

G O D O T #7

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by

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Insecurity is reading a letter in YANDRO about a year ago, written by someone whom I had never heard of before, dejectedly noting the departure from fandom of an individual whom this person claimed had been responsible for his development and maturation as a fan. Inasmuch as I had, similarly, never heard of the party in question, I was a little unnerved by this tribute. Surely my loose contact with actifandom has not dissipated to such an extent that the present day Tuckers, Grennells, Willises and Blochs are completely unknown to me. That is either the case, or else the qualifications for one's ascendancy to BNFdom have dropped to a disturbingly low level. In any event, farewell Nameless, sorry you will be leaving, and perhaps, in the time during your suspension of activities, some promising young neofan like Anonymous over there will slip into your hallowed shoes.

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While not an alarmist, I do beleive that within every mountain of fact, after the extraneous embellishments have been cut away, there is a core of truth. Therefore, the more I read medical reports, the happier I am that I'm not a smoker. I've gone through the stage where a few cigarettes a day was required in order to mentally attune myself with the masses who found smoking to be as essential as breathing and eating. These just proved to be tentative experiments, and not steps along the road to nicotine addiction. My feelings perhaps are not as pure as the cigarette slave who kicks the habit in one spontaneous burst of defiance, but they reflect a genuine enough concern about myself to heed the faintest possibility that something quite a bit less pleasurable than smoker's cough comes with smoking. I am not intolerant and I will happily distribute ash-trays for the benefit of any smoker who comes to visit. I don't even object to conversing with someone who is talking to his cigarette more actively than he is talking to me. This other fellow is a rude boor but he is more offensive than his habit. I will not even contribute to the fund that is attempting to raise a sign reading "This is Marlboro Country" over Forest Lawn.

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In Mailing 116, Andy Main said a number of things that needed saying, without restraint, without the calm approach that inevitably obscures the urgency of these charges. These were thoughtfully stated charges that had a wider scope than the limited membership of FAPA. I can understand Andy's indignation, I can sympathize with his disgust, and I can hope that others will be able to read what he said. Any honest dissent is meaningful today, when the best efforts of our government are directed at stifling those who disagree with its policies, and our President ridicules his opposition, ineffectually seeking to generate a wave of laughter that will topple them from their influential positions. The only thing wrong with Andy's statements was that too few people read them. I don't ask for something like this every mail. I can abide by its absence several years in a row. But let's set it of five years, in which time something equally provocative must occur.

The last few lines on the first page should read: "I don't ask for something like this every mailing; I can abide by its absence several years in a row. But let's set a limit of five years, in which time something equally provocative must occur." The ugly blotch obscuring some of these words comes from allowing correction fluid to dry while the stencil is pressed a little too tightly to the backing sheet. Don't blame the mimeographer.

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The Tricon was a grand convention, handled with accomplished skill and efficiency. During the course of even the least important function there was always a convention representative on hand or nearby to see that things were kept in order. The hotel staff was given no justification in saying anything critical about the conduct of the convention attendees. On the other hand, there were some things that could be said with absolute conviction about the hotel. The elevator service was rotten. The elevators themselves were neurotic; they suffered mental breakdowns between floors, or became choosy and only stopped at certain floors. During my stay I formed an intimate acquaintance with the stairs.

The other conventions, running at the same time as our's were more restrained in their formal program. Informally, these characters were irritating louds who frequently became obnoxious and meddlesome. The bagpipers were either noisy (if you didn't happen to care for bagpipe music) or enchanting (if you did). The Canadian Legionnaires presented themselves as unreformed boozehounds whose prime military strategy appeared to have been to disgust the enemy. The shambled into beer parties, crowded into knots at the masquerade, took up space where they were least wanted. They were the sort of patriots who give patriotism a bad name. But then don't they all.

The first time I entered my room I thought I had wandered into an elevator. The closet was wide and the bed was soft and that's all I really cared about. So little time is spent in the room that what would normally be a discomfort was overlooked.

I met more people than I can list, many I had met before and some I hadn't. There were a couple of persons I had never seen before, and didn't care to see again. I enjoyed watching John Boardman engaged in a continuous floating argument with some loudmouth in a straw hat who was obviously unaware of John's capabilities or leanings. When loudmouth found he couldn't switch John's allegiances he went seeking new game. I later saw him talking with John W. Campbell Jr., which proves that some people never learn.

