

Every writer's recipe for ridiculous reviews

The criteria I use for reviewing books has been handed down in my family for generations. They were developed by my great-great grandfather, Mortimer Boolschootter Jr., who reviewed books for the *New York Times* in 1450.

Choosing books to review is the hardest part of the job. For example, I've got this sharp book about an evangelist whose sexual assets are God-given. On the back it has rave notices from papers such as the *Yankton Journal*, the *Crete Crier* and the *Middleton Daily*.

funny papers
bruce nelson

I also have 457 sequels to *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and 36 books about Jackie Onassis. Next month I'm expecting 1,752 versions of Watergate.

Shirley Smirk, the popular critic of WXYZ radio in Hoboken, N.J., said they were all great.

As you can see, you have to be a fast reader. A million words a minute is not bad, but if you have trouble you can wait for a *Reader's Digest* condensed version and review the book from it.

The next step is the actual review. The mark of a good critic is one can divert as much attention as possible away from the book to himself.

The key is to compare the book with another book that is unrelated to the first. For example, you can compare anything by American authors with anything by non-American authors, such as Yuan Ying Yang or John Doystoyevsky. No reader will admit not having read either, let alone admit not knowing who they are.

There are, of course, old standbys such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald or Faulkner. You can compare any literature with their books. Just be sure to use phrases such as, "this new book reflects the writings of Faulkner," "reminiscent of Hemingway," or even "another Fitzgerald."

If all else fails, compare the book with the Bible. Better yet review a new translation of the Bible.

Finally, review the author against himself. Say that "this is Philip Sloth's best to date," or "a definite letdown from Agatha Christie's *Murder, Me and Mystery*." This causes real anguish for the reader because he probably hasn't read those books. To assure anguish, compare a novelist's first work with other works that he didn't write and that you made up.

The point is to drive the reader crazy. If you see husbands leaving wives, wives shooting husbands or an increase in membership of the Happyday Book Club, pat yourself on the back. You are a book reviewer.

Drug symposium planned

Plans for a seminar Nov. 28-Dec. 1 for development of alternatives to drug abuse were announced by the Nebraska Commission on Drugs.

It will be at the Ramada Inn in Lincoln, according to Jeffrey Kushner, commission executive director.

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Landscape exhibit opens at Sheldon

Landscapes by American artists from the early 19th century to 1973 occupy the second floor of Sheldon Art Gallery through October 28.

"A Sense of Place: The Artist and the American Land" is a joint exhibit in cooperation with Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, which is displaying the

other half of the exhibit through Oct. 28.

The paintings depict natural settings from all parts of America, in styles ranging from the realistic to the abstract.

Ballet opens arts series

Ballet starts the Performing Arts Series tonight at 8 p.m. in Kimball Recital Hall. Ballet West USA, a ten-year-old company from Salt Lake City, will dance to music by Tchaikovsky, Rossini and Glazounov.

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