

G O D O T #10

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All the major advertised airlines have an unspoken agreement not to stress the safety factor in their advertising. This is done for the obvious reason that any airline which boasts about its high percentage of favorable flights, is bound to cause some potential users to consider the fact that accidents can and do happen. A perfect flying record does not grant the airline any sort of immunity. This sort of restriction is comparable to the action taken by the tobacco companies in stressing the safety margin of a brand of cigarettes through a meaningless tar and nicotine quotation. No cigarette maker will even imply that his brand was a major cause of a reduction in the number of lung cancer deaths among smokers. This again opens a steadily widening door to the suspicion that there is a discernible link between lung cancer and cigarette smoking, and you know how dedicated the tobacco industry is in surpressing the slightest confirmation of that fact.

In the case of the airlines, however, there is remarkably little to say when safety is ruled out as a promotional point. Fares are regulated by a federal agency so the rates between destinations are practically identical among competing airlines. The bonus discounts for families, students, and service personnel are also maintained on similar levels. So the competition that must exist whenever identical products are offered for consideration now takes the form of irrelevant frills. One airline points with considerable pride to its record of broiling steaks while in flight, instead of having the meals prepared during airport stopovers. Another offers the traveler a choice of steak or lobster. And still another has a variety of meals prepared by chefs from the major world restaurants.

I can only conclude that I am radically different from most air travellers. I've flown about a dozen times in my life, and each trip was made for the express purpose of getting from here, to there and back again. The thought of gourmet meals, wide-screen movies, ten channels of stereo, and hostesses modeling bright new uniforms had no bearing whatsoever in my choice of a carrier. I picked the airline that was the easiest to reach from my home, and which came closest to my destination. None of the other inducements had the slightest effect on my decision. I recognize that the major communications outlets derive a large amount of revenue from airline advertising but I wonder if it isn't time that the carriers did some close evaluation of their campaigns. It would be interesting to see how many customers are fickle enough to be swayed from a choice by the lush promise of ready broiled steak or fashionable hostesses.

Following the well publicized disorders that occurred during the Democratic Convention in Chicago I noticed with disturbing frequency the use of the epithet "pig" to describe the Chicago police. I think the term "pig" is completely inappropriate when used in this context. To me a pig has always been a docile, easily domesticated, slightly sloppy beast who lives a contented, lethargic life before eventual butchering. This description is obviously unrelated completely to the actions of Mayor Daley's finest. I submit that the term "pig" should be deleted and substituted with either "wild beasts" or "mad dogs" which projects a more accurate image of the behaviour patterns of the law officials during the Democratic Convention.

Despite the failure of the banquet and the masquerade, I thought the BAYCON was a reasonably enjoyable convention that had enough going in its favor to offset the disagreeable spell of weather on the opening days and the poor planning evident in some programs. My first impression of the BAYCON was blaringly negative. My wife and I arrived at San Francisco airport on the Thursday before the convention, and descended into the same unbearable heat we had foolishly believed remained back in New Jersey. The plane flight had offered no intimation of unfavorable climatic conditions. It was in fact, a normal plane journey from beginning to end with no bouts with reluctant stewardesses and no sudden detours to Havana. I'm used to relaxing in a near motionless state for up to five hours with occasional interruptions for a lukewarm meal, a lukewarm movie, and the inevitable wealth of vital information piped from the pilot ("We are now flying at an altitude of 1300.487 feet, to the left of the plane is Lake Tochee-kobee, to the right is the Flatrange Mountains...").

The descent to San Francisco Airport snapped me brutally back to reality as a combined throbbing headache and queasy stomach served to welcome me to the sun-swept land of Reagan and Rafferty. Sandra was feeling the same discomfort that I was and we managed to disembark and enter the steam bath, which, glory be, was all over the place and headed for our respective lounges where we took a few pills and gradually felt a sense of humanness returning. We then took an ingenious device that would have warmed the jaded heart of Torquemada, known as a helicopter, for the final stretch of the journey to Oakland Airport. During the latter adventure the airport baggage handlers had a nice game of "Musical Luggage" with our suitcases, and managed to misplace several items with the ease and finesse that must come from years of careful apprenticeship. After a two hour wait these items were recovered and passed on to us.

