

G O D O T #9

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DYNATRON #35

I'm looking forward to reading other reviews of "Dangerous Visions", because it is one of the few recent books I've read myself almost immediately after publication. Normally I'm several years behind in reading the new releases, and only Harlan's pre-sales pitches kept this volume out of that category. This heavy pre-selling practiced by Harlan Ellison at several conventions dating back almost three years is probably one reason why my own opinion of the anthology is very close to yours. If Harlan had shuffled quietly into view, said: "I'm editing an anthology of completely new stories, I don't know much about editing but I thought the stories were pretty darned good, and I hope you'll buy it and tell me what you think," and then walked away the anticipation would have been lessened, and the disappointment wouldn't have been so strong. But, unfortunately (in this particular case) Harlan's promotional faculties easily outclass P.T. Barnum's when it comes to vigorous drum-beating. I've noticed one feature of the book, that most of the stories would be unacceptable to the current magazines, has been dropped from the advertising copy, so it really becomes unnecessary to refute this claim by pointing out that if any of the stories in "Dangerous Visions" were rejected from a magazine, it was probably due to the tale being unpublishable, only in the sense that all bad stories are unpublishable. As one example, incest was used in Sherwood Springer's "No Land of Nod", first published in Thrilling Wonder Stories, December 1952 with far greater immediacy and plausibility than Sturgeon's well written but overlong narrative.

Del Rey's opening story seemed more like a substantial basis for a Sunday sermon, than as a foundation for an SF yarn. Although the deity is a character, and not a very formidable one at that, I found no example of blasphemy in its length, and I suppose it could even be regarded as a reverent fable. It lacks Del Rey's bite.

I won't comment too much on the remainder of the contents, other than pointing out that I thought Frederik Pohl's story was one of the best I've seen in any book. It's not often that a writer can take a very conventional idea and treat it in a thoroughly new perspective. But Pohl has done this remarkably well. There is no particular scene that can be recalled out of context so I am not seizing on the impact of one bit to be used as a reason for my liking of the entire piece. The complete thought he presents is stated with far more effectiveness than any neat sermonizing could have accomplished.

Oh yes, mustn't forget Niven's story. Although the idea was a good one, the writing was uncertain and vague, as if the author was tentatively advancing each portion of the story, with the provision that they could be instantly withdrawn if proven unsuitable. Larry Niven is a good representation of the novice writer who hasn't quite yet developed his skills enough to be considered a professional. (Needless to say his Hugo was awarded a bit prematurely, although I'm sure that one day he will be better qualified to accept one). Contrast Niven's grammatical fumbblings with the writing of Lieber's "Gonna Role the Bones". Lieber writes with complete self-assurance and understanding of the game, even when tackling a theme as difficult as the one he uses here.

The stories that relied on surprise endings were the weakest of the collection (i.e. "Evensong", "Ersatz" etc.etc.). Farmer's exercise should not be judged as a

completed work, and used in comparison with his other, more accomplished novels. I saw it as a test he set up for himself, a specific attempt to master the Joycean vein in a science fictional setting. Farmer is too good a writer to completely fail at anything he sets out to do. "Riders of the Purple Wage" is moderately successful if you are willing to read it through entirely. Certain parts were quite funny, and every single name in it should be studied at length. It was undoubtedly an exhaustive creation, but Farmer seemed to have fun with it, and I hope this will refresh and replenish him satisfactorily to return to serious writing.

I admire and respect Harlan Ellison's determination to produce a major anthology. If "Dangerous Visions" is remembered thirty years from now, it will be because of its origin, and not the content. I hope Harlan approaches his next literary project with as much enthusiasm.

Can pornography, even "semi-pornography" be obtained at a newsstand? Whenever this charge is used, the object referred to usually turns out to be PLAYBOY, ROGUE or a men's magazine of that nature. Pornography and obscenity are markedly relative terms and subject to the limitations of individual viewpoints. I, as an example, thought the cover picture on LIFE magazine several months ago, offering an intimate picture of President Johnson lovingly admiring his newly born grandson, to be unspeakably obscene. Ordinarily a picture like this would have little merit, but it strikes me as offering a telling contrast to the President's other activities. For one who has shown so little regard for human life, it seems distinctly out of character for him to reverse this attitude and lavish affection on a child as innocent and unaware as the thousands who are suddenly and forcibly being annihilated.