I finally had the chance to spend enjoyable periods of time in the huckster room, marveling over the goodies from Howard Devore, Bill Thailing and someone else whose name I didn't catch. I had the foresight to bring along one, large traveling case, empty and folded in our suitcase. By the time I left Cleveland this case was filled to the overflow, and in addition I was struggling with three "New York in '67" shopping bags, also devoid of any additional space. The stewardess on the plane wanted to know if I had enough to read (the flight was an hour and ten minutes) and a seat companion wondered what "New York in '67" meant. I didn't bother replying the first because it was the sort of question that is given with no reply expected and the second, because, as I said, the flight was only an hour and ten minutes long.



A word about the "New York in '67" shopping bags. Besides comfortably contributing to the deluge of pro New York propoganda, they proved invaluable for storing items on hand, rather than depositing them in your room each time one was secured. I don't know how many of these bags New York had printed up, but I frequently was led to beleive that not only did every hotel guest and bellboy carry one, but so did every single citizen of Cleveland. That's what I call effective saturation advertising.

Another propoganda piece was also of great value. I'm referring to the pocket programs that Dave Kyle had printed plugging Syracuse. It proved a great convenience to be able to check the convention schedule by unfolding the pocket size guide, instead of struggling through the bulky program booklet. Whether or not this is used for promotional purposes, I feel these guides should be a part of all conventions.

It was encouraging to view the zeal that the competing cities displayed in pushing their bids. New York's victory was as predictable as Boston's defeat. Boston will be trying to get the convention the next time it takes place on the East Coast, and I have a feeling they won't get it then either. Inexperience is an overused charge to apply to them, but in this case it's perfectly applicable.

The Hugos didn't quite come out the way I thought they would have. ERB-Dom's award was a good example of what organized block voting can accomplish.

Of the dramatic presentations viewed I liked STAR TREK very much, THE FANTASTIC VOYAGE moderately, and TIME TUNNEL not at all. In the case of TIME TUNNEL, a pre-judgement can be made validly: TIME TUNNEL is made by Irwin Allen. Irwin Allen is also to blame for VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA and LOST IN SPACE. Need more be said? Everyone commends THE FANTASTIC VOYAGE for its effects and settings, and berates it for the poor casting, dialogue, and story development. I'm agreed.

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Recent fans-turned-pros are usually responsible for professional work that is a gingerly attempted try at writing something of merit. It very frequently never is. In comparison, their fannish output is far, far superiour. But pro-writers, who have little or no contact with fandom are writing things that are memorable and will be noted with delight by a great many discerning readers. As example, compare the professional stories of former (and still) fans like Terry Carr, Ted White, Calvin Demmon and Alexei Panishin with the writings of Samuel R. Delany and Roger Zelazny. Delany and Zelazny are accomplished writers, the others are trying to act like accomplished writers. The members of the first category have all written some excellant pieces for fanzines, but when it comes to a paying market, the quality plummets. Is this because of the needs to doctor one's own capabilities to the demands of this market, in order to sell to a publication that pays good money for bad stories? (After all, television script-writers are very highly paid or is this a false analogy?) There's always a need for new writers but only a few today have the necessary skills to pose the threat of replacing a retiring veteran.

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Send Stephen E. Pickering to camp.

The most consistently satisfying current magazine is "Fantasy and Science Fiction". After a period of uncertainty that was evident by a small amount of shoddy handling, all its components seem to have meshed nicely. I'm sure that Boucher and McComas would be happy with it. Fred Pohl's publications still have some ghastly inequities in story content, ranging from the very good to the absolute unreadable. The policy of beginning a new serial in the same issue that has seen the last chapter of a previous one is too obvious a pitch to catch the reader. I would rather see the bulk of an issue be fitted out with a large chunk of a single serial, instead of splinters from a pair.

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Is there anyone besides myself who finds Queebshots to be dreary, irritating, unfunny, forced, contrived and time-wasters? They are also Clarke-wasters, insofar as the Clarks, two **marvelously** talented people, tend to exhaust their wits in these misguided trivialities and ignore **more worthwhile outlets** for their much desired writings. Similarly, I am disgusted with LIGHTHOUSE simply because it does not appear frequently enough. The issue in this mailing is an example. Conceive of a FAPA mailing that included a fanzine as this, and stretch this mailing out several years. With four LIGHTHOUSES a year would anyone bother to read the other FAPazines?