The Claremont from a distance resembles a quaint, aging fairy-tale castle. Closer up the peeling paint and lack of hotel streamlining becomes evident. Our room had more space than the so called modern hotels and motels I've been to, and if Conrad Hilton ever ventured into the Claremont he would immediately begin devising schemes to partition the room and conceivably double the capacity. After seeing our bathroom I no longer had any questions about the origin of the one pictured in "2001". Messers. Clarke and Kurbick had undoubtedly selected the one in our room as the prototype for that pictured in the film. The fire escapes of the hotel were slender encased spiral slides that looked like silos and accomodated a fortune of empty beer cans, to say nothing of overloaded fans throughout the convention.

The management of the Claremont was as old-fashioned as the decor; they were friendly, courteous and (from my viewpoint) were always willing to help. The first evening that we were there the uncommonly severe heat wave made the atmosphere terribly oppressive and my asthma began complaining to me. I had no difficulty in securing an electric fan from the management which is something I doubt could have been accomplished in the Statler-Hilton, for instance. Maid service was always prompt and genial. I did not have to wait until 5:00 in the evening to have my room made up which I'm sure I could have gotten with no trouble from the good ol' Statler-Hilton.

Less enchanting were the eating facilities which offered little variety, closed at odd hours, and seemed quite unprepared to cope with the herculean demands of a crowd of more than six persons. Due to the relative seclusion of the hotel eating was more of a problem than one would expect. You couldn't step around the corner for a bite, because the corner was down an exhausting slope and around it there was just a group of hungry people, looking for a decent restaurant. It was a case of either tolerating the Claremont's finickyness or dropping ten or fifteen pounds involunterily. The few lucky persons who had cars with them at the hotel made so many friends during the convention...

It's almost unfair to recall the botched-up way the banquet and masquerade were handled. Both were held in the wrong sort of room. The inescapable pillars prevented anyone from observing what was occurring with complete ease. It soon became a game of twisting to one side in order to see Harlan Ellison and ducking into a painful Yoga position, that threatened to blossom into an angle the Kama Sutra never dreamed of, for the purpose of viewing the banquet table. The light show was almost completely secluded; where no pillars prevented observation a flock of shaggy heads accomplished this same trick. I'm told there were three rock bands - I couldn't distinguish any difference between the numbers played. I was pleased to learn that the rock bands had not yet surrendered to the unconventional custom of disdaining payment for services rendered.

The masquerade was conducted exactly as if it was an unwanted but required diversion from the rock bands and the sooner all those odd persons in crazy Buck Rogers suits were pushed past the judging stand, than the music would resume. Where the music should have supplied a soft background to the paraders it dominated anything else foolish enough to offer competition. Half the persons in the hall had no interest at all in the masqueraders and impatiently awaited each new rock group. The costumers who braved the hostile and slightly stagnant atmosphere were insulted and humiliated by the official in charge of the fiasco. No identification, save for a meaningless number, was given. No area was set aside for cameras. The masqueraders were ingloriously shoved onto a creaky platform, forced to hastily cross and vanish from the sight of anyone who blinked more than twice during the presentation. I'm told that eventually a judging of some sort was held, and prizes were awarded though I did not have the endurance to remain in the diminishing congregation and I don't know who did.

I think it should be obvious from past examples that it's more enlightening and meaningful to the audience when they know what a particular masquerader represents. If the presentation is for a gag costume it is absolutely essential that identification be made, or else a clever gag costume can be totally incomprehensible to the viewer. It should also be clear that a microphone is needed on the stage. A number of masqueraders offered some sort of visual embellishment to their costume. Beyond the fourth row no words could be heard.