Tell Jack Speer that Mr. Spock does indeed possess the ability to control other emotions. There is one organization known as the L.N.N.A.F. (Leonard Nimoy National Association of Fans) which claims a membership of close to 1300, all of whom adore Spock. There is a more teenybopper oriented fan club in New York called "Vulcan Enterprises" which was responsible for the STAR TREK skit at the NYCON, and who are now selling "Mr. Spock for President" bumper stickers. I know this for fact because my wife has two of these bumper stickers. I have refused to let her put them on our car. And Shirley Meech, in Delaware has eight scrapbooks filled with pictures and articles about Spock/Nimoy. Or that may be eight trunks.

#### TRILL #6

I'll keep your San Francisco observations in mind. There is a good chance that we will make it out to the BAYCON this year, and I am looking forward to seeing as much as I can of the city in the short time that we will be there. I expect that the rampant publicity of Haight-Ashbury has contributed toward its transformation into a tourist trap, as much as anything else. The real hippies, those that once inhabited Haight-Ashbury before anyone ever heard of it, have probably all fled to a safer region which is unknown to most of us, and probably will remain genuine until the press discloses its location.

Do you object to being abrasive towards President Johnson by calling him a murderer, or just being abrasive to him in general? Anyone who controls as many lives as he does should certainly be held responsible for errors or misjudgements, and when these errors or misjudgements occur I believe we should be told of them, instead of given the promise of some unspecified gain without a correction in these conditions. The disrespect directed towards him has risen quite sharply in recent times, causing some people to feel it was "unpatriotic" or improper to offer any criticism at a time when a critical power struggle occupies the minds of many. I feel that no time is more important than this, when lives are in the balance of each strategic decision.

Your question about whether or not TRILL is the first xeroxed FAPazine interests me. No, I don't know the answer to this question, I'll leave that to the other historians. But we have a xerox 813 at work, and for a while I was considering putting out a FAPazine through this medium. It would be a laborious and tedious process, since 10 is the limit of multi-copies, and after that the machine ejects the original and it must be run through again. In addition, such a publication would of necessity have been printed on only one side of the paper. Our machine jams copy at the slightest provocation and running several hundred back printed sheets through would tax it to its limit. The reproduction is always sharp, crisp and clear, but along with that you get a printed bar of type along the top margin reading "Xero copy" and complete even elimination of this frame, together with perfect back to back register would be impossible. A nearby office also has a 914 model but this would take even longer per copy, than the 813 and make the problem even more difficult.

#### VANDY #29

I fully agree with your proposal to notify hotels of sub-standard service but I think your plan can be modified a bit. Most hotels do very high volume business, and are unconcerned about a few isolated complaints. Perhaps twenty of thirty will cause them to check back on certain procedures, and perhaps instigate some improvements, but then again they may feel this represents a few disgruntled opinions from persons who would be inclined to bitch over anything, and therefore not attack the problem with the necessary severity. Fred Patton had the right idea, he linked the poor service of the New York Statler-Hilton with the loss of the convention to the hotel's Los Angeles branch. This hurts the hotel men - this represents a very tangible loss of income. If you write an offending hotel mention some organization you are affiliated with, and state quite firmly that you will do all you can to see that this hotel chain does not host a convention of your particular group. It's the masses the powerful hotel chains are most afraid of, and if there's some way you can represent yourself as an important spokesman for a group than do so.

Electric typewriters are a joy to operate, but they create a reliance on the conveniences they offer. I use an electric IBM at work, and in the evening, when use this Royal non-electric, I occasionally find myself punching the Margin Release key and wondering why the carriage doesn't instantly swing back. I suppose the same retention can be applied to telephones. I daily use one with half a dozen different extension buttons that light when a call is placed through them. Our phone at home are the more conventional type, but this does not deter me from hastily snatching up the cradle, and stabbing out at the base of the phone, in order to open a unused line.

The only meaningful suggestion William F. Buckley has ever made was written shortly after the brief Arab-Israeli war. He thought it would be a good idea if the United States signed a Mutual Defence pact with Israel for our protection.

I admit it's an old argument but I think it's a relevant one; if a nineteen year old is expected to give his life for his country, he should be allowed to have a small say in how it's run. I think you'd be surprised at the number of teenagers who are quite informed about the national political situation, and would exercise a voting privilege to do something about it. If you feel that youngsters under 21 have too little sense to deserve the right to vote (and there are some that do) then I am appalled at the vast majority of voting ignoramuses over 21.

The Peace Corps would still be a good idea, if the overseas recipients of its services were led to believe that it was a true representation of the American spirit. Unfortunately most of the people benefiting from it have the opinion that it's a deliberately contrived attempt to project a favorable impression on one hand, while we are burning towns and napalming children on the other. And who's to say they are wrong?

