



Number 22 Redd Boggs, editor Winter 1970-1

"Improve every opportunity to express yourself in writing, as if it were your last." -- Thoreau, Journal, 17 December 1851.

Where it's at is always crowded with fuggheads.

Confession of a Curmudgeon

Verbatim report of an overheard remark by a hippy type pointing out Zellerbach hall on campus to two companions: "You haven't dug it yet? It's a fantastic place. It's, like, ultra-modern inside. It'll blow your mind, man!"

They call me obstinate -- indeed, John Kusske, for one, might call me "dogmatic" -- merely because...

Except in jest, I never said "Like, it's ultra-modern," even when the formulation was a fad a decade ago.

I never called a woman a "chick" in my life, and would rather bite my tongue out than refer to a man's spouse as his "old lady."

I never remarked that I could (or could not) relate to anything or anybody from acid rock to Rock Hudson.

I fell into a froth on the floor, kicking my heels, the last time someone asked me if I was orientated toward radicalism or maybe it was Republicanism.

I never called a hospital a medical facility, a school an educational facility, a prison a rehabilitation facility.

If you ever come around to "rap" with me, be prepared to get the rap resoundingly right on the top of your head. But don't you mind. You can think of it as me "doing my thing."

Charles Manson is a faan!

They'll Kill Us All: 2

(from the Oakland Tribune, 6 January 1971)

"About 200 canisters of nerve gas awaiting disposal sank unnoticed through the melting ice of an Alaskan lake in 1966 and lay at the bottom three years before the army tried to recover them, the office of Senator Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, said today.

"The gas was described as type VX, and is said to be so deadly that a single drop on the skin can kill a man....

"The gas had been placed on ice covering the lake in a remote section of the Gerstle Testing area of Fort Greely in early 1966.... When a spring thaw occurred in May of that year, Gravel's office reported, the canisters sank. No one apparently noticed that it was missing for some time, and nothing was done to find out what happened until late 1968.

"An army report said disposal of the gas was completed in 1969."

Bebe Rebozo, whiffy-zut! whiffy-zut!

Kubrick & Clarke: Zombie Makers

"There are nineteen rules governing literary art in the domain of romantic fiction -- some say twenty-two.... They require that the personages in a tale shall be alive, except in the case of corpses, and that the reader shall be able to tell the corpses from the others...." -- Mark Twain, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses."

A movie lavishly praised by fans -- some of the very same fans, indeed, who were bedazzled, say, rather, bamboozled, by "Star Trek," The Fellowship of the Ring, and the Incredible String Band! -- ought to be avoided at all costs. This is a doctrine I will defend à outrance with all the fervor of Timothy Leary upholding insanity. But, well, Stanley Kubrick filmed that apposite and antinomian black comedy "Dr Strangelove," didn't he? Then "2001: A Space Odyssey" couldn't be utterly and irredeemably arrant claptrap, could it, even though all the weathercocks in fandom veered in one direction and sang in the gusty wind that was like the gale of ten million farts howling out of the north-northwest?

Ah, but it could. After three years of fiercely resisting the impulse, on an evening when I could have been cozily holed up in my study, shoes off, beret doffed, moodily sipping fragrant green Chartreuse (at a modest \$1.50 an ounce) and reading the heady syllogisms of Summa Theologica, I ventured forth into rainy January weather to clap eyes at last on the film that was praised once (in the bible of fandom, no less) as "possibly the greatest film masterpiece" -- I quote ex capite -- of our abused twentieth century. Indeed, the prodigy that "2001: A Space Odyssey" manages is that, after all, it is at least ten times worse than I ever imagined it could be.

Who did film "Dr Strangelove," after all? Surely not Stanley Kubrick, who is held responsible for "2001." Surely the man who concocted

that bladed satire of the military could not possibly claim, and with a pious and solemn countenance, in "2001" that mankind's first tool was a weapon, and that the first human activity was the formation of a murder-gang, a proto-army. Isn't this taking Genesis iv:8 a little too seriously? (Mankind's first and greatest tool, that transfigured a beast into man, was language -- this is the invention that made social organization possible, and afterwards, culture. The monolith should bring not a piece of bone, but a word.)

