tomorrow-Bracelet	73-Alas, Babylon-Frank
85-The Burrowers Beneath-Lunley	66-The Immortals-Gunn
82-Night Walk-Shaw	68-The Humanoids-Williamson
95-The Demolished Man-Bester	52-Catastrophe Planet-Laumer
90-Wild Card-Hawley & Bingham	76-When Worlds Collide-Wylie & Balmer
45-The Swarm-Herzog	62-After Worlds Collide-Wylie & Balmer
96-The Invisible Man-Wells	78-Methuselahs Children-Heinlein
98-1984--Orwell	75-The Stainless Steel Rat-Harrison
94-Starship-Aldiss	73-Pebble in the Sky-Asimov
97-A Clockwork Orange-Burgess	82-Emphyrio-Vance
65-The Alien Way-Dickson	92-Odd John-Stabledon
82-King Solomon's Mines-Haggard	65-The Lind Thing-Brown
55-Time Enough for Love-Heinlein	78-War with the Gizmos-Leinster
92-First Men in the Moon-Wells	75-Encounter-Holly
86-Synthetic Man-Sturgeon	95-Haunted Stars-Hamilton
92-Make Room, Make Room-Harrison	55-Pollinators of Eden-Boyd
55-Phoenix w/out Ashes-Bryant & Ellison	92-Out of the Deep-Byndham
88-Double Star-Heinlein	82-Day of the Triffids-Wyndham
92-Dragon in the Sea-Herbert	45-I Will Fear No Evil-Heinlein
88-The Stars Ours-Norton	
75-Earthwreck-Scottia	

As I look back over this list, I must confess that there are quite a few books I have left out. This listing comes from the books on my shelves which I can glance at for the old memory jostle; there were quite a few tomes which were checked out from the local library, read and returned. I wish I hadn't returned the Winston Juveniles with the Schomberg endpapers and covers; they are getting more difficult to acquire as time goes by and paying the library \$2.00 for the book in 1955 would have been a wise investment.

Another aspect which springs up in this listing is the psychological condition of yrs truly and it's effect on my opinion of these books. I tried to eliminate subjective coloring as much as possible; the mental condition does tend to change the viewpoint of the book. Other situations were also causal in forming my opinions of some of the books, but as I mentioned above, I did my best to evaluate these works on their own merits and not my emotional condition at the time I read them.

A trend which appears is that of more enjoyment being experienced with older sf written by the GIANTS of the field than with current practitioners of the art. I don't think there is one Halzberg, Eckland or Russ among the group-probably because I know that I don't like their stuff from reading their short stories and therefore am not at all tempted to waste my cash on their novels. Harlan is not listed because he hasn't, as far as I know, ever written a novel length sf story. Gee, that's quite a reputation he has for never having passed the big test...

LeGuinn and Sherriff suffer the most in this evaluation and Wells, and Heinlein fare the best. I didn't realize two things prior to making these evaluations, first, that I had so many books

in my collection and two, that my anthologies outnumber my novels about two to one. Hmmm...I wonder what that means?

Anyway, there you have it; I hope this will be helpful in whatever way you choose to use it in conjunction with...THE PROJECT!!! I await the next issue of PHOS or VERT or GUYING or whatever with anxious anticipation.

Lester Boutillier, 2726 Castiglione St. New Orleans, LA 70119

I got GUYING GYRE #5-6 today. Er, I guess you want some more numbers for some more books. Okay, here's a few:

Aldiss: THE DARK LIGHT YEARS-35	Anderson: PEOPLE OF THE WIND-65
Asimov: FOUNDATION-88	Blish: SPOCK MUST DIE-15
SECOND FOUNDATION-88	Brunner: SHOCKWAVE RIDER-75
Delany: DHALGREN-15	Dick: FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICE MAN SAID-65
Farmer: THE LOVERS-65	Galouye: DARK UNIVERSE-36
LORD TYGER-15	INFINITE MAN-35
VENUS ON THE HALF SHELL-38	Heinlein: ROCKETSHIP GALILEO-15
Harrison: BILL the GALACTIC HERO-85	Malzberg: GALAXIES-36
Moorcock: BEHOLD THE MAN-95	Sheekley: OPTIONS-58
ETERNAL CHAMPION-45	Sturgeon: VENUS PLUS X-38
Wells: FIRST MEN IN THE MOON-87	Wyndham: THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS-57
WAR IN THE AIR-67	Zelazny: DOORWAYS IN THE SAND-95
IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET-56	THE DOORS OF HIS FACE, THE LAMPS OF HIS MOUTH-57
Bradbury: FARENHEIT 451-77	Campbell: INVADERS FROM THE INFINITE-48
THE ILLUSTRATED MAN-96	THE BLACK STAR PASSES-48
Burroughs: AT THE EARTH'S CORE-95	ISLANDS IN SPACE-48
WIZARD OF VENUS-35	THE NIGHTIEST MACHINE-48
THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT-35	THE MOON IS HELL-48
A PRINCESS OF MARS-77	INCREDIBLE PLANET-48
THUVIA, DAUGHTER OF MARS-38	THE ULTIMATE WEAPON-48
THE MASTERMIND OF MARS-66	THE PLANETEERS-48
Conway: THE MIDNIGHT DANCERS-56	Gernsback: RALPH 124C41plus-38
Eklund: BEYOND THE RESURRECTION-25	Kornbluth: NOT THIS AUGUST-54
Goulart: SHAGGY PLANET-54	LeM: SOLARIS-35
Lanier: HERO'S JOURNEY-62	Norman: THE GOR SERIES-15
Natheson: THE SHRIMPING MAN-75	Siodmak: DONOVAN'S BRAIN-75
Russ: THE FEMALE MAN-73	Stapleton: THE STAR WALKER-35
Smith: THE SKYLARK SERIES-42	
Clarke: IMPERIAL EARTH-78	

I would comment too on Ursula LeGuin's remarks, as quoted by you on page 16 of the second section of GG #5-6. Science fiction has already become intellectually, aesthetically, and ethically responsible art, a great form. It has fulfilled this promise for the past 30 years and will continue to do so long as the buying public continues to support quality stuff and doesn't "go to Gor."

David C. Merkel, College Station, Williamsburg, VA 23186

The SF club ((At William and Maty)) puts on conventions about once a year; in addition this year we're having the director of the Hayden Planetarium, Dr. Mark Chartrand, come speak on 'life in the universe'. We don't do a whole lot else as I'm afraid there are less than a dozen even halfhearted fans in the club.

Enclosed is my first contrib. to The Project. I think it's a great idea and I'm going to devote a lot of space to it in the 2nd issue of my new zine, Ered Nimrais. Sorru I can't send you the first ish, I'm out of copies.