For a change the banquet offered reasonably good food although served in the most minute portions. It seems that when banquet food is the typical assembly line hog-swall that most hotels dish out there is no problem in obtaining king-size second and third portions. But when a good meal is served the management arranges for the amounts dispensed to be the kiddiest of kiddie portions. The awards and acceptances were far too long. The Hugo banquets should be reserved for announcing the Hugo winners and no others. No first fadom, no special awards, no cute little skits. Philip Jose Farmer's Guest of Honor speech was the sort that's meant to be read carefully. Farmer is not a good talker, and I doubt that anyone can be for an hour and a half. All his good points were dulled by the long, humorless delivery that resulted in persons fidgeting, walking around the room, leaving the room, and napping at tables. One gentleman sitting beside me was annoyed because a friend of his situated two tables away was able to fall asleep, while he could not due to the efforts of his vigilant wife by his side. Every time his eyelids drooped she nudged him. Bob Silverberg's dry, reserved wit was the perfect balance to Harlan Ellison. The combination meshed together perfectly like two well oiled machine gears. I sincerely hope that future convention committee can re-stage this duo. Rumor has it that two or three people find Harlan a shade obnoxious after five minutes. But whomever inherits the toast-mastering chores for next year, I do hope something will be done to shorten the program. It shouldn't be necessary to attach a time limitation to the guest speakers. A good speaker should be able to judge by the audience reaction when his remarks are going beyond the bounds of toleration.

We spent several days in San Francisco, unashamedly doing what all the other tourists who visit the city do. I came away with several distinct reactions to the city. It's clean. It's incredibly clean. I saw no litter on Market Street or its neighboring avenues, no bags of garbage left to petrify. In most of New York and Newark street littering is performed as a matter of pride; one does not feel that he has properly achieved adulthood unless he is responsible in some small way for the dirt and filth that congests every vacant lot and side street. From what I could see of San Francisco this condition did not exist, or else was curbed by the most fantastically efficient sanitation system possible. Coupled with this reduction of noticeable eyesores was the friendliness and courtesy of most strangers I encountered. Rather than being treated with hostility, or suspiciously eyed to see if I would suddenly pull out a knife, it was an extremely refreshing change to encounter merchants and bus drivers who smiled pleasantly and gave explicit directions with no sign of irritation. Needless to say, this is not the situation you find on the East Coast.

More than all these surface manifestations of a greater regard for the other person, a number of strangers I conversed with, both at and away from the BAYCON seemed possessed of a greater awareness of what was going on. In East Coast suburbia the average family is quite content to live in regulated, lily-white communities, insulating its mind from news of outside stimuli by endless discussion of the "communist led revolts" in the cities and campuses and the cataclysmic problems faced if any of them try to move next door. This is exactly the sort of hypocritical, inherited ignorance that accounts for the appalling lack of progress in human relations and human understanding made in the last three hundred years. I probably encountered a small pocket of what I consider to be enlightenment, in San Francisco, but it was a refreshing and invigorating experience.

We investigated the bus and cable-car networks and found them to be entirely satisfactory for our needs. The lines seem to be laid out sensibly enough, the drivers were always courteous, and I found little overlap in routing. I suppose there must be slums and hovels in San Francisco, but I saw none of them, and this strengthened the city's image in my mind.

The climate even offered some highly agreeable aspects. I don't like temperatures extremes in either direction; I'm more tolerant of intense cold than intense heat, but I savor neither condition. Except for the heat wave early in the week, which represented a freakish climatic twist, and not the norm, the days were mild and comfortable, the nights cool and pleasant. I am an asthmatic, and my wife has several uncomfortable allergies, so we've had our share of battling stifling respiratory elements. Neither of us suffered the slightest discomfort linked with these ailments during the entire week's stay on the West Coast.

Immediately after we returned home we started making plans about a permanent move To San Francisco or the surrounding area. Our enthusiasm has cooled somewhat since then. Our lease has another year to run, my wife has been assisting in organ transplants at the hospital, and I bought a 1968 Chevy II Nova several weeks before leaving for the Baycon and three years of payments stretch before me. So we aren't going to pack up leave tomorrow or next week. But sooner or later we will weigh the comparative advantages of making a living on the East Coast and the West Coast, and once that's begun I'm sure the decision to move will be made, although neither of us will admit that. So don't be too surprised if you suddenly see a California address after my name. It won't be right away, and it won't affect my FAPA membership (in fact it may even prove an accelerator for my usual lethargic pace), but it's as inevitable as December following November.