Evidently the missionary spirit you speak of that STAR TREK imparts to some fans has accomplished a great deal. According to our evening newspaper two nights ago STAR TREK has been renewed for the next season, after a very heavy letter-writing campaign. Both TV GUIDE and NEWSWEEK have blamed the campaign on a "sci-fi" magazine which simply is not so. The small amount of publicity that the first few letters protesting possible cancellation received, apparently served to mobilize a number of other views, completely unconnected with fandom, in to writing to save the show. Equally good news is that LOST IN SPACE is to be dropped, but this is balanced with a report that Irwin Allen will create a new series: THE MAN FROM THE 25th CENTURY with James Darren.

Speaking of Irwin Allen, has any convention committee seriously considered the possibility of inviting him to speak at a future World-con? Stand him up in front of a bare wall, and give everyone stones...

#### GRANDFATHER STORIES

The only thing more disturbing about the vast amount of comic book dealers at the NYCON, was the amount of attention they attracted. It looked to me like a few comic book sellers were constantly selling large portions of their stock, while the sf hucksters appeared to be selling in small spurts. If you want to get sticky about it, there were sf comics being sold, and nearly all the dealers offered items that had some relation to sf, if they weren't outright books or magazines. But it does seem unfortunate that a large display of old "Superman" comics, or movie stills can take the space needed by a pulp dealer who (in my opinion) has items of far greater value. The one who seemed the most taken aback by the selling and buying audience was Steve Takacs who probably brought down the entire hardcover stock of his store, and I imagine returned home with it at the end of the convention. For some reason hardcovers just don't seem to sell, possibly because unless one is a completist he knows that eventually original hardbound releases will come out in a cheaper pb format. I was amused to see two local dealers: Richard Witter and Gerry de la Ree, who attended the convention with none of their considerable stock.

I suppose an sf convention is of more interest to young children, than most large gatherings that consist of dry talks, formal speeches and re-acquainting yourself with persons you hoped you saw the last of the past year. I've noticed that a lot of families who attend do bring the kids, allowing them to browse through the huckster room and art exhibits, and attend the masquerade. Not only does it save the cost of a sitter, but it's an important contribution towards an early introduction to sf. Sf cons tend to be colorful and noticeable, as much to the veteran as the newcomer.

I notice you display a fondness for your past autos. To a non-carowner the emotions one feels towards a faithful auto that is either being traded in, or sold to another, is almost impossible to convey. There is none of the strong affection associated with a dog but on the other hand, you can't look upon the discarded car as simply a useful tool. Cars attain very distinct and recognizable personalities, which are taken for granted until they go, and then you suddenly realize what you have lost.

#### A PROPOS DE RIEN

If 99% of television is crud, please name the one percent that is not. And does this also include 99% of the commercials?

I doubt if violence is considered acceptable by the tv industry, or the viewing public, since rapid denunciations follow whenever an overabundance of violence is portrayed. Since the tv industry makes a habit of trying to offend as few as possible, I wonder why this edict is ignored in most programs when strict anti-violence is professed by everyone.

The trouble with administration criticism is that first you must very definitely show they said one thing which was not so, or which was distorted in an attempt to give it another meaning. Since nearly everything the government says can be reworked to conform to whatever propoganda the government wishes to give us, pointing out the one, solitary untruth is like trying to find a single salmon in a sea of fish. Distrust of public officials has always been fashionable, but when it becomes a case of not believing anything said by the President, I begin to wonder if it really matters which side wins. My skeptical mind invariably seeks to uncover the political meaning behind public pronouncements. I don't think President Johnson has ever leveled with the American people, and given them a truthful appraisal of what's going on. I would first examine the credentials of the speaker, before accepting anything said concerning the Vietnam mess. When the enemy overruns Saigon and dozens of other major towns, cows the totally ineffective and impotent South Vietnamese army and is only beaten back with great loss, the government solemnly declares the victory was for us because it will give the South Vietnamese more responsibility in dealing with their own problems. Indeed it will, just as soon as they learn which way to aim a gun when they fire it.

The keyword is of course communism. We are protecting the Asian peoples from the vicious onslaught of communism, as embodied by the Yellow Peril. We need only be told that the action is to prevent communism and this becomes an excuse for any atrocity deemed workable at the time. The only way to acheive a full strategic stalemate would be by referring to the South Vietnamese constantly as Negroes. In this way a great many Americans would be more inclined to abonden the futile struggle, rather than risk their lives to save Negroes from communism. Dean Rusk could be expected to drop all the contradictory nonsense he's been sputtering and urge a complete U.S. withdrawal, hopefully expecting the relatives of his new son-in-law to be swallowed up by the communists. (He attended his daughter's wedding but he refused to give the bride away - after all, how much should one expect of him).