In the future you'll be getting two separate zines from Williamsburg: The Mutant for the SF club and Ered Nimrais from me. Until I have the address of The Mutant's new editor, just send both copies of your zine to me and I'll give one to her. In other words, the SF club gets a copy of each issue for The Mutant, and I get a copy of each for EN. I'm doing this so I can keep a copy of each zine I get; until now I've had to turn them over to the SF club library.

Anyway, I'm going to put each future contrib. to The Project in EN so my readers can have the benefit of my opinions too, and you can get them from there. My evaluations are based only on the Personal Preference Evaluation Chart. ((Beautiful!))

NOVELS RATED

Tolkien-The Lord of the Rings-98	Heinlein-The Moon is a harsh Mistress-95
Laumer-Dinosaur Beach-75	Heinlein-Double Star-85
Laumer-A plague of Demons-93	Heinlein-Stranger in a Strange Land-85
Laumer-Retief's War-88	Silverberg-To Open the Sky-65
Piper-The Cosmic Computer-75	Doyle-The Lost World-73
Piper-Little Fuzzy-75	Clement-Cycle of Fire-88
Piper-Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen-76	Clement-Ice World-88
Piper-Space Viking-74	Clement-Starlight-87
Tolkien-The Hobbit-68	Clement-Close to Critical-86
Dickson-Tactics of Mistake-88	Clement-Needle-78
Dickson-Dorsai!-76	Anderson-Satan's World-75
Dickson-The Outworlder-77	Heinlein-Citizen of the Galaxy-74
Herbert-Dune-94	Anvil-Pandora's Planet-93
Herbert-Dune Messiah-68	Anvil-Strangers in Paradise-77
Herbert-Children of Dune-78	Harrison-The Technicolor Time Machine-77
Niven-Ringworld-93	Harrison-Deathworld-74
Niven-Protector-75	Harrison-A TransAtlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!-74
Hallus-StarGate-76	Pournelle-A Spaceship for the Kind-76
Anderson-The people of the wind-63	Biggle-The World Menders-78
Schmidt-The Sins of the Fathers-55	Schmitz-The Lion Game-75
Dickson-The Pritcher Mass-63	Harrison-In our Hands the Stars-66
Simak-Cemetery World-76	Delany-Nova-63
Simak-Enchanted Pilgrimage-77	Delany-The Fall of the Towers-35
Simak-Time is the Simplest Thing-84	Dickson-Wolfling-78
Heinlein-Time Enough for Love-45	Schmitz-The Tuvula-68
Heinlein-I will fear no Evil-45	Randall-Garrett-Too Many Magicians-68
Dalmas-The Yngling-83	Asimov-The Foundation Trilogy-83
Reynolds-The Five Way Secret Agent-75	
Reynolds-Amazon Planet-56	
McDaniel-The Arsenal out of time-65	

That's all for this time but I'll do some more for you soon.

Mark J. McGarry, 631-E South Pearl St., Albany, New York 12202

Alan Burt Akers:
TRANSIT TO SCORPIO-57

Poul Anderson:
THE STAR FOX-68

Piers Anthony:

MACROSCOPE-87

OMNIVORE-85

ORN-80

Isaac Asimov:

THE NAKED SUN-68

THE STARS, LIKE DUST-66

FANTASTIC VOYAGE-67

THE FOUNDATION TRILOGY-66

THE END OF ETERNITY-68

THE CAVES OF STEEL-67

THE GODS THEMSELVES-67

Michael Avallone:

BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES-48

Michael Bishop:

A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE-86

James Blish:

CITIES IN FLIGHT-77

VOR-74

SPOCK MUST DIE!-48

John Brunner:

THE AVENGERS OF CARRIG-50

THE DREAMING EARTH-54

THE SHEEP LOOK UP-83

STAND ON ZANZIBAR-92

John Boyd:

THE LAST STARSHIP FROM EARTH-76

THE RAKEHELLS OF HEAVEN-77

Martin Caidin:

CYBORG-64

Arthur C. Clarke:

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY-76

CHILDHOOD'S END-74

EARTHLIGHT-74

PRELUDE TO SPACE-66

SANDS OF MARS-64

RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA-84

IMPERIAL EARTH-82

Lester Del Rey:

NERVES-57

Philip H. Dick:

FLOW ME TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID-73

WE CAN BUILD YOU-58

NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR-54

Roger Zelany:

LORD OF LIGHT-76

CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS-78

ISLE OF THE DEAD-87

THE DREAM MASTER-87

JACK OF SHADOWS-84

STAR PRINCE CHARLIE (with Dickson)-63

PLANET OF NO RETURN-55

THE WAR OF TWO WORLDS-68

WORLD WITHOUT STARS-48

THE REBEL WORLDS-77

THE WAR OF THE WING-MEN-68

ORBIT UNLIMITED-65

THE BYWORLDER-69

SHIELD-69

THE HIGH CRUSADE-70

THREE WORLDS TO CONQUER-46

A MIDSUMMER TEMPEST-77

VIRGIN PLANET-60

THE WINTER OF THE WORLD-83

THE DANCER FROM ATLANTIS-80

SETAN'S WORLD-86

FIRE TIME-84

THE DAY OF THEIR RETURN-88

BRAINWAVE-76

Pierre Boulle:

PLANET OF THE APES-56

Ben Bova:

THE DUELING MACHINE-57

AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN-87

Fredric Brown:

ROGUE IN SPACE-56

Edgar Rice Burroughs:

A PRINCESS OF MARS-66

THE GODS OF MARS-63

THE WARLORD OF MARS-63

THUVIA, MAID OF MARS-63

THE CHESSMEN OF MARS-63

THE MASTERMIND OF MARS-57

A FIGHTING MAN OF MARS-67

SWORDS OF MARS-57

SYNTHETIC MEN OF MARS-57

JOHN CARTER OF MARS-30

PELLUCIDAY-58

AT THE EARTH'S CORE-58

Samuel R. Delany:

DHALGREN-93

TITAN-86

NOVA-97

JEWELS OF APTOR-82

EMPIRE STAR-66

THE FALL OF THE TOWERS-74

THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION-82

THE BALLAD OF BETA 2-66

BABEL-17-76

Roger Zelany:

THIS IMMORTAL-87

DOORWAYS IN THE SAND-80

What can I say? This is too ambitious for me to do wholepiece. I'll send along some more writers the next time I write.

The Project reflects your interest in sf, as EMPIRE reflects mine--two sides of the same coin. Two "doers," but from different ends of the spectrum. I wish you all luck, but I can't get fanatically involved in lists of numbers. You might keep a running tabulation of the top 10 books according to you readers, and pub the list in each issue.