The dawn men in the first scenes of "2001" are even stupider than the gorilla and the chimpanzee, by the way. After all, the latter do use rocks and sticks for tools, and unlike Homo Kubrickus, are aware of the sweet uses of projectiles -- as visitors to a zoo can attest after dodging well-aimed monkey shit. In any case, I am a Darwinian, as (I take it) any rational person must be. And I believe that any progress made in the past 30 million years ought to be credited to or blamed on man himself. I can't quite swallow the notion of divine intervention by Providence on a monolith.

But if Kubrick has lost (or never had) the animus against the military that made "Dr Strangelove" exciting and convincing movie fodder, he should nevertheless not have neglected to duplicate one aspect of the earlier film, the aspect that made it as popular at the box-office as in the liberal weeklies. He gathered together a group of talented actors -- perhaps by promising to pay them -- and caused them to portray a gallery of flabbergasting American types, and a few alien ones besides: Jack D. Ripper, "Bat" Guano, Dr Strangelove, and various others. In casting "2001," Kubrick apparently cornered in the washroom a number of habitués of a Gay bar on the Sunset Strip. Then he didn't bother to coach them at all in their new careers before shoving them willy-nilly in all their no-doubt-toothsome masculine glory before the grinding cameras. He never even provided scripts for them to work from, but airily told them to improvise their lines as they went along.

The result is that "2001" limns dimly only two characters of the smallest consequence, and attempts no characterization at all. It also comes to pass that Kubrick appears even to have forgotten the medium in which he is working is called the motion picture. He is capable of filming, and putting in the can, scenes that contain hardly a flicker of motion. I cite as a particularly dismal example the scene in the satellite station (which looks like the most absurd apotheosis of a modern American airline terminal inside that one can possibly imagine) during which Kubrick's protagonist #1, Dr Floyd, is supposed to establish the plot (if it can be so dignified) during a chat with a man and three women while they all squat on some uncomfortable-looking chairs. Here we behold the stiffest quintet of photographic subjects in the history of the camera, or at least since the family-portrait chromos of 1872. Hardly anyone in the scene manages to express the smallest atom of vitality, emotion, or even at the minimum the presence of warm blood. They hardly move a muscle, certainly not facial ones, and look about as alert and lively as a cemetery lot in Eudora, Arkansas. Despite the handicap of the monkey mask, Homo Kubrickus manages more expressiveness than these people, and is far more nimble and sprightly to boot.

The following scene, in which Dr Floyd addresses a briefing of scientists (or somebody) about the monolith discovered on the moon, is very

nearly as stiffish. Two or three people in the scene move and talk (but not very animatedly); the eight or ten others, sitting limply around a U-shaped table, might as well be dummies for all they contribute to the scene. This scene is also notable for Kubrick's ready acceptance of the necessity for governmental secrecy surrounding the discovery of the monolith -- this again from the man who jerked aloft an indignant middle finger at the Establishment in "Dr Strangelove." I see no hint of satire here. This is as dead serious as an Inquisitor's prayer for divine guidance. Happily, from the audience Gretchen added a satiric touch that seemed to delight the Berkeleyans among whom we were seated, veterans of many a loyalty-oath skirmish. When the blank-faced Floyd insisted on top secrecy and asked the lumps of scientists to renew "in writing" their pledges of secrecy, she shouted ringingly, after a well-timed dramatic pause, "I refuse!" But there are no rebels in the picture.

