



The Book of the SubGenius

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Sometimes a book goes too far. Sometimes is... now. First, there was *The Gilgamesh*. Then... the *Bhagavad-Gita* Then... *the Torah, the New Testament, the Koran* Then... *the Book of Mormon, Dianetics, I'm OK You're OK*. And now...*The Book of the Subgenius (How to Prosper in the Coming Weird Times)*

The Book of the SubGenius Details

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Author : SubGenius Foundation , Ivan Stang

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From Reader Review The Book of the SubGenius for online ebook

Justin Day says

A fun faux religious text that will keep you laughing as it lampoons religion, conspiracy theory, hive-mind cult thinking, UFO cults -- arranged as a collection of random pamphlets supposedly circulated. I imagine that some or all of this may have been circulated that way at some time. It has a cool "zine" hand made photocopied feel that I enjoy.

This reminds me a lot of Principia Discordia, the Discordian texts. Not sure which one came first, but if you dig this, you'll like that or vice-versa.

Mark says

An incredibly juvenile parody of Scientology that nevertheless contains occasional nuggets of real wisdom and a few moments of laugh-out-loud hilarity. Graphically noisy, the pre-digital cut-and-paste chaos of each page adds to the mesmerizing ugliness of the book as a whole. The central emphasis on Slack as a religious doctrine will remain important long after the target of the book's satire is forgotten.

Stuart Dean says

Do you want to be left behind when the Sex Goddesses from Planet X come to collect the Overmen? Of course you don't! The teachings of J.R. "Bob" Dobbs collected here for your enlightenment. See you on X-Day, July 5.

Malcolm Collins says

One of the most formative books of my life. I would strongly recommend it to any middle schooler struggling with religion.

It is funny, fun, and subversive.

Barney says

One of the most important books ever written. It's up there with Hobbes' Leviathan, Joyce's Ulysses, The Phantom Tollbooth and See Spot Run. It is even more important and timely than the latest book from the latest Republican or Democrat flavor of the month.

Pull the wool over your own eyes and learn to pay to know what you really think and read this book. Find the glorious power of "Bob" and become your hero and hers as well.

Jessie says

all sorts of awesome

Julie Decker says

Eternal Salvation or Triple Your Money Back! Yes, that is an offer these folks make, and though most of the book is bizarre enough that you're convinced it's a joke, something about it makes you aware that they're Completely Serious . . . and YOU need to be a part of it. If you're a superior creature, that is. With loads of philosophy on how the norms have shunned us and how we should now embrace Slack and buy our salvation, this book is full of brain-blistering rants, odd characters and creatures, unholy messages, and nonsense that is 100% pure distilled truth. (And there are some cool frightening messages you can copy, cut out, and spread around! But "Bob" says you shouldn't do that either. So you should. But don't tell anyone I sent you.)

I've been an ordained SubGenius minister since 1995, and it was this book that did it.

Patch says

Bow young bucks! Before the wicked wisdom widening weeping eyes! Pay props to "Bob" and know ye to be saved from the reptile underlords of the uber realm! Give us your money!
Fight along side The mighty Gee-whiz, Connie, Philo, "Bob" and Grandmaster flash in hot pusuit of the Ham Sandwich of Gawd! Give me liberty, or give me slack, or kill me!

Hours of fun AND education. Mountains of cocaine. Tons of cocaine! Find your soul mate, or at least get laid by paying for it! What more could you ask for? Ask, then do it yourself. Make the most of your time on the toilet.

John says

Every now and then, when I get to feeling low I pull out my dog-eared copy of Dobbs and run through it again. It's a masterful book that does a brilliant job of disguising wisdom as bullshit -- tells us not to take ourselves so damned seriously.

Peter Crispin says

I love this book. It's a very amusing read if you don't take it seriously, and a very thoughtful (and challenging) read if you do.

Ike Hall says

Your mind needs an enema, and this book is the nozzle! Reprogram yourself with BULLDADA while there's still time!

Pete Wagner says

BOB and Rev. Stang were the spiritual counterparts to the politically-oriented street theater gang I organized in Minneapolis in 1981. The Subgenius originators were sending us their earliest writings and graphics and we were publishing them in our satirical bimonthly tabloid, "Minne HA! HA! -- The Twin Cities' Sorely Needed Humor Magazine." So we were among the first to publish any of the stuff that is included in this book, for our 40,000 readers here in the Twin Cities.

Our own group, the 1985 Brain Trust, which was mainly into guerrilla theater, was like the political counterpart to the Church of the Subgenius. Our book, Buy This TooBUY THIS TOO by me, Pete Wagner, is somewhat similar to this book but more grounded in its focus because political satire leaves you almost no choice if you want it to be effective. Our attacks on the New Right were more head-on, where BOB's were more roundabout.

