

## Editorial

We have received gratifying notes and comments about the most recent issue of Pynchon Notes. Readers and teachers of Pynchon's work have submitted to us short essays that record their own explorations and tentative conclusions, some of which are to be found in this issue. Naturally, this is the principal form that we hope the response of our readers will continue to take in the coming months.

While our mail daily brings us evidence of widespread interest in Pynchon's work, the MLA Convention seminars have not reflected this interest for some years. One of the co-editors of PN (Tölölyan) was involved in organizing the seminars or special sessions devoted to Pynchon in 1975-1977, but his later efforts to continue met with the MLA's refusal, as did Beverly Clark's, last year, for reasons unsatisfactory and largely unexplained. This year, other colleagues are proposing a special session which is described below. We urge all our readers to support this proposal in any way they can.

JMK, KT

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

"Re-evaluating Thomas Pynchon": Topic for proposed special session, Modern Language Association Convention, December, 1981

The publication of Gravity's Rainbow, Pynchon's third novel, divided the critics. Many reviewers compared the novel favorably to Ulysses; Edward Mendelson used the term "encyclopedic narrative" to group the novel with Moby Dick and Tristram Shandy. Others were more guarded in their response, if not downright hostile: Gravity's Rainbow was criticized as obscure, overly complex, flippant, and obscene.

Eight years later, Pynchon's importance is still being debated. Much has happened in Pynchon criticism since 1973: at least six critical studies and two collections of essays have appeared; a journal, Pynchon Notes, is in its third year, and many essays have appeared in Critique, Contemporary Literature, Modern Fiction Studies, and others; and Pynchon has been the

subject of dozens of Ph.D. theses. According to Viking Press, Pynchon's publishers, a new novel will be published in the near future. Since the MLA has not offered a session on Pynchon since 1977, we propose this special session to reassess his status as novelist.

Papers or abstracts are therefore solicited for a special session dealing with Pynchon's reputation at mid-career. These should address either the present state of criticism about Thomas Pynchon (books, articles, reviews, bibliography, dissertations, etc.), or Pynchon's importance as a novelist. Papers or abstracts--in duplicate--must be received by April 1, 1981.

Gary Thompson (Saginaw Valley State College, University Center, MI 48710)

Walter Isle (Rice University, Houston, TX 77001)