Your scale applies well if you consider 65 as a pass-fail line, as it is in school tests. Those books failing the grade, I've found, I could trash unsympathetically. Those passing are worth re-reading, assuming I had nothing to do.

In any case, this list should confirm D'Ammassa's opinion that I have no taste. (No, he never daid that, but we disagree on just about everything we say about books and writing. I disagree with just about everybody on books and writing--and most other things.)

John Thiel, 30 N. 19th St., Lafayette, Indiana 47904

I've enclosed my contribution to the project, and hope I've got my list arranged satisfactorily.

I had trouble, in spite of your explanations, figuring out exactly what the project is; I can see it involves listings, but what wlse is it concerned with? Are you trying to chase down various science fiction books that various people may have read in order to furnish you readers with a cross-section of the best in science fiction? I've read approximately the same novels everyone else has, but as to shorter things, I've run into a lot of off-trail and obscure stories. In my fanzine, PABLO LENNIS, I've been complaining about how few other people are acquainted with some of the fantasy and sciencefiction I've read.

On the enclosed list I've included some mainstream works I've read that most people have read, as well as my reactions to them.

My observation in reading the letters in GUYING GWRE is that tastes in sf appear to have changed. Heinlein isn't as revered as he used to be, minor writers are getting more prominence, and I had always thought that HG Wells was accepted as a writer of literature rather than of, as Paul Walker says, readable books. I get the impression that I'd have a battle if I tried to maintain my own opinion of War of the Worlds, which is that it's the most well-thought-out and true-to-life description of an interplanetary invasion that's ever been written, and vaster in scope than any other science-fiction book.

As for lack of interest in Heinlein, Robert Blenheim's comment that none of Heinlein's stuff can be considered great literature seems mistaken to me--in Double Star he has invented an entire, logical, interplanetary government our of nothing, no accomplishment for a lesser writer; in Citizen of the Galaxy, certainly as good as Jonathon Swift's works, he studies the issue of interplanetary slavery on a cosmological level; what writer of ordinary works would be interested enough in vital issues such as slavery to create an interplanetary panorama of the problem? However, in contradiction to Blenheim's attitude, I don't think any great science fiction is being written any more, with the possible exception of the latest book by Bester and maybe such stories as Bind Your Sons to Exile by Jerry Pournelle.

You say you're looking for articles about sf writing. I'm still trying to find some outlet for my thesis that science-fiction is in a decline and that the new writers aren't any good, but I don't know if you'd agree with it enough to print it. I admire the wide range of letters you print, but nobody seems interested in any criticism of the current field---they seem to like watching Heinlein Kuttner, and Sturgeon riding in the back seat with Vonnegut and Malzburg of Keith Laumer driving.

If what you're trying to do is unearth the science fiction field for everyone's benefit, I certainly admire the project.

HEINLEIN:

Waldo & Magic Inc-98
 Puppet Masters-98
 Rolling Stones-98
 Starman Jones-95
 Tunnel in the Sky-98
 Double Star-98
 Star Beast-98
 Day After Tomorrow-85
 Assignment in Eternity-85
 Farmer in the Sky-95
 Revolt in 2100-85
 Citizen of the Galaxy-98
 Door into Summer-15
 Beyond this Horizon-85
 Stranger in a Strange Land-15
 Farnham's Freehold-15
 Starship Troopers-45
 Have Spacesuit Will Travel-15

WELLS, HG:

War of the Lords-98
 Invisible Man-85
 Time Machine-65

SIMAK:

City-55

LEIBER:

You're All Alone-98
 Green Millenium-95
 Two Sought Adventure-98

BESTER, ALFRED:

Demolished Man-95
 Stars My Destination-95

BRADBURY:

Martian Chronicles-98
 Illustrated Man-95
 Golden Apples of the Sun-95
 Fahrenheit 451-65
 I Sing the Body Electric-65

LEINSTER:

Forgotten Planet-98
 Other Side of Here-98
 Space Platform-55

HOLDEN, RICHARD COURT:

Snow Fury-85

SLOANE, WILLIAM:

To Walk the Night-85

SHOL:

Costigan's Needle-95
 Altered Ego-45

ZELANY:

Lord of Light-15

WYNDHAM:

Day of the Triffids-45
 Re-birth-15

TUCKER:

Wild Talent-55
 Long Loud Silende-55

STURGEON:

More than Human-98
 Cosmic Rape-95

RUSSEL, ERIC FRANK:

Call Him Dead-98

FARMER:

Lovers-98

CHRISTOPHER:

No Blade of Grass-95

BROWN:

Martians Go Home-85
 What Mad Universe-98
 Angels & Spaceships-95
 Lights in the Sky are Stars-88

KUTTNER:

Robots Have No Tails-98

Jane Elizabeth Fisher, 714 N. Harrison, Cary, NC 27511

The many discussions of what books to teach in a high-school sf course in GG 5/6 really hit a nerve. At my present high school the "Worlds Beyond" course features an entire quarter devoted to sf--what do they they read? One anthology is all, and very few of the stories of representative of the genre. I gave the teacher your address and suggested he get in touch with you, but I seriously doubt if he does--you see, he is also the football coach and does not like reading (much less sf or f) very seriously.

Books that I would personally like to see taught in a high-school sf course would have to include Rite of Passage by Alexei Panshin. It is wonderfully well written, and one of the few initiation stories involving a female that I can recall. Plenty of action, too, and never boring. (I think that is one of the more important qualities for sf on high-school level--you'll lose a lot of students if the books are as hard to read and understand as many of the so-called 'classics'. It's hard to convince many students that reading can be enjoyable, but well worth the effort. Sf with its sense-of-

wonder is ideal for this kind of mind-streching).