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The pro-Viet Nam crowd, whose chief activity apparently is ganging up on small groups of pickets protesting the war, strikes me as a bunch of hypocrites. If their concern is strongly in favor of the war they are doing nothing to further it by playing hoodlum on city streets. Let ~~them~~ go overseas and fight Mr. Johnson's Holy War and stop depriving plenty of others from resources which they use. The collegiate conservative who has the zeal to picket and march in support of continued aggression is a liar if he stops short of this. At the rate that the bodies are toppling in Viet Nam everyone who believes in this war has a duty to support it. If nothing else they may make themselves useful as fertilizer, helping to nourish rice paddies, which in turn will give U.S. pilots an excuse to unload their bombs on these strategic sites.

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Sometime I frighten myself. I've begun to buy sf again. And not just the current products either. I've visited local back issue stores, and within the past month paid personal visits to Milton Spahn in New York, and Richard Witter in Staten Island, both of whom **have more** back issues than I do, and are perfectly willing to satisfy this inequality. We have five bookcases scattered throughout this apartment and you may guess what percentage of the shelving space goes for my wife's books. I don't know why I'm doing this. I don't know why I started collecting the first time and I attacked the hobby with the same enthusiasm as I do now. If anyone knows, please tell me. And how do I stop?

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The film version of **FAHRENHEIT 451** opened in New York last month and was as poorly received as the trio of Bradbury's plays a few years ago. New York is not a Bradbury town, and resents him for some reason or other. Even the most yielding critic couldn't find anything too nice to say about the film. I'll bet if Ron Ellik was here things would be different. You hear that Ron...you hear that?



Some comments on Mailing #117

VANDY #27

Our cats -- or one of them, anyway -- frequently sleeps in much the same position you describe; flat on its back with all four feet up. Whenever I see her in this position I can hardly restrain myself from disturbing her, and placing her in a position that I would find more comfortable. She also sleeps with her tongues protruding a quarter of an inch and I can find no explanation for this.

The few times I've driven the Penn. turnpike I've never found the placement of signs to be any great hazard. Other than its long stretch of double lanes in both directions it seems to be about equal to any of the other heavy-volume highway. Both the Turnpike and Parkway in Jersey are almost 100% three laned. That way the slow driver has his lane, the moderate traveler has his, and the insane speed demon has his section which he can commit suicide on, and hopefully do so on his own. Two laned highways are limiting and force the good driver either to crawl along behind a line dominated by a motorist afraid to go above 30 MPH, or risk damage by trying to pass the guy.

I listen to AM radio too: the proper way. I switched it on exactly on the hour or half-hour, hear the news and weather for five minutes, and return the dial to its off position. I thereby avoid disc jockeys, obnoxious commercials, even more obnoxious records, and the overall sort of junk that you see on television and hear on radio. It's quite a dependable method.

The tv conflict you cite, may also indirectly affect the success of STAR TREK. In this area it runs from 8:30 to 9:30, the second half beginning at the same time that the Thursday night movie does. I imagine that a lot of viewers are lost to the flick. I nearly was myself a couple of times. I don't let it happen anymore. But perhaps a more favorable time slot would result in higher ratings.

A couple of times when I wandered into the N3F room at the Tricon I found John W. Campbell Jr. there. Possibly he has just been recruited and can shortly expect to receive the obligatory welcome letters. (I recall when James Taurasi joined N3F a few years ago. After a brief biog in the Welcomittee bulletin, it was stated quite emphatically: HE IS NOT A NEO, HE IS A PROMINENT FAN).

SALUD #24

But if it's so important keeping Communism out of Viet Nam, why aren't we sending troops to Cuba to drive Castro out. On the one hand we have the case of a possible change from a communist dictatorship to a non-communist dictatorship. On the other hand there is Cuba, an admitted Communist state, 90 miles from Florida, spreading treachery, subversion, and sabotage through South America. Isn't it extremely inconsistent to overlook a "menace" so close to our shores, while young men are dying in Asia because of a possible threat that may or may not materialize?