Another depressing example of cadaverish actors and nonexistent characterization comes in the scenes depicting the Jupiter expedition. Here the crew consists of three men in suspended animation, and two others. The trio in suspended animation are the ones in the coffin-like structures. Keep that in mind, because it's otherwise hard to tell which are which. The two men who are presumably not only quick but operational shamble around like ineptly-programmed robots, and chat in monosyllables without moving more than their lips. They are even more zombie-like than the real article after whom they must have been modeled -- the astronauts of the 1960s. However dehumanized modern-day astronauts may be, they are presumably capable (in their private moments) of good old redblooded he-man activity such as goosing each other, slapping each other on the ass with wet towels, and similar goodnatured and innocent horseplay. Protagonist #2, David, and his shipmate (name forgotten, if he has one) loom up as bleak and as hollow as the row of untenanted spacesuits shown in one scene. Indeed, the empty spacesuits look slightly more vital. After these two characters, the comic relief from Brooklyn in "Destination Moon" (1950), so much criticized at the time, seems like the product of genius.

The only "crewman" on the Jupiter expedition who expresses ordinary live interest and human emotion -- in fact, the only "human" character in the whole movie -- is the computer HAL 9000. And he is obviously queer, judging from his voice and intonations. My theory is that he goes meshuggah because he is physically incapable of fellatio. Incidentally, the whole film shows some evidence of being another product of the Gay Establishment -- the same spermatic source That Gave Us "The Loved One" and other such pictures -- in its ogling of male bodies and its cold disregard of women as active characters. The same tendency, however, lurks unremarked in much of Arthur C. Clarke's science fiction.

The psychedelic "trip" at the climax of "2001" didn't wobble me by a hair. I feel that Walt Disney's "Fantasia" (1940), particularly the non-objective splashes accompanying Bach's Toccata and Fugue, was more imaginative and creative than Kubrick's color filters and photomicrographs. And the New Wave resolution of the "plot," which really seems to have caused nocturnal emissions among many fans, saddened me. With a rational ending, the movie might almost have measured up to a typically mediocre Rod Serling story on "Twilight Zone." As it is, the ending is a cop-out, and in any case I shrink from the products of the genius of

jitney James Joyces as from plague carriers and door-to-door salesmen peddling Mormonism.

The fetus (with its eyes open!) swimming into the camera at the end, though. Is it only Gay hubris that imagines a fetus existing without a mother, or only the half-pint imagination of one who has not stopped to ponder the ancient question of the primacy of the chicken and the egg?

Come back, Lloyd Fuller!

Certified Sex Fiend department

(from order-form for sex books from "Social Research Corp.," New York)

"Gentlemen: Please send me the items that I have indicated below. I am an adult, being over 21 years of age. I believe that books should be free to portray to adults, matters pertaining to sex or nudity. I understand that the purpose of these books is to further sexual knowledge and to help free us from our outdated puritanical mores and beliefs concerning sex. I am not endeavoring to purchase these books in order to harass the sellers of same, or to interfere in any way with the exhibition to adults of material dealing with sex or nudity. I am not a member of any law enforcement agency, a Postal Inspector or Postal Department employee, nor am I working for any such agency directly or indirectly. Neither am I a member of any censorship group or working for any such group, directly or indirectly. I understand and believe that the more a person knows about sex, the less likely that person is to have marital or personal difficulties. Signature _____."

For the sake of the sparrows bring back the horse.

My Thirty Years in Fandom -- and How They Flew

2. Days of Pepsi-Cola and Petunias

[The following fanciful account of my fannish origins was originally published in Spirochete #8, 3 June 1965, in Apa L distribution #33. Some original contributions to this series are in preparation.]

"How long have you been in fandom, Redd Boggs?" Miriam Knight asked me the other day.

"Well, let me see -- it's about 25 years, I guess," I said, figuring furiously.

"Good heavens, Redd Boggs," Miriam Knight said. "You were in fandom long before most of the fans of today were even born."

I tried to disregard that estimate because it made me feel old, and I'm not quite so ancient as it makes me sound. I was just a barefoot

boy when I got into fandom, playing mumblety-peg, whirling around on my velocipede, and composing erudite articles on R. F. Starzl with equal facility. Besides, a lot of the fans around now were already around then, when I was a gaptoothed neofan with turned-up pantaloons. I wrote my very first fanzine article for Spaceways, edited by Harry Warner Jr. The night I visited my first Minneapolis Fantasy society meeting, sometime early in 1941, Samuel D. Russell was present, one of the leading lights of the club.