Another excellent example of s-f at its best is Canticle for Leibowitz by Miller. Engrossing, but with a deeper message also. Flowers for Algernon is very good--is in fact required reading in 10th grade English here along with Alas, Babylon--Welcome to the Monkey House, an anthology of Kurt Vonnegut's short stories, was one I enjoyed while around 14 or 15. Russ' Picnic on Paradise, her first novel, is probably her best as far as plot and characters go--the heroine Alyx is strong, capable, and rather unforgettable and the theme is simpler than And Chaos Died and less than in her The Female Man. Eric Frank Russel's Sinister Barraer is one of those you read at one sitting breathlessly, and is probably the best of Before-the-Golden-Age (at least the ones I've read)--one of those that could never ever be boring, but I wouldn't re-read it. The Note in Gods Eye is well-adapted to high-school s-f and is in print currently--some of the better space opera around, undoubtedly. If you could find any of Kuttner's Gallegher stories, I'm sure your classes would find them hilarious. Ellison would be very good for that age group. (I know. I began my infatuation with Ellison in the 9th or 10th grade). I Have no Mouth but I Must Scream is probably his most representative anthology with the title story, "Pretty Maggie Money Eyes", and "Lonely Ache", though it would be a shame for them to miss "Death Bird" or "Repent, Harlequin". (So much of Ellison is good) Dangerous Visions is a necessity (that's what got me hooked on s-f and fandom in the first place) A.D.V gets a little rough in place and is not of the same quality as DV (though I probably enjoy A.D.V more--the ideas are better) plus the fact that DV is currently in print always helps. Dune is very popular of course as for Heinlein, how about Glory Road, The Door into Summer (one of my forever favorites) or The Moon is a Harsh Mistress? All are worth reading, well-written, and very much what the whole genre of s-f is about in the first place--most of Delany is too involved in classical symbolism for high-school, but his first book (written when he himself was a teen-ager) is a very nice fantasy intitled Jewels of Apor that I myself fell in love with in ninth grade--Arthur Clarke's best book is probably Childhood's End, though The City & The Stars is not far behind. Both would be worth reading, as would any of Bradbury--esp. Illustrated Man and The Martian Chronicles. Lastley but not far from leastly, the good Dr. Asimov's novel The God's Themselves went through my alg. class 3 times a few years back until some bounder nipped it off, forcing me to buy a new copy. Thus it is a proven favorite.

Whew--hope you can read this, but recommending books, esp. book I love, excites me and I just keep on writing until I've got two pages in about five minutes. Wait--one last--Tommorow's Children, an anthology edited by Asimov, is truly excellent and as I found it very good in the 7th grade, I'm sure it would not be difficult at all for your classes. Some of the best short stories I've ever read are in that volume--one particular whose author I always forget is entitled "Star Bright" and is one of the very few short stories whose plot I remember clearly (or correctly, for that matter). Lovely.

Gil, have you ever thought about setting up your course with about three or four books (novels) required reading and the rest alternatives--all revolving around some central theme such as, say, time travel.

I'm looking forward to reviewing GG 5/6 in one of the next issues of SHADOW and would really appreciate maybe getting the next one on my own??

Rick Wallace, 751 Main St. #107 So. Portland, Maine 04106

Working on your suggestion, I moved against my High School's policy of keeping a 'remedial' SF class. Our school uses what they call the "phase" system.. Courses like "Selected British Authors" and "Early Victorian Lit." fall into phase 5. "Contemporary Lit." would be phase 3 (average) and "Science Fiction" falls into phase 2 (below average). In my opinion SF isn't geared towards anyone in a phase 2 class.

The biggest problem I've run into is finding a teacher interested enough to teach an intelligent SF class. Most "English" teachers have no idea that Science fiction extends beyond the bounds of Nevil Shute and Pat Frank, with the occasional Vonnegut on the rare Crichton. No one is interested or cares enough about teaching such an SF class, so it does not exist.

I've heard you want recommended books for a Science Fiction class. One I'd put on that list would be The Man Who Fell to Earth. This book is a fantastic example of what insight SF authors can have. Originally written in 1963 by Walter Tevis about the 1970's. It simply has to be read to be believed. Despite the fact that the alien has come from Mars, Tevis' scientific and social insight had a tremendous impact on me when I read the book.

Lynne Holdom, P. O. Box 5, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

You did ask for shorter length recommendations as I recall--my recall is getting bad but.....Well I thought I'd list some for you but have to make a few statements also. I don't read anthologies much; in fact I avoid them like the plague. I have exactly nine shorter length story collections. There are: DANGEROUS VISIONS, AGAIN DANGEROUS VISIONS vols 1 & 2, THE SF HALL OF FAME vols 1, 2A & 2B, ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE by Healy & McComas ed., and THE HUGO WINNERS vols 1 & 2. Furthermore I did read more shorter length stories years ago than now so I remember more from then, no doubt. I also recently had to list 20 favorite shorter length stories--one per author. These are the stories in caps. I felt free to list more than 20 as I thought you'd like more. Now on to the list and comments.

THE UNDERPRIVILEGED by Brian Aldiss--I don't even remember where I read this but it's remained in my mind. I don't usually like Aldiss's work either but this haunted me.

THE MAN WHO CAME EARLY by Poul Anderson--A truly haunting time travel tale and a variation on such classics as A CONNECTICUT YANKEE and LEST DARKNESS FALL. Other favorite Anderson works are "Brave to Be a King", another time travel story; "Time Lag", a story of interseller war fought with no FTL ships; "The Longest Voyage", a tale that may explain why we all read SF--the story of man's questing spirit. (one of my favorite books as a kid was a story of the travels of Lewis and Clark.)

THE MARTIAN WAY by Isaac Asimov--a tale of the grandeur and loneliness of space travel. "Nightfall", naturally; "In a Good Cause", a story which shows that the obvious heroes aren't always the real heroes--for this I overlook the either/or philosophy.

THE TEACHER FROM MARS by Eando Binder--I read this at 14 and haven't reread it since but I really liked it then.

SURFACE TENSION by James Blish--Blish got tired of hearing this praised but it too has the questing spirit. I still remember the picture of those underwater astronauts spending the night in "space".

THE SEARCH FOR ST. AQUIN by Anthony Bucher--I liked this and I'm not Catholic but has a very interesting robot in it. It also is not preachy which could be a great temptation in a story like this.

THE VITANULS by John Brunner--Brunner wrote this for DANGEROUS VISIONS but Ellison didn't like the ending so Brunner sold it elsewhere. It's my favorite of anything Brunner wrote dealing with immortality among other things. "The Totally Rich" is another excellent story but hard to classify.

JUDGEMENT DAY by Sprague DeCamp--every maladjusted fan has got to appreciate this one. "The Wheels of If" is an excellent parallel world's tale.

DOLLYON'S WAY by Gordon Dickson--one of the few tales he wrote where the hero isn't a rare Dickson winner. "Enter a Pilgrim" shows promise but I'm not sure that it's not the germ of a novel.

EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE by Thomas Disch--another time travel story but with a difference. Another excellent Disch story is "White Fang Goes Dingo" but I don't know if it was published here.

FOR THE SAKE OF GRACE by Suzanne Hadon Elgin--I don't know where I read this one. It's an excellent fem Lib story without the preaching.

MY SISTER'S BROTHER by Philip Jose Farmer--an alien contact story with religious overtones. When I first read this at 14 or so I didn't like it much but did rather like "Daughter" which is a wild take-off of the Three Little Pigs. Other enjoyable Farmer stories are "Mother", "Father" and "Riverworld", that last was where I first heard of the Riverworld. Your students would probably like "Skinburn".