The only time an alarm clock works reliably is when you're already up and no longer needs its services. Unlike some mechanical devices which invariably antagonize human beings, the alarm clock is more subdued in temperament, and perfectly willing to allow its owner to sleep as late as he or she cares. Frequent settings can not rid it of this habit. You have no choice but to hire a rooster or take a job that doesn't begin until the late afternoon.

J.G. Ballard has more success with his short stories because he can't crowd as much lethargy into them, as he can his novels. There must be something he is trying to achieve with his unique writing style, but the most that can be said about it is that it so effectively dulls the readers' senses that they can no longer distinguish between a good story and a bad one. All to Ballard's advantage, I would say.

#### ALIQUT

I think Bruce Pelz performed a service by providing a FAPA ballot for all members he spotted. A ballot is a ballot, a strictly within all legal framework as long as it's signed by the qualified party without outside duress. You may argue that Bruce's presence alone constituted noticeable duress but then this could easily have been overcome by filling out your desired votes, and rendering a nonsensical signature that would have invalidated the ballot. In any case, I hope that Bruce continues this praiseworthy practice and I shall look forward to seeing him in New York next year, with an outstretched hand, a blank ballot, and a sinister smile.

#### SERCON'S BANE #30

Have you noticed the way the Batman villains attack their roles (to say nothing of the Dynamic Duo) with all the fervor and excitement of a genuine criminal about to pull off a major caper? I guess a lot of actors wish for the opportunity to overact, and since the penalties against this practice in legitimate filming are quite severe (like, the breadlines) they relieve themselves of the yearning by going bad-guy on Batman.

#### SPINNAKER REACH #6

Somehow I find the idea of doing farm chores in the morning, and watching the snowflakes at night, to be completely unrelated. Farms make me think of corn, cows, and the perpetual summer that Thorne mentions. a snow-covered farm sounds as unlikely as a sweating Santa Claus.

Perhaps sending better hectoed copies of zines to the more prominent FAPAns, under your administration, was an act of thoughtfulness, but were you really doing them a favor? With some of those magazines, it might have been wiser to forward the least readable copies to the more sensitive members. Age doth not mean quality.

Reversing the present Viet situation, what would be our reaction if a squadron of North Vietnamese unloaded a cargo of bombs outside Washington, D.C? The latest fad among the button wearers is one reading: Lee Harvey Oswald, where are you now that we need you.

If LSI is an example of getting something for nothing, than it must provide a more substantial kick than its proponents claim. No one says it will take you through time to creation and the crucifixion, even though you may feel and believe as if this happened. Can self-discipline and meditation achieve the same results that a sugarcube of LSD gives? And if that is the case, why not bypass this costly mysticism and take the trip properly and simply, instead of straining your mind in order to reach an abstract level of consciousness? Would you suggest that anesthesia be abandoned in hospitals, so that surgical patients be allowed to reach a condition of negative reaction to pain through some equally profound self-discipline? And LSD is facing confiscation and banning through its misuse not its use. There's a big difference there.

#### DAMBALLA #12

Your cover is quite striking, and I hope you'll exhibit more examples of sumi.

All this talk of home-brewing makes me feel distinctly uneasy, and just a trifle jealous. Alcohol costs have risen due to higher taxes, and it looks as if it won't be long before the only alcohol within reach of the consumer is that undrinkable stuff purchased at a gas station. Come to think of it, gasoline costs too are ascending, and you would earn the gratitude of myself, and many others, if you could refine some usable and cheap substitute for automobile gasoline. We can worry about drinking the stuff after we get the car running.



I sympathize with your digestive difficulties while air-borne, but I've noticed with amusement that this has never been a problem to me, on the few instances that I've flown. On the contrary, flying seems to provide an accelerated appetite so that not only do the meals remain down, but they frequently demand companionship.

Karen Anderson's award was deserved as much for the presentation of the portrayal, as the costume itself. Beauty's an odd thing. What may be beauty to one is not necessarily attractive to another. Her outfit was properly impressive, and I would say it was beautiful, though not in the same sense that the model from STAR TREK was. The quibbling is only with your labeling, Chuck, I'm in complete agreement with the disbursement of awards.

There's nothing wrong with your liking fireworks. The only trouble is that so do a lot of young, blitz minded imbeciles who use firecrackers as an excuse to declare war on their neighbors. We have legal fireworks on July 4th, carefully supervised by the local police and fire officials. They are louder, brighter and more attractive than the one or two inchers detonated in haste behind a building.