#### VUKAT #6

I remember Stan Freburg's OMAHA too, let's see who else does. At the time I purchased this, I was struck with the album cover, a take-off of the finale scene from OKLAHOMA with a lot of disreputable charactors in gleeful poses going through the motions of a final fanfare before fadeout. I was unaware, until now that this was a coffee commercial, but on reflection I can't see how I overlooked that, since Eustace K. Buttermit was the star of the show. But whoever heard of a brand of coffee named "Butternut". Nowadays brand names are far more descriptive of the product, like Chock-full-o-nuts.

The plot gimmick of having some inexplicable adventure turn out to be a dream, and then begin over again received its best treatment in the 1945 British film "Dead of Night". After that, no one else could effectively use this trick without recalling memories of the film.

This F-UN con sounds like, well...fun. I hope Charles A. Crayne is aware of what he's letting himself in for. If he delivers everything he promises, it could eclipse the BAYCON two months later.

#### MOONSHINE #34

I have been told by Mike Avallone that the new Ellery Queen novels are rumored not to have been written by Queen. One possible suspect is Milton Lesser. I can't judge for myself, I haven't read any new material by Lesser to compare it with Queen. Ghosting is apparently not too uncommon a practice, since Harry Harrison has confessed to writing to last "Saint" novel. Even Paul W. Fairman is going to write Ted Mark for awhile, only under the name of W.F. Paul, by lining four "Man from Stud" novels from Lancer later in the year.

I thought MAD changed to a slick format in order to promote sagging sales, because comic books at the time were not doing well. The Comic Code Authority seemed more concerned with depictions of violence and sex in comic books (most notably the other E.C. publications) than with the content of MAD. In fact it would seem to me that MAD had less to fear from comic censorship than the others. Certainly the format switch was beneficial, I still see it on the newstands, although I rarely read it.

#### HORIZONS #113

Instead of future worldcons making financial donations to FAPA, suppose FAPA donates sums to future worldcons, for the privilege of meeting there?

We recently purchased a color tv and I feel as you do, that my tv watching time has increased since then. First it was the desire to see what a lot of the programs looked like in color. And more impressive than the programs, are commercials, some of which are quite attractive when viewed with the proper tints. Color tv is perfect for food and travel commercials primarily. Cooked meats look far more palatable when you can see the shades of tenderness and the color of the gravy. On such programs as sports specials or newscasts, the addition of color seems unnecessary however, since the visual message can be conveyed just as effectively in black and white. The disadvantages to color sets are the myriad tuning arrangements that can be created. We also have an indoor antenna, which brings in moderately fine reception, although anyone crossing past the antenna while a color program is in progress can eradicate the color briefly. A roof antenna is available and I could have our set hooked-up if I cared to, but I don't.

I don't know whether or not you find this true in your case, but I've learned that the most effective means I have to sharpen the focus of a televised film is by tilting my glasses. We have a year's guarantee with the set, and I was ready to complain to the service about poor reception until I realized that the difficulty with the reception was more my fault, than the tv's.

I can understand your desire for neutrality in con-site bidding but does this imply to you do not participate in the final voting? It's fortunate that the 1969 possibilities are reasonably well defined, and I have no hesitation in voting for St. Louis over Columbus, considering the latter's immaturity and lack of fanish orientation. I'd feel very confident if Ray Fisher handled a convention but I would be scared to death at the thought of what Columbus might do, given the same responsibility. It's the sort of choice that requires very little debate to resolve.

#### ENGARDE #2

Talk about "other fandoms". This was an attractive enough fanzine with very competent writing, but I'm afraid I just don't belong in The Avengers circle, since try as I will, I don't regard Diana Rigg's departure from the program as a major crisis. I've seen the show a few times and I think Miss Rigg is a charming creature, kinky outfit and all, but I think if she is replaced by another, her replacement could turn out to be just as vivacious and appealing as she is. I would have preferred to

see the original British version of The Avengers, since by the time the present episodes were made, the producer was aware they were primarily for export, and "Americanized" them severely in order to be suitable for the U.S. tv market.

The program has recognized the fact that the limitations of commercial television will not allow any deep or involving stories to be used, since the continuity is invariably broken by commercials, and any feeling of association is removed by the relatively small viewing space. The only dimensional characters are Rigg and MacNee, and this because they are in view every week, and have ample time to create a believable image. The rest of the cast does not overexert itself to promote character plausibility, they are more concerned with gimmicks and flip dialogue, which survive the tv transition far better.

#### SERCON'S BANE #35

Sorry to hear your tycoonning attempt nosedived, but I suppose it's just as well. If fate had transformed you into another J. Paul Getty you might have tried some really wild schemes like reviving CRY into a 300 page weekly fanzine, colored covers and interiors, paid contributors, etc.etc. And who the devil can comment on a 300 page fanzine?