IN THE MUDDLE OF THE WOAD by Randall Garrett--I liked all the tales of Lord D'Arcy in his parrallel universe where magic works by law.

WHAT'S IT LIKE OUT THERE? by Edmund Hamilton--the only story by Hamilton that I've liked. That may be because I didn't discover him as a kid. This is a realistic hard-headed tle of space exploration.

COVENTRY by Robert A. Heinlein--an excellent story about the interrelation of man and society. Other Heinlein gems are "Universe", which tells of the discovery of a truth and in which Heinlein invented the generation star ship which has forgotten its origins; "And He Built a Crooked House", a funny mathematical story; and "The Menace From Earth" which has a trite plot but a beautiful picture of flying in the caverns of the Moon.

THE BELIEVING CHILD by Zenna Henderson--one of her non People stories about a six year old witch. Perhaps I'm fond of this story because I liked THE MAGIC OF OZ as a child.

NIMSY WERE THE BOROGROVES by Kuttner & Moor--this story is hard to classify but I loved it and I first read it as an adult. Other gems are "The Children's Hour", a story of a very strange alien; "Vintage Season", a time travel story; the Baldy stories; and the Gallagher robot stories. CL Moore writing alone produced "Shambleau" and "Jirel of Joiry".

THAT SHARE OF GLORY by Kornbluth--this is another story I haven't reread in years but it used to be a real favorite so I'm giving it the benefit of the doubt. Interstellar interpreters would be a real necessity and they would certainly have opportunities for adventure and for subuly influencing societies.

A NICE GIRL WITH FIVE HUSBANDS by Fritz Leiber--another time travel story and I also like "Catch That Zeppelin" which just won the Nebula.

BETTYANN by Kris Neville--I read this at 14 or so but recently reread it and liked it as much as ever. Bettyann is an ordinary little girl with a strange background and an even stranger talent.

INCONSTANT MOON by Larry Niven--my favorite Niven story but I like almost everything he writes. "At the Core" and "The Handicapped" are special favorites.

AND HE WALKED AROUND THE HORSES by H. Beam Piper--this probably wouldn't interest anyone but a history nut since a lot of the interest comes only if you know history. "Omilingual" is another interesting story.

WE PURCHASED PEOPLE by Fred Pohl--this is a real nasty story about cold-blooded, dispassionate aliens and some really nasty people.

WHEN IT CHANGED by Joanna Russ--yea I liked this; it was when she expanded the story into a tracty novel that she lost me.

IN HIDING by Wilmar Shiras--a bit dated now but still interesting. I guess this would be under you "poor superman" category.

LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS by Bob Shaw--the slow glass story which was much better than the novel that rose from it.

THE MANOR OF ROSES by T. B. Swann--I like most of Swann's work but this is his masterpiece. It's set in medieval England.

A MARTIAN ODYSSEY by Weinbaum--this still stands up mainly because of its portrayal of Twwel, the first non-nasty alien. The seques, "The Valley of Dreams" is good too.

CONSIDER HER WAYS by John Wyndham--another femLib tale which shows one of the nastiest future societies ever but does cause thought. Which would produce more happiness?

A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES by Roger Zelazny--a truly poetic story. I'm not usually a Zelazny fan but I was here.

Well that's the list. I noticed that I like stories involving time travel (no surprise) and one's with religious or philosophical overtones which did surprise me as these aren't interests I would have circled. This is just a pronounced in my 20 favorite novels so it must exist but until I actually listed my favorites I didn't suspect it.

This is about all I can contribute to the shorter fiction bit so it'll have to do until I start reading shorter fiction again.

Denny Bowden:

Rather than taking the time to type (or re-type) the list of evaluated books, I'm sending it along as it was tabulated by my student aide. Otherwise it might be summer before I get around to taking the time to do it properly.

I realize that a few of the numbers were not necessarily done exactly as they should be. For instance, some of the students designated books as "80" in their personal preference numbering instead

of disallowing the use of 0, 1, 9.....Anyway, I hope that most of the figures will be of some use.

Your system has worked fairly well for me, but I'm sort of forced to require reading of specified short stories from the text. Becuase of that, the individualized program is hurt. Also, our library resources are limited to the relatively small supply I've begged, and forced from the students. (Each student is required to donate 2 used sf paperbacks or donate \$1 to be able to "use" the classroom library of sf books.)

The semester course involves reading required stories from the sf text (an excellent one!), viewing video-taped programs on classroom tv, some audio tapes I've gotten myself. (I keep telling myself to write to this Joanne Burger(?) to ask about the tapes she supposedly has for sf teachers. Do you know anything about the N3F (I think that's it.)?)

Sam Long spoke to the classes last month, telling them all about fandom, zines, cons, etc. in a single hour. I'm certain I enjoyed it more than most of my students. Sam was a pleasant speaker, but the majority of my "sf" students sighed up thinking SCIENCE FICTION/UFOLOGY was going to be an easy English course.

Anyway, Sam spent the night with us and spoke to my classes.

This month BOB TUCKER (yes, THE Bob Tucker) came and graciously spoke to all of my classes (including my journalism classes). Naturally, Bob enthralled many of the students, and many who had not been sparked by my love of sf began to feel the hear when Tucker told them stories of how the world of fandom is. He told the story of Southgate in '58 (how Rick Sneary couldn't go to a worldcon so they brought the worldcon to him!), the trip to Australia, and lots more. It warmed me too when I heard a student tell me the next day that he heard other students "Smoooooth"ing in the halls. Bob will be well-remembered (and loved) in Daytona. Hes a Jiant of a man...

In the future I plan to invite Andre Norton to come because she lives only 60 miles from Daytona. Also, I hope to entice this guy Joe Green to come.....Daytona will become fannish BEFORE Suncor if I can have my way.....(If you have the addresses of Laumer and Piers Anthony, could you let me know them?)