The more I hear about unions, the less I like them. It's ironic that the exploitation of the workers by big business concerns was responsible for the creation of the unions. Sweat shops, rock-bottom wages, inhuman working conditions, a complete lack of security or advancement all led towards the union empire. It was the only means by which the worker could achieve some sort of say in the tyrannical conditions imposed upon him by greedy and uncaring businessmen. The unions worked for a time; they raised the workers' living standards and gave him a bargaining power that helped formulate a more positive relationship with the employer. Management has no one to blame but itself for causing the need for unions and helping to give birth to the nationwide labor movement.

Today the situation has been reversed, the shoe is on the other foot. Unions which once stood for the honest representation of the public now operate on a "take all you can get and damn the public" approach. Strikes by public workers are commonplace, many of them deliberately arranged to cause the most inconvenience to the population. As I type this, New York is going through a simultaneous cold spell and spiraling flu epidemic. The oil delivery drivers have picked this advantageous time to rebel against the public welfare, thereby subjecting everyone to critical health hazards. New York has a law prohibiting strikes by public servants, such as teachers, sanitation men, and policemen, all of whom have struck. This law is consistently overlooked, and might as well not be there.

The unions now have power and are acting as if they are determined to repay vengefully every unscrupulous factory owner of fifty years for indignities suffered at that time. The recipients of this combined hostility ultimately turns out to be everyone but the top men in management. Each time a contract expires the unions demand astronomical increases in wages and benefits. The demands are always met, frequently with the threat of a strike, more often with the strike, and in the next months the cost of living average starts soaring again. The unions often offer a fortress to criminals and bigots. (Jimmy Hoffa was unanimously elected President of the Teamsters Union again. Is anyone surprised? He was unable to campaign because he happened to be in jail). George Wallace received some of his largest backing from both northern and southern unions. He knew he would get this, and he played up to this support.

Politicians and legal authorities are scared to death of union power. The President of the U.S. frequently castigates the steel industry or the automobile industry for having to raise prices. He never refers to the outrageous contract demands made by the unions which directly force the industries to raise prices in order to survive. Congressmen try to outdo their colleagues in promoting measures that are conspicuously favorable to union interests.

The unions are not your friend.

A number of persons have expressed puzzlement over the choice of Jack Gaughan as Professional Guest of Honor at the 1969 World S.F. Convention in St. Louis. These skeptics argue that although Jack has always been friendly and genial towards fandom, he lacks the necessary qualifications and talents of anyone receiving so high a commendation. They also feel that there are many personalities far more deserving of a Guest-of-Honorship who first should have been consulted before the present selection was agreed upon. For the benefit of those doubters, following are the qualifications held by Jack Gaughan to be Guest of Honor at a World Science Fiction Convention:

Comments on Mailing #125

DIFFERENT #3

"Science Fiction and the Romantic Tradition" by J.J. Pierce is the funniest thing I've read since Redd Boggs' attempted canonization of Stephen Pickering.

MOONSHINE #36

"The Bacon Report" was positively riotous. I am hardly ever provoked to laughing out loud over a piece in a fanzine, but this did it. Opinions will probably differ as to which part was the most successful, but I preferred the section reporting the banquet. Why the author should wish to hide behind a pseudonym is bewildering, since this is hardly an article which the writer should experience any second thoughts over.

I felt the same way that Rick Sneary did about Moorcock's book. He seemed to be trying hard to do something with it, but he was derailed long before reaching the conclusion. I think the only reason Moorcock does these is to help finance publication of NEW WORLDS, which I understand is still floundering badly with a circulation slightly less than that of WARHOON.