Despite the difficulties with the hotel, I do think you would have enjoyed the NYCON. Once you realized that these problems were being faced by everyone, and were unavoidable it would be merely a matter of time before acceptance followed. Probably the most irritating thing about such difficulties would be assuming they were occurring only to you. After awhile it became clear that every guest in the hotel would have been eager to lynch Conrad Hilton, the hotel manager, and the few snotty elevator operators. Everyone was in the same boat.

Well maybe if you protest to one side long enough about a war, the side will realize the stupidity of its actions and pull out before anyone else gets hurt. And maybe not. Who can say? But people are getting hurt, burned, and killed right now, and a complete cessation of all comment, and merely accepting everything our side does, because after all it is our side, and we have God on our side...seems like the most dangerous course of action.

#### THE RAMBLING FAP #41

Downtown Newark is taking steps to eliminate some of the narrower streets through redeveloping the area and making it easier for traffic to navigate through. It's surprising that there are so many areas in major cities consisting of tight, thin roadways which can barely manage a single car, going in one direction. I would think that the initial high cost of street widening would be offset by the increased commerce more easily usable roads would bring

Your right about STAR TREK having its highs and lows. When it first began its second season it ran into a pack of "lows", programs that were poorly defined and unworthy of the show. But within the past few weeks there has been considerable improvement in both story line and acting. Instead of presenting a humorous story that was more of an embarrassment, there was a humorous story that had some pretty funny lines to it. Spock is less of a comic relief than before, and I'm pleased to see that the "Oh Cisco - Oh Pancho" routine at the end has been eliminated.

#### SERENADE #6

William Buckley operated on the same premise that you ascribe to a potential New Hampshire Presidential Primary candidate, in the last New York mayoral election. He knew he could not win and therefore did not feel compelled to indulge in such foolishness of baby-kissing, hot-dog eating, or all the other voter pandering devices so

common a practice today. He was quite free to express his views about whatever subject he chose, as a Mayoral candidate, without forcing himself to limit certain remarks that might prove offensive to potential voters.

It's odd that you are almost non-committal about THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. while you condemn MISSION:IMPOSSIBLE. I always assumed that if you liked one show, you automatically liked the other. I'll have to force myself to watch an entire MISSION:IMPOSSIBLE so that I can assume some degree of awareness when the show is brought up. The same resolve applies to I SPY. I am more concerned with a program that is well written and demonstrates wit, rather than gadgetry so the latter may be more suited to my tastes. I suppose it can be said that the quality of a series tv show is improving, although this is hardly a broad compliment.

Shouldn't it be TAWF, not TWAF?

There should be some regulation against sending credit cards unsolicited through the mails, if there isn't already. Suppose the card is lost, or strays into the hands of someone else who proceeds to run up a fortune in your account. Since you did not notify the issuing agent that the card was lost (because you were unaware it was being sent) can you then be held responsible?

DAMBALLA

I'm rather amazed, too, at the thought of a writer who can't stop working. Using myself as a yardstick, I find any sort of writing to be often tedious and frequently insufferable, and I must prod myself to complete even the least important letter, of which I send few enough these days. I can not conceive of facing a typewriter, rolling in a sheet of paper, and merrily typing away hour after hour, filling pages with entertaining and saleable prose. I have the greatest respect and admiration for anyone who can do this, and do it well, since it represents an unapproachable feat to me.

I meant to say Chuck, that I couldn't see how your remarks towards Philip K. Dick were justified. I thought his LIGHTHOUSE article was thoroughly more entertaining than most of his books. If it was written while in flight, so what? No absolute proof has ever been offered that hallucinogenic drugs cause brain damage or retardation. They have even been used as a treatment against already existing mental disorders.

You say that every citizen owes his country service (presumably fighting in wars waged by the country). But why? Suppose the wars don't always represent the best interests of the country, but instead reflect the mania of the very small minority having the power to mobilize the citizen and send him off to war? Wouldn't you be doing more for your country by refusing to participate, then by going off under orders and helping to discredit your country even further, in the viewpoint of neutral observers?

THE FANTASY AMATEUR #122

The listing of the contents of the past 4 mailings serves a vital dual purpose. Not only is it helpful in recalling past stand-outs, as it is primarily intended, but it is personally useful because I don't have to go checking back in order to see what number GODOT this will be. I could easily avoid even this small problem by bringing forth a new title each time I make an appearance, but I'm satisfied with the title I have now. And why not reinstate the practice of providing an indication before the names of members and w/l'ers who have new addresses?