Craig Anderson:

A rating or two for the PROJECT, to wit:

SALEMS LOT-Stephen King-93

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE-Anne Rice-55

INTERVIEW W/VAMPIRE is the bestseller which was sold to hardback for about a zillion dollars and to paperback for a like amount with movie rights for nearly a million bucks; all this foofrah for an inferior novel, in my humble opinion. Rice's book is reasonably well plotted and written, but another DRACULA it aint. It is yet another example of an author with fair talent capitalizing on legend and sucking in the gullible reader with a "new" and "fresh" treatment of an old theme; in actual fact, however, INTERVIEW treat the vampire rather shabbily, reducing this incarnate evil to just another puzzled, troubled person searching for fulfillment. Rice ignores the time honored aspects of vampirism and creates a James Dean, a "Rebel Without a Cause" sort of fellow who is not such a bad guy but who happens to be a vampire. His adventures are many, but the point of his being a vampire is watered down to insignificance beside his seemingly never-ending search for "truth" and meaning in his life/death. The vampire element could have been

eliminated entirely with no striking effect on the book. So why bother with making the character a vampire in the first place if the fact of his vampirism is secondary to his psychological problems? INTERVIEW is not about a vampire, it is concerned with a poor slob who regrets the fact of his vampirism and continually tries to be a "good" vampire, a nice guy. Heck, he doesn't even like to suck at the old jugular; imagine, a vampire who doesn't like blood and killing. Rats, might as well have John Wayne love the bad guys, hate horses and give aid and comfort to the Indians. As far as vampires are concerned, INTERVIEW is a flop, a book concerned with a nitwit who is coerced into becoming a vampire and then regrets it for the rest of his death/life. Certainly, a vampire doesn't have to enjoy being a vampire, but the vampire should at least be something of a menacing figure and not a twit who runs around beating his breast and crying disconsolately about his fate. I suppose that I am a traditionalist in these matters; I like my vampires to be real stinkers, a la Stoker's DRACULA, said book being a real chiller which still reads terrifyingly well today. But what do I know? TIME, NEWSWEEK, SATURDAY REVIEW and the NEW YORK TIMES praised INTERVIEW as being the horror/vampire book of all time. Hogwash; if you want to read a real vampire horror story, try 'SALEMS LOT by King.

Ahhhh....'SALEMS LOT, now here's a horrendous tale for those of us who like to be grabbed by the throat, shaken, huled from horror to horror, buried in unrelenting terror and suspense and enjoy the thrill of a anster storyteller revealing incident after incident of spellbinding horror. You have probably gathered at this juncture, Gil, that I found 'SALEMS LOT' to be some story. Yes indeed. I rank it second only to DRACULA in the field. King has accomplished what is perhaps the most difficult feat of legendary literature: he has brought dark horrors from a time past into the present day and made these horrors believable. You and I and our friends could be the people battling the vampire menace in 'SALEMS LOT; our next door neighbors could be the folks requiring a stake through the heart. Ahhh yes, if it thrills and chills you want presented to you on a gory platter, with characters you can believe in and care about, read this book. Hopefully, someone will make it into a film and will do it justice.

David Dyer-Bennet, Carleton College Northfield, MN 55057

Although it has been an unconscionably long time since you sent me GG 4 and GG3, I can't simply forget that I received them, so this is my response.

First, since I'm writing, I'll mention that I just read your LoC in, and noticed you interest in seeing photos of phans and phros. I've published a few issues of a photo-zine for Min-

neapa, and hope to publish more if/when I have time to hit the darkroom again. In the meantime, I would like to point out to fan editors who are already using offset that, with the use of a cheap kit available from Continental photo corporation, anyone who normally does his own printing can produce his own halftones, which then can be sent to the printer just like any line drawing. Thus, no excessive cost. Since I'd really like to see photos in fanzine, and since so many fanzines are offset these days, I'm trying to spread this information around as much as possible.

GG3 has a really good selection of letters in it. I haven't found any yet that I care to respond specifically to, but just wait....

Okay, here's one. William Goodson is a Heinlein freak, it appears. So am I, and I even roughly agree with his ratings (but double star should rate in the top 4). His final line, however, is simply incorrect, in two dimensions (or some such). First, there seem to be many people who recognize Heinlein as the greatest writer of the century. Second, much as I like him, Heinlein is definitely not the greatest writer of the century. And how could Ken Ozanne leave out The Moon is a Harsh Mistress?

Gil, what are you doing with all these people who send in the titles of anthologies and collections, rated using your novel evaluation system? ((Saving them for later.))

Are you eventually planning to average all your project scores together for a final report, or what? I'm beginning to worry, looking at the figures here, that when everything is averaged together, all books will get essentially the same score. There seems to be an incredible range of opinion on them.

Moving along into GG4, I find the details of how you ran your class (e.g. reading inventory folder) absolutely fascinating.

Looking through the section of student reports reminds me of the days not all that long ago when I was in highschool. If someone had tried to ask me how many books I had read in the last 3-4 years I would have laughed at them--the total would have been hundreds, and I was probably reading 5 more each week even without a class to urge me on. I wish we had had a good SF class in our system. The closest I got was in senior English, where we had a chance to read a book of our own choice, as long as we could get a couple of other people to read it also (so that the teacher didn't need to read 25 books for the quarter). I managed to convince some people to read Dune, which was not strictly fair as I had read it 5 times already (and read it twice more, just to be sure I had absolutely everything tagged), and had also read Dune Messiah. Still, it's less of an advantage than the teacher usually has over the students.

I understand that we now have an SF class here in Northfield, but I have no idea who teaches it or what their qualifications are. I suppose that I should really take the trouble to find out; it's quite possible that some poor sucker got stuck with it and needs some good advice. Reelsoonnow.

One fairly common statistical procedure in cases where you really don't know anything about the variability of the data you are working is to exclude the extreme 1/3 of the observations. This is based, somewhat loosely, on the fact that if there really is an underlying effect being measured (not just random noise), then the data will tend to have a normal (Gaussian) distribution (because of the Central Limit Theorem, which says that the average of a large number of anythings tends to have a normal distribution), and therefore 2/3 of the data points will lie within 2 sigmas of the mean.

Speaking of statistics, if you are using a fancy calculator, it might be extremely useful to record the standard deviation of the ratings for each book, as a measure of the variability of opinion. At least, you might record the range of the evaluations.

Now, a quick contribution to your other shoe.

1A: Category name is in conflict with description, as "poor" does not fit into what you describe at all. SILVERBERG, Dying Inside, The Book of Skulls?; Zelazny, Lord of Light, Amber series and just about anything else he ever wrote (these don't match the "poor" in the category title, but fit the description).

Best short I've seen is "In Hiding," and I can't remember who wrote it. Zenna Henderson's People series (Collected in The People: No Different Flesh, and Pilgrimage: the book of the People), clearly fit here. Oh, and Bester's The Computer Connection; and Dune.