HORIZONS #116

I think most airports do have metered parking sections in order to accommodate the short-time traveler who may be parking just for the purpose of being a ticket or checking some luggage. From the airport's viewpoint a lot with limited metered parking would leave more space for the long-term parkers who will be gone for more than a day. From my own experiences I've noticed that airport parking facilities are always crowded, and usually situated a mile and half from the main terminal building. It's not just the skies that are crowded. One solution might be to have a regular bus or train service operating from the large cities to all the major airports. Most cities have scant limosene fleets going to the big hotels but this is more for the convenience of the incoming traveler, than the commuter from the same city who wants to leave the car at home. I think that eventually all the big airports will undertake major expansion programs to combat the contagious overcrowding that can not be avoided these days.

Hell's Angels, like fandom, is a member-run microcosm, sustained by internal contributions instead of outside sources like a charity. And that probably limits the comparison between the two. Fandom is more restrained in its social conduct, and does not get into the newspapers as frequently.

The producers of the U.N.C.L.E. series don't mind intimating that Illya might be a Russian, in order to suggest a form of unity. They're unwilling to deliberately come out and state his nationality so as not to offend the anti-Russians, which would probably result in the D.A.R. picketing NBC, if it was ever revealed that U.N.C.L.E. employed Soviet agents in its service.

Andre Norton has mastered the technique of writing the successful juvenile or teenage novel, and she merely repeats the formula time after time. I don't think there's anything wrong with this. The only thing repetitious is the pacing and climax, I've found her plots always contain enough variety and diversity to distinguish them from her other books. Her books do extremely well in libraries and schools as opposed to the novels that aim for an adult market and are therefore restricted from school recommendations. And if I'm not mistaken she is Ace's biggest seller.

Christmas is only a few days away. The Birth of the Saviour of the Merchants is being devoutly celebrated by the faithful flocking to their brightly lit non-denominational alters where the money-exchanging ritual is performed, in all its solem piety.

DYNATRON #37 & #38

The most encouraging feature about Delany's writing is that it continues to improve with each new story he writes. He's learning more about the craft, and more about how to apply himself to develop the skill. I wonder what we can expect from him ten years from now if his talents continue to progress at the rate they are now. Roy, you're being funny. You're really being funny. Labeling Sturgeon, Ballard, Vonnegut and Cordwainer Smith as "nothing writers". If you so astutely appreciate Delany's considerable talents how can you ignore the skills of these other four? Or are you just trying to show John J Pierce that he isn't the only comedian around?

I doubt if the "New Wave" is as new or as revolutionary as its followers claim. Theodore Sturgeon was experimenting in horizons of the new wave over ten years ago in stories like "To here and the Easel", and "The Man who lost the Sea". If these stories were published today I think they would unhesitatingly be classed as new wave writing, thereby alienating all those who are hostile to the form. At the time Sturgeon wrote these stories there was no talk of this mini-revolution. The readers casually accepted them as being slightly off-trail, which was not unusual for the author. If I'm not mistaken "The Man who lost the Sea" appeared in one of Martha Foley's Years best collections of mainstream writing. There have been other examples of experimentation with radical stylistic modes, but since no category existed at the time for these misfits they were largely ignored.

I'm beginning to think you're hilarious Roy. JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN has turned out some marvelously chilling screenplays. The entire production line-up of this series eclipses STAR TREK with ease. The stories are better written, the actors know how to handle their roles and the program seems to be aimed at an audience above the teen-age level. STAR TREK on the other hand continues to plummet in quality each season. Frieberger seems to feel he knows the reason for ST's popularity in the past seasons and is trying to retain this elusive quality by preventing the intrusion of creativity, plot changes, or more pronounced character development. I'd rather see STAR TREK go off the air now so I can recall the good episodes, instead of observing a painful progression of mediocrity.

"Ballroom of the Skies" by John D. MacDonald appeared in the Winter 1953 issue of 2 COMPLETE SCIENCE-ADVENTURE BOOKS.