I find it interesting that you would bring up the possibility of government investigations because of some uncomplimentary remarks directed towards Johnson & Co. If the government went around scrutinizing the background of everyone who disagreed with Uncle then they'd be unable to do anything else but this (not at all a bad thing). If loyalty is measured by one's unthinking obedience to his government, whatever the case, then I have little respect for these indiscriminating loyalists. It's so much easier to accept official actions, than to question their meanings and uncover their questionable results. If Uncle is going to jeopardize anyone because of honestly expressed opinions than Uncle is not worth devoting your time too.

Several folk have mentioned of Richard Lupoff's resemblance to Gomez Addams. Dick Lupoff with a moustache looks like Dick Lupoff with a moustache, and nobody else that I recall. He's not the least bit Gomez Addams-ish. His eyes don't even sparkle.

#### ANKUS #19

As I've met no more than three or four of the characters described herein, some of the costumes worn to depict the others are considerably thought provoking. For instance, how much does Gretchen Schwenn look like Bruce Pelz on the cover, and if the resemblance is close enough, I can sympathize even more with Buechley. I daresay that this would be an effective theme for a worldcon masquerade.

#### SCIENCE FICTION FIVE YEARLY #4

Drake Douglas works with some sort of financial firm in New York, works isn't quite the word, he's the president of this group. I have his name written down somewhere, but where that is... Anyway, it's a name that no one else has heard of before, and he most definitely is not some prominent writer. I understand that some scholar of horror films, upon reading Douglas' book, submitted to his publishers a book-length manuscript with all the errors in the original volume. The publishers were seriously considering bringing out this reply in the form of a separate book under some ridiculous title.

Silverberg's serial sounds faintly familiar, as if I'd read the story, or parts elsewhere, but no... Is it true that Sol Cohen has been bidding heavily for full reprint rights once it concludes in SFFY? You won't get any money for it, but think of the prestige.

Harlan Ellison, on the other hand, has written something quite unique, quite original and (predictably) quite controversial. Cohen would have nothing to do with it, and that's the bitter truth

### SPIANE #3

As I recall your camera was a small, unadorned device. Even if you were unable to take the sort of pictures you wished, you may be assured that as a photographer, you made more friends with this outfit, then had you been equipped with a fancier camera and a flash approximating in brightness the sun at noon. Too many photographers are more concerned with shooting their subject in the proper conditions, technically speaking, then whether or not his eyes may be looking forward to an intense glare of light. The answer, order Jay Klein's con memory book.

### THE VINEGAR WORM

The reason I had heard for the name change from Archer to Harper, in the flick version of "The Moving Target", was that this was done to please Paul Newman. Most of his biggest hits started with "H" (i.e. HUD, THE HUSTLER) and the film execs felt that it would provide a mental bolster to Newman to star in another film beginning with an "H". This may or may not be true, but it's one possible explanation. Granted, it's not much of a reason for the name change, but it's a believable one.

### THE RAMBLIN FAP #39

The objections to baths, as opposed to showers are that showers use less water (if you're the sort that likes to conserve water) and showers wash away body dirt, in a tub you're still immersed in it.

I could not possibly sleep for eight hours no matter when I had to be up in the morning. This can be blamed entirely on the feline membership who threaten all sorts of harassment if they are not fed promptly on time in the morning. Their reasoning runs along the lines that sunrise indicates breakfast time, and who am I to dispute this charge. Don't suggest I go to bed earlier, because then they would keep track of the time, and just as effectively rob me of any sleep lasting more than seven hours.

I wouldn't care to live in an area where I had to arm myself nightly. I do believe in protecting myself and practicing self-defence, but if some neighborhood was so dangerous a concealed weapon was needed I would move and promptly.

I find it very easy to tear myself away from the tv offering to read a book. This has always been the rule, and only in the case of extremes in quality on either side will I overlook it. That is, I will not feel guilty if I sit up for several hours finishing a book that has captured my attention. But I do become quite concerned and apprehensive if I spend more than an hour looking at the idiot box.

Agreed re: THE PAWNBROKER. A most superlative film, no matter what the Legion of Decency may say. (And they have said a lot, in their sacred crusade to uphold the noble principle that the human body is dirty).

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