- 1B: This should also include Cyborgs. T.J. Bass: Half Past Human and The Godwhale. Anne McCaffrey, The Ship Who Sang; Eric Frank Russell: Men, Martians, and machines; Bester's Computer Connection fits marginally here; Heinlein: The Moon is a Harsh Mistress;
- 1C: Niven: World of Ptavvs; Dickson: The Alien Way; Niven/Pournelle: The Mote in God's Eye (Best aliens I've ever read of); Alan Dean Foster: Midworld, Icerigger;
- 2A: Doc Smith's Skylark series, Subspace Explorers, Spacehounds of IPC, Triplanetary, First Lensman; Heinlein: The Man Who Sold the Moon, The Rolling Stones;
- 3A: Icerigger, Midworld (Oops, both by Foster); Heinlein: Tunnel in the Sky;
- 3B: What the hell is Way Station doing in this category?
- 3C: Niven/Pournelle: The Mote in God's Eye; Doc Smith, the Lensman series; Dickson, the rest of the Dorsai! series (Three to Dorsai contains all but one of the published novels); Heinlein: Coventry, If This Goes On, Space Cadet, Red Planet, The Moon is a Harsh Mistress; Pournelle: A Spaceship for the King;
- 4B: Miller: A Canticle for Liebowitz; Anthony: Sos the Rope, Var the Stick, Neq the Sword
- 4C: Heinlein: anything; I don't seem to understand this category. It seems to me to include practically everything ever written that relates to earth. Is this intentional?
- 4D: Heinlein: The Past Through Tomorrow (SS); Larry Niven: the Known Space stories (Tales of Known space, Neutron star, ringworld, A Gift From Earth, World of Ptavvs, Protector, The Long Arm of Gil Hamilton)
- 5A: Doc Smith is the best
- 6A: Heinlein: Waldo; Zelazny: The Amber series, This Immortal, Isle of the Dead, Creatures of Light and Darkness, Jack of Shadows; Katherine Kurtz: The Deryni series (all books have Deryni in title);
- 6B: Zelazny's Amber series doesn't belong here; Anthony: Sos the Rope, Var the Stick, Neq the Sword; Fritz Leiber: Fafhrd and the gray mouser (series);
- 7A: Dramatic Mission (section of McCaffrey's The Ship Who Sang).
- 7B: Niven: Neutron Star (SS)
- 7C: Hervert: Dune, Dune Messiah, Children of Dune; Zelazny: Creatures of Light and Darkness; Niven/Pournelle: inferno; Dante: Inferno; Heinlein: If this Goes on;
- 7D: Nourse wrote Star Surgeon; White didn't. Nourse also wrote The Mercy Men; Niven: A Gift From Earth; Avram Davidson (I believe did a series about an interstellar roving dentist, but I can't recall any titles)
- 8B: Heinlein: The Rolling Stones; Eric Frank Russell: Men, Martians, and Machines, The Ultimate Invader; Stasheff: The Warlock in Spite of Himself, Kind Kobold;?????: Mechasm (The Reproductive System)
- 8D: Bloodhype? Really? Niven: Neutron star (SS)
- Enough.

John Robinson, 1-101st Street, Troy, NY 12180

You Bastard.

I decided it was about time that I did some ratings; Next thing I knew I'd done a hundred and that was only a small portion of the number I might do.

The thing of it all is it's time consuming. It must take me an hour to do fifty, and besides, I find myself lining up the ratings you published in sequence and computing mean, median and even mode. This kind of thing has just got to be done--but by someone besides me.

You should recruit some programmer from your readership to write a program for taking coded entries (starting with assigning each book a number or alphameric designation) and putting ratings in sequence, computing the mean, the median and even the mode. I forget who it was that said that ratings whose means and medians vary by more than five points should be questioned, but he's right. So someone should be recruited to work out the speedy and efficient processing of the results of the work of all the nice folks who write you so helpfully. They deserve something back--like a master listing of all the books with, say, five or more ratings--and I think it's too much for you alone to do. Try John Andrews, maybe, or even MITSPS.

Your problem, after you have the basic program, would be getting some time on the right machine and someone to run it for you. Now if you had access to a terminal it might be good to have a program which would make it possible to add new ratings and compute new results.

I liked you artwork. Nuff said.

Please take ratings out of printed letters if possible, and skip over paragraphs such as "Here are some ratings:" when they cause rambling. Edit letters on themes if possible the way D'Amassa does in MYTHOLOGIES and Brazier departmentalizes in TITLE. Sure it's more work for you, but it's also more orderly and enjoyable for the reader.

Richard Brandt, Box 29501-TCU Ft Worth, TX 76129

I was immediately intrigued by your request for favorite short stories. In my case, many of the stories are from that wonderful Golden Age when I was just starting to read seven or eight SF books every week from the Public Library. On re-reading, even if they didn't hold up to my mature mind's critical sensitivity, the aura of nostalgia and deja vu still earned them a soft place in my heart. As in the vivid impressions I retained of movies I saw as a child, even when a later reviewing showed I hadn't understood a thing that was going on.

"The Star Pit" by Samuel Delany remains one of my favorite shorts; it tops all of Delany's works at creating vivid visual impressions, forms a new kind of man-made world and a different way of looking at it--it has an edge, and is peopled with three-dimensional characters driven by honest emotion. "Time Considered As a Helix...", etc., is another favorite. Charles Harness' Faustian "Probable Cause" is only marginally SF, but is still a good story. Joanna Russ' stories of the lady barbarian and all of RA Lafferty's tales of the three scientists were good light entertainment and fair science fiction. Ray Bradbury's "Frost and Fire", quintessential science-fiction adventure. Robert Sheckley's "Watchbird" and

"Paradise II", serious speculative stories from the first SF book I ever read. "Repent, Harlequin!", etc.--Ellison's style fails him, I think, when he tries to get as serious as his message; this allegory works far better. "E for Effort" by T.L. Sherred, overlooked writer, overlooked work--his "Eye for Iniquity" is pleasant fantasy, too.

Daniel Keyes' "Flowers for Algernon" for its treatment of human emotion; Bradbury's "Fog Horn" for its timeless personification of loneliness; Pamela Sargent's "Bond and Free", a very recent story (F&SF) about telepathic misfits that made a great impression on me, for its style and for the method of narration--also because of a faint similarity to an SF story idea I've held for a while myself. Kris Neville's story about "Bettyann"; Bob Shaw's "Light of Other Days"; Laurence Yep's "The Eddystone Light" from Elwood's DEMON KIND and just about anything by Sturgeon. I'm a great one for schmaltz. If there's an SF--al equivalent of THE GREAT GATSBY I'd love it--or I'll probably write it.

Craig J. Hill, 220 Standish #1, Redwood CA 94063.

Boutillier's LoC: In the confused heat of classifying anything literary, I'm pretty sure it gets down to the definition of the word, and even that, in many SF hardcover studies that the amount of varied interpretations are totally astounding. Even though making its short story form into the fifth annual volume of Fantasy and Science Fiction, "Canticle for Leibowitz" was never hot until Miller decided to take the original short story form and remake it into a damn good book. Then again, it can be assumed that John Robinson's classification of "Canticle for Leibowitz" as "literary" is the continuous praise projected from appreciative critics when the book was first published.