BUY THIS TOO, like Book of the SubGenius, came out in 1987. By the time I was writing it, Bob had pretty much faded back from the limelight (always loved that his countenance was partly peeking through in the backdrop of Letterman's "Late Night" on CBS for a few years) and the SubGenius stuff we had run in our paper was funny and fit right into our whole scene but about the only thing that was enduring by then was a faded stencil spray painting of BOB on a small concrete wall along the Mississippi River near our house. We had done more blatant things, like a bunch of stencil spray paintings on trash cans at the University of Minnesota that read "BIBLE DISPOSAL BINS" and had a big cross with a circle and slash through...

The satire here is much more obtuse but we always appreciated it and the ten dollars Rev Stang sent along with his first submission to our magazine. (btw if you want to look at these, they are up at facebook/minnehahamag - I scanned as many copies as I could find a few years ago, and I'm sure there are at least some of the ones with the SubGenius material in...some of which may not be in this book)

Cheers,
Wag

James Beach says

The "Church of the Subgenius" is an organization that *appears* to be mostly the output of writer Ivan Stang and quite a few collaborators. It is either a religion disguised as a joke, or a joke disguised as a religion.

Early on in this book, the Church describes it's flavor of experience as "irritainment." I would say that's quite accurate. It's also very strange, extremely funny, and at times very insightful. Also every single page has so much going on, verbally conceptually and artistically, that you could stare at it for a day.

This other review on the back of the book itself says it best:

"A rare knack for masking genuine wisdom in the guise of utter bullshit."

Ben says

Nice mid-20th-century line drawings of 'generic' handsome males smoking pipes collaged with Apocalyptic religious iconography. Contains references to many, if not most all, popular Conspiracy themes and alleged masterminds/shadowy groups. The authors seemed to have quite deftly absorbed and synthesized the consciousness of "Kookdom" to produce a 'bible' which cannot be comedy or farce because everything written in it is true. Strangely, terribly, true; yet all the while proclaiming it to be just a "joke". Practice yoga by reading this book and forcing yourself to laugh loudly followed by deeply inhaling and calmly exhaling for half an hour. This should help to detoxify your deep muscles and muscles.

Clackamas says

I'd totally forgotten about this book.

Background: I was a student at a conservative Quaker college in 1998.

During mid-semester break in the fall, I went out to Enterprise, Oregon with my friend Chris, a copy of my college's lifestyle agreement, and a sharpie. The Challenge issued me by Chris was to spend the weekend with old and new friends away from the school just being myself instead of the person I was trying to force myself to be. He, in turn would mark off each lifestyle agreement I violated by simply behaving like Clack.

First, I met Chris at his Mom's house. She is a minister of the Church of Inner Light and reads auras. She read mine as a preparation for the trip (violation 1- "no member shall participate in cult or occult activities"). I told her that I thought her "reading" of me was a crock of cr*p (violation 2- "avoid mean-spirited behaviors"). She took it well though because she's cool like that. So, Chris and I set out.

Once in Enterprise we stayed with my former boyfriend (ehem. violation 3- "we believe that only marriage between a man and a woman is God's intention for the joyful fulfillment of sexual intimacy"). However, he and I had split on terms that weren't the best so we were actually quite angry with each other (still violation 3- "this should always be in the context of mutual compassion, love, and fidelity". Also violation 4- "avoid abusive or manipulative actions").

Afterward, I got to meet his more recent ex (violation 5- "regard each person with love and respect" and 6- "avoid discrimination"). She was pretty p*ssed off because of course she was trying to get him back. She tried to make sure that I understood just how much better she was for him than I by showing me a tape she'd convinced him to make while they were together (violation 7- "we avoid giving attention to what is obscene and pornographic"). Frankly, I couldn't see why she thought that'd convince me she was better.

The next day we went to Ex's buddy John's house where everyone was sitting around creating characters for an epic-level D&D game, drinking, and smoking. I joined in all activities listed (violations 8, 9, & 10- "the use of alcohol by traditional undergraduate students is not allowed at any time they are enrolled at the

university”, “presence or use of illegal drugs is not tolerated”, and “the use of tobacco is not permitted”).

John asked me how things were going and I gave him a few juicy details (violation 11- “avoid gossip”). When Ex asked what we were talking about, I said “nothing”, because I didn’t want him to know what a crotch his other ex had been to me (violation 12- “tell each other the truth”). I’m glad that I talked to John though, because he was a big help to me in creating my character for the game. He let me fudge the numbers to get a more powerful setup (violation 13- “do honest work”).

We played in the smoky room until early the next morning and then stumbled back to Ex’s place. I tripped on the way and hurt my leg. When we got back, he gave me some Percocet that he had left over from an old car accident (violation 14- illegitimate use of prescription drugs is not tolerated). It helped but I was dragging when it was time to get up. Fortunately for me, Ex was ADHD and had some stuff to perk me up too (violation 14 again). We just sat around that day playing cards (violation 15- “we avoid gambling”).

When Ex and I parted, we promised to keep in touch more, try to get together more often, etc. (violations 16 & 17- “honor each person” and “keep our promises”).

All in all, it was a fun, albeit personally instructive, weekend.

Oh yeah, about the book that I’m reviewing... Ex’s buddy John was ordained a minister of the Church of Subgenius and sent me home with a copy of the book.