Forry Ackerman was around, of course, in 1940-1, and in 1947, when I belatedly started publishing for myself, he was the mainstay of Tympani, the newszine co-edited by Bob Stein and me. Bob Tucker was already a famous fan, too, and was widely printed in fanzines everywhere, as well as in his own publication, Le Zombie. My old dad, Len J. Moffatt, was a fan back in Pennsylvania, but hadn't even heard of Bell Gardens, California. Elmer Perdue, Walt Daugherty, Jack Speer, Sam Moskowitz, Roy Tackett, and a few others were around 25 years ago, too, but what ever happened to people like Joe Gilbert, Joe J. Fortier, Lynn Bridges, Donn Brazier, Bob Jones, Tom Wright, and Bob Bloch, who were around 25 years ago but have been forgotten by today's fans?

The fandom of 25 years ago, if you can imagine it, was a fandom that had never heard of Walt Willis, Ted White, Bjo Trimble (not to mention John), Lee Hoffman, Norm Clarke, Tom Perry, Bruce Pelz, Marion Z. Bradley, Rick Sneary, Ruth Berman, Bob Lichtman, Richard Bergeron, Gregg Calkins, Charles Burbee, F. Towner Laney, Terry Carr, Dean A. Grennell, Ethel Lindsay, Avram Davidson, or even Miriam Knight.

That was a long time ago, and a very deprived age. I'll never forget how we used to hitch up old Nellie, our grey mare, load up the old Sharps, in case we ran into a skulking redskin, and go dusting down the long road to the little crossroads store that also served as the village post office, to pick up the mail and the latest issue of Famous Fantastic Mysteries once a month, every time the accommodation train chugged into the little town of Minneapolis. And the wonderful evenings I spent pouring over the latest R. F. Starzl or the latest Hoy Ping Pong, by the flickering light of a whale-oil lamp.... Eheu! fugaces labuntur anni!

"What is life but a dime novel?" -- Henry Kuttner

Sweet Mystery of Life department

(from the San Francisco Chronicle)

"Bridgwater, England (AP) -- Adrian Bennett has discovered the reason for the slight but persistent deafness in his right ear. He's had a cork in it for the past 20 years. Adrian, 23, has been hard of hearing since he was three. Tuesday he went to a new doctor. 'The cork popped out when the doctor syringed my right ear,' Adrian said. 'It was a quarter inch long and cylindrical like a cigaret filter. When the doctor told me I'd had a cork in my ear I thought he was having me on. I've asked my mother if she knows why I should have been going around with a cork in my ear, but she is as puzzled as I am.'"

The Stiff Finger

What in the world! No wonder the papers on my desk form such a lofty mountain that letters and fanzines cascade to the floor whenever I lift a pencil or displace a manuscript. I have this basaltic layer of books underneath the papers, books -- I remember now -- that I was keeping to hand with the thought that I might review them someday. Now that I pry them loose from the desk blotter and look at them again in their slightly flattened form, I see that they are all (gasp) science fiction. Already time has dealt with some of them, and a number of them are forgotten even by Richard Delap and Ted Pauls. Review them! Perhaps an autopsy is more in order, to ascertain why these works died so suddenly and in such dusty neglect. Should one review science fiction, after all? Perhaps one might better give his time to "reviewing" the rhinoceros at the zoo, a more formidable and lively specimen than the books I find crushed here like dead flowers. Brave rhino, I see authority in your heavy prance and glitter in your polished horn....

But in an effort to clear away this sullen mass of literachoor, I herewith dismiss some of them with a few contumacious notes to paste in your hat the next time you visit the secondhand bookstores.