Gilson's LoC: After following Lester Del Rey's criticism for quite sometime, I was also somewhat disenchanted with his comment's on Delany's DHALGREN. Like Ellison, I have impression that Del Rey was more concerned with the thematic overall and not really the actual content of the book. It's also absurd that Del Rey in his own grips for the definition (if there is one) of SF, says DHALGREN isn't science fiction! This is kind of silly to call a established well written three year period of writing non-science fiction.

To this date I've only been in one course of Fantasy and Science Fiction and have personally met one science fiction teacher. The course in F&SF was taken in the later part of my high school days, but I remember taking it because I was already interested in science fiction. Before that time, science fiction was a image of self-discovery and thus I gradily became interested. Before that time and emergence of interest of SF, the only thing I remember is having some grabadghey Jack London book shoved into my face, and from then on I hated Jack London. Now that I look back at it, and also seperately critisize Jack London's work on his own merit, I think he has to be the worst stylist who has ever written. Getting back to my own experience of having SF in high

school I remember loving the course because the teacher was into a form of self discovery, and that effecting her way of teaching made me like the course for how the teacher went about teaching it, it's really hard to explain but I liked it. As far as college is concerned with robotic teaching methods (not all of them), and you would be something entirely different. It's one thing to teach a course and it's another to have the course as a learning experience. All I can say is the world needs more english teachers like you....

D. Gary Grady, U. S. Navy Public Affairs Center Naval Station,
Norfolk, VA 23511

A few ratings I don't think I've given you yet: Rene Barjavel The Ice People (La Nuit des Temps); 84. Bradbury's Something Wicked This Way Comes; 82. Isaac Asimov's (Paul French's) David Starr, Space Ranger; 42. His Lucky Starr and the Oceans of Venus; 45. I've tried to rate the last two as juveniles.

Paul Walker's criticism of Verne makes me suspect he has read primarily old translations which submerged most of the Vernian satire and punning. Many editions of Five Weeks In A Balloon still follow the old British editions' practice of omitting the hilarious parody of the Explorer's Club, or so I have heard. Most of Verne is intentionally funny, but you'd never know it to read the translations usually lying around. And I think a lot of critics that don't even read the man's work. One knocked Verne for things that weren't even in his novels, and I wish I could name names. Curse my memory.

I think Peter Roberts misses the real advantage of your system. You are NOT assigning a number to a book but to an individual thing. If I run across someone who rates books about the same way I do, I have a good chance of enjoying something he gives a high number. Sure it's not perfect, but neither are any form of book reviews. At least this system gives you a key to the reviewer's tastes in a handy manner.

Michael Shoemaker, 2123 N. Early St., Alexandria, VA 22302

I've been in sort of a sf reading mood lately and so I've been catching up on a lot of the old Astoundings in my collection. I have six additions for the Project. The Silent Multitude by D.G. Compton rates an 87 (great characterization & writing; haunting; slow & complex; I intend to read the test of Compton this summer and perhaps write an article on him). Needle by Hal Clement rates a 77 (I've been meaning to read this for 8 years; fast entertaining reading). You're All Alone by Fritz Leiber rates a 48 (This one was very difficult to rate because it has a great idea which is completely wasted. The story just comes to a stop without an ending. It's intriguing and well-written, but nothing is ever explained or resolved; very disappointing). Renaissance by Raymond F. Jones rates a 53 (This one was another disappointment; I'd heard so much favorable comment on it. It reminds me of Van Vogt the way Jones keeps pouring ideas into the story, but it is less smooth and the ideas aren't as interesting as VV's. I'm not sure it all hangs together either. It's damn long for an SF novel and I almost quit halfway through, but I had to stick it out to see how it all turned out.). The End is Not Yet by L. Ron Hubbard rates a 55 (I'll bet I'm the only fan under the age of 40 who's ever read this book; I don't think it's ever been reprinted, and I can understand why. It's really hardly even SF so much as it is a thriller of international intrigue, with a financier trying to instigate a nuclear war between the US & Russia. It's heavily dated by its

technocracy propaganda, which was passe even for the time it was written.). To the Stars by L. Ron Hubbard rates a 72 (This was the first novel to deal with the consequences of the Lorentz-Fitzgerald time dilation effect without trying to sidestep the issue. Off-hand I can't think of any other stories that have likewise confronted the problem. This is both a good novel and an historically important one.).

I am now embarked on reading all of H. Beam Piper in ASF.

David C. Merkel, College Station Williamsburg VA 23186

I'm going to continue helping with The Project, which I think is one of the greatest ideas I've ever heard, and I think that when you do get it done you ought to publish it in book form. I think there would be a lot of demand for it if it was fairly comprehensive.

I noticed you mentioned that people often tell you their preferences when giving you their personal preference numbers, and I agree that that's probably useful, so I'll endeavor to tell you something about what kinds of writing I like to read.

I only read for entertainment, I want to enjoy what I read. I like excitement, even fear, but by and large I like for there to be a hero, and I like him to be at least partially victorious. The Lord of the Rings is my favorite book, Walt Kelly was my favorite comic strip artist, and Analog in the 50's and 60's represents to me the height of sf writing. I like Gordon Dickson, Hal Clement, and other good hard sf writers. I like complex plots, I like humor, I like Keith Laumer, I like Jack Wodhams, and my favorite author is Christopher Anvil. He is not a very versatile author, nor is he a superb writer, but I like his stories as fun stories without exception. I was brought up on John Campbell, and I have his tastes in sf.

Wow, that sort of poured out; I hope it helped. I'm starting a project of my own which maybe you can help me with. I am going to do an index or list to matter transmission/teleportation stories, and the details of the project will be in EN #2. I wanted to do a list of parallel world stories, but Dave Ortman is already doing that. I don't think my index to Analog will be particularly useful to the sf world as a whole, but a list of matter transmission/teleportation stories might be in demand by teachers and even sf readers in general. I may not actually go through with this, it depends partly what the response is, but I'd like to hear what you think of the idea.

Shakrallah C. Jabre, 20 N. Main St., Newmarket NH 03857

My all-time favorite SF novels? My favorite two are easy to pick. Flowers For Algernon by Daniel Keyes and Double Star by Robert A. Heinlein. These two are examples of why I love SF. After that it gets hard to pick just three. I have so many I enjoyed. I guess Brainwave by Poul Anderson and Slan by A. E. Van Vogt. I suppose number 5 could be Ringworld by Larry Niven. (But not my favorite story by him, that is his short story "...Not Long Before The End!")

But I might have also pick The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury, More Than Human by Theodore Sturgeon, Marcoscope by Piers Anthony, Earth Abides by George Stewart, The War Of The Worlds by H. G. Wells, The Computer Connection by Alfred Bester, most stories by Heinlein, and others.