WARHOON #25

Ted White has adopted the best format for a detailed review of "Dangerous Visions." It's too bad he allowed his prejudices to interfere with his judgements. Roger Zelazny's story was an empty sketch that can be interpreted either as a reflection of some implied profundity, or as the inconclusive short story it appears to be. For the benefit of those unaware of Ted's favoritism towards Zelazny he aptly demonstrates it by saying "Zelazny too is saying something about machines, but he is saying it indirectly, in myth form. His point is almost whispered, and apparently too subtle for some of the readers who were overwhelmed by some of the shouts of the other stories in the book. Zelazny is a poet. Good poets don't scream." This is a beautifully worded rationale which can be applied to make any mediocre story sound like a masterpiece. We also know Ted doesn't like Norman Spinrad. Norman wrote a book called "Bug Jack Barron" in order to bug Ted White. It turned out to be the worst book Ted never read. Therefore, Spinrad's story, which has considerably more plot, characterization, and movement is given a D- and a few sneers. Ted should have stuck to reviewing the stories and not the authors.

Warhoon is, as usual, one of the most satisfying publications of the mailing.

QASAR #1

Ted Pauls probably does not associate with Baltimore fandom because he does not regard himself as a fan. KIPPLE rarely will mention science fiction or fandom, and it can only be considered a fanzine by appearance. Ted has a stable of letter writers, most of

them unknown to fandom, whose views on politics are similar to his. Usually the only dissenter is George Price but his severe oppositions to Ted's views manage to sustain running arguments within the lettercol. John Boardman has a column, Ted editorializes on various subjects, and quotations lifted from weighty books fill the gaps between letters.

I recognized more names on the first quiz than I did on the second.

SAM #14

I wrote to Gordon Eklund about his puzzling remarks in his FAPAazine. I don't know him, I've never had any contact with him, and a quick check of all the zines I've run through FAPA show that nowhere did I state "FAPA does not need Gordon Eklund". Nor would I. I think someone's out to get him.

This is the second or third time you've revived SAM. Each time you do you shudder over the very early issues and supply a rundown of the contents. Why not be different this time and let us know what's coming up, instead of recounting what's allready been?

VANDY #30

I can assure you that the heroes of Harry Harrison's "Deathworld" books don't find his alien worlds dull.

Since you mention bumper stickers, I wonder what's to become of one particularly popular one now that the Pueblo crew has been released. TIME Magazine has reported that another sticker drawing much attention reads simply: RECALL PAUL.

The original triple projection process for Cinerama was modernized into a single unit about five years ago. When Cinerama was first developed by Lowell Thomas in 1952 a curved screen divided into thirds was used to receive an image cast by three different projectors. When run simultaneously one unified picture was acheived which was wider and took in more scope than that possible with a conventional projection arrangement. But along with the added viewing area you had the disadvantage of slightly elongated figures if you were not seated in the exact center of the theatre, and a wavy, blurry line indicating the division between the screens. "2001" employs a curved screen but only one projector is required the flash the image onto this screen, thereby totally eliminating the break between thirds of the picture. If you see **this** picture again after it's been released on a normal screening I think you'll be able to tell the difference.

I didn't find "2001" to be boring or overlong either. Since the early 50's fandom has been complaining about Hollywood's obsession with linking sf to some cheaply made, unredeemably juvenile feature films that refuse to grant the slightest amount of intelligence to the viewers that go to see these flicks. Now in "2001" there is finally a film that stresses an adult theme with a complex plot development in no way relying on childish fixtures. The fans are confused, bored, or feel it's too new wave-ish to mean anything and they start wishing we had more twenty foot spiders and teenage frankensteins again. I think we may reach a point where the truly superlative sf film, such as "2001", will completely pass over fandom with no flickers of recognition or acceptance, and instead be received warmly by the general public. Progress is being made more rapidly than many people realized. "2001" has proved that an sf film is not necessarily a children's picture - for the longest while there was no distinction between the two. "Barbarella" has shown that sex and sf do mix, and quite comfortably if Jane Fonda is involved in the proceedings somewhere.

This has been written, edited and published
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