The only book reduced to a pancake in this heap that deserves (even so belatedly) a full-length review is The Thurb Revolution, by Alexei Panshin (Ace) -- an Anthony Villiers Adventure, it says on the cover. Who? Anthony Villiers. A shadowy figure at best and not a very diverting one. His adventures, alas, are mild affairs -- one can find more excitement on Telegraph avenue, meandering among the heroin pushers and con men dealing three-card monte on the sidewalk -- and the whole novel is a Nachtwandelin of low-key inconclusiveness (continued next book). No, it is an Alex Panshin Adventure. For up front is Panshin, prattling away like a footling Thackeray. He is aburst with philosophy and observations that sound slightly askew, and you wonder if he is putting us on -- only the tone is not ironic. Panshin is a young writer of promise, and his books deserve attention. I am glad Ace is so receptive to off-beat items like this, but I wish this example were not so dreadfully soporific. I like my novels to be about something and somebody, and this one is not.

If Villiers is only a fleeting image from one of the drearier walls of Plato's cave, then what is Doc Savage? Land of Always-Night (Bantam) reminds me after all these years (during which I have tried to live the clean life) just what a hideous hack Kenneth Robeson was, but after Mr Panshin one feels the impulse to embrace the fellow as a genius merely because he told a story and kept it moving without extraneous chatter in the foreground. Does it matter that the story is ludicrous, even idiotic, in incident and development? Of course it does! And what ailed the author and his editors and publishers to cause them to imagine that a "man of bronze" was a proper hero?

Derai, by E. C. Tubb, is a lot more professional, but the other end of the same Ace Double, The Singing Stones, by Juanita Coulson, is a lot more interesting. Just why this should be was the subject of a sagacious essay that now, alas, will never be written.

Buoyed up by the good reviews it received, I continued lightly to flit through Picnic on Paradise, by Joanna Russ (Ace Special) long after my initial enthusiasm had leaked away. I anticipated that sooner or later I would reach the store of, as the saying goes, goodies that the reviews, one and all, promised. After many months of flit and flutter, I managed -- as I see by the faded bookmark -- to reach page 7. But that's a mere piffle. I must confess here an even graver fault. Despite the most strenuous effort, I found The Girl, The Gold Watch, and Everything, by John D. MacDonald (Gold Medal), to be nothing more than blop and bloop. Hear that, Len and June? MacDonald's literary Spitzbüberei deserves (and may even receive) an essay someday, but little notice need be taken of this indecently conceived and fraudulently concocted male chauvinist frappé.

Yankee soldiers fight best when billeted in mansions: Chateau Theory.

Bonbons of Pseudo-Erudition department

(from "Uncollected Works" by Lin Carter, World's Best SF, Second Series)

"I watched my invention reproduce the entire literature of the Greeks (including, I must note, the 14 lost comedies of Aristotle...)"

Australia in '75

Figs and Thistles

O tempora! note: On the very same Sunday in Berkeley (17 January 1971) these two lectures were delivered: At the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarians, the Rev. James Stoll, minister to the Loving Revolution, spoke on "Gay Liberation -- The Homosexual in America Today," while Dane Rudhyar, billed as "the noted philosopher and astrologer," gave a talk at Newman hall, the Catholic center just off campus, on "The Way of the Seed Man." An appropriate comment occurs to me: Good God! # Something even stronger might be remarked about a statement in the second inaugural speech of our beloved governor, Ronald Reagan. Said Reagan, "It is time to ignore those who are obsessed with what is wrong" with America. Do you hear that, all you carping Democrats?

BETE NOIRE (formerly Cockatrice) is edited and published occasionally for the Fantasy Amateur Press association by Redd Boggs, Post Office Box 1111, Berkeley, California, 94701. This issue, number 22, is intended for circulation with FAPA mailing #134, winter 1970-1. A minister in Shrewsbury, England, was leading the choir in a rehearsal of the hymn "I Cannot Help But Wonder Where I'm Bound," when a grating beneath him gave way and he sank three feet into the floor. The text of this issue was cut on Sure-Rite stencils and Gestetnered on Whitehawk blue mimeo paper, both bought at the ASUC store on campus. Despite certain superficial resemblances, this is NOT a Karen Anderson production. The Gafia press.