Ned says

One of the best catch-all self-help panaceas I could find at the time it came out I guess. Now I type while my left hand tries to pick off the aliens sucking on my VERY FLESH!!!!

Looking back now this article of faith seems rather prescient. Only operate this vehicle under extreme care and without the aid of trendy chemical amusements of any kind. Inoperable harm may result. If only there could return a time of say 15% oxygen in Earth's atmosphere, us puny humans may have a chance to survive and escape earth's terminal velocity. But not these days despite disney and turner and nato and Sprint/AOL/myspace/FoxNews/ etc ad infinitum who ridicule our intelligence with placating unending promises of anime bliss and moral outrage on trivialities instead of the sweet rantings of someone like dear departed Rev Ivan Stang.>> transcript edited by management]

Erin Betts says

A REAL LAFF RIOT

Nick says

"pull the wool over your own eyes" p.5

Woah. So this is a huge, modernized zen koan with surreal pictures and organized like a propagandistic religious pamphlet mixed with a snake oil catalogue. It isn't all a joke though. As the Church claims its "a joke you can believe in".

In its more "serious" moments it espouses a sort of discordian daoism. The main goal of a SubGenius is to acquire Slack. Slack is pretty much Dao, amended for a chaotic universe and pathologically lazy, oppositional, or uncooperative people. Wikipedia accurately summarizes Slack: "Slack is about finding satisfaction with what you have and who you are, as opposed for searching for satisfaction in accomplishment." This is the most valuable actual philosophical point in the book imo.

In general the philosophy is very paradoxical. Glorifies truth and falsehood, life and death. Sometimes I feel like this is to poke fun at what religions do, and other times I feel like its trying to make a Postmodern point. If you asked one they'd probably say something trite to the effect of "its both and its neither hurr durr". But as awful as these noodly bastards are, they are sort of awfully correct if you just read what they *aren't quite* saying. Gah now I'm doing it goddamnit.

It somehow simultaneously satirizes abrahamic beliefs, conspiracy theories, new age beliefs, and itself. Postmodern junkies will enjoy this. Super kitschy, campy, and ironic. That, the DEVO references, and the pop-scientistic imagery makes it harken back to the days of New Wave.

Politically the Church favors free enterprise and what I'd dub hyper-anarcho-anarchism. More generally they favor any fanaticism or radicalism which opposes The Conspiracy.

liked the references to the Lovecraft mythos. Also note: this book claims to make you go insane if you really dig into it.

Eventually after reading I got bored with the repetitive absurdist mythology. The thing is also, if you read enough of it it starts to make sense and loses the full absurd flavor.

Thats my review.

Jeffrey says

What if the funniest people you know decided to start a religion that cynically but hilariously embraced the idea of an omnipotent huckster preaching the virtues of goofing off? And what if they developed a whole mythology and backstory for it, copiously illustrated with mutated advertising art from the 50s? Then you'd have this book. Okay, so this book isn't the uniquely bizarre and entertaining breath of fresh air it was when I first picked it up 15 years ago when "zines" still were cutting edge. But it's still a wonderfully clever read and, taken in context, a real creative landmark.

emily cress says

"Bob" wrote "The Book of the Subgenius" as a series of pamphlets during the '50's and '60's, exposing what he'd learned about the conspiracy "from the inside". He was a former high-level gov't intelligence and enforcement agent. After leaving this nefarious profession, he travelled extensively and learned many things

from Native American elders and Oriental monks and Fundamental Baptists in Georgia.

BOB exposes many things which could have gotten him hung for treason in this no-holds barred tell-all. So, in order to get away with doing what he does for as long as he can possible do it he employes heavy sarcasm and effectively disguises his writings as the rantings of a lunatic. In order to read it you have to know how to break the code, otherwise you could come to some very wild conclusions. I cant tell you the code because that would disappoint Bob. But I can reveal some clues:

1. The UFO cult that he appears to proseletyze for is a big satirical model of the "Lie" or "Con" (conspiracy). All of his urgings to prepare for salvation via abduction by the "X-ists" are actually irony-coded warnings not to cooperate with any attempts by the Lie to assimilate us into submission.
2. His posturing as a "Big Daddy" who alone knows everything is actually a tirade against those who make this claim in earnest. He is making fun of those people.
3. "Bob" is not only the pseudonym of the author, but also (depending on the context) a sort of catchall codeword for certain metaphysical concepts relating to energy and consciousness.

Some notes on specific chapters -- "The UFO made me do it" is by far the clearest section in the book. An early chapter detailing "Bob"'s background provides information helpful to breaking the code. A list of prophecies contains bogus events interspersed with real ones, and the distinction is made by a difference in typeface. Also in this list, all events are off by one year.

With all this in mind, get your fists around a copy of "The Book of the Subgenius". You'll most likely find it to be the best exposition around of not only What's What but also Why and How the What's What became a TOP SECRET. Keep it in your chamber of excremeditation and study it as if your life depended on it! You might as well.

Dont Quote Me

-Emily
