

Also-ran critics flop, thank God—er, Tolkien?

By Bruce Nelson

Through the annals of time there have been many writers who have failed in their efforts to write a great novel. Even more unknown, however, are the book reviewers who aspired to write one penetrating analysis which would be a work of art in its own right, and who failed as well.

While lost in the library the other day I came across some old, yellowed newspapers in which I found some book reviews that never made it. Here they are:

War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy, reviewed by Joseph McCarthy

"Yep folks, here it is, more evidence that those pinko Commies are trying to infiltrate our country. Why jes' yesterday my son told me that this book was required reading in his college English class. This just

proves those professor-type pseudo-intellectuals are all card-carrying Communists.

"Now if you take a close look at this here book you'll see that the character Pierre Bezukhov is none other than that pinko Commie Ike Eisenhower. Next time you have a book burning in your neighborhood jes' take a look at it before you toss it in and you'll see what I mean."

Long with the Wind by Martha Mitchell, reviewed by John Mitchell

"Wind is probably an appropriate title to go with my wife, but seriously I am forced to admit that this is really a terrible book.

"For example, the symbolism of color expressed by Scarlett's name is so trite that only my wife could think of it. And although I humbly acknowledge that I am Rhett Butler, I

have no idea as to the identity of that wishy-washy and hen-pecked Ashley Wilkes. Besides, we don't need another book on the Civil War."

Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger, reviewed by Billy Graham

"Dear Father who Art in Heaven, please forgive Mr. Salinger for the deed he has done. He knoweth not what he writeth. But while you're doing that, Father, I have advocated that Mr. Salinger's hands be cut off, just as last spring I advocated that rapists be castrated.

So help me—I mean—you, Father, we'll stop all this sin for your glory because we both know that all Holden Caulfield really needed was a good old-fashioned whipping. Amen."

The Bible reviewed by Luci Furr

"Evidence is mounting that this book was actually written by J.R.R.

Tolkien. The evidence lies in the endless genealogies and histories which are so reminiscent of the Lord of the Rings. However, this earlier work is much poorer. The structure is bad and the plots, if not endless, are aimless. It seems as if the books Matthew, Mark and Luke can't agree as to who did what and when.

"The Gandalf in this book is not as loving, for one day he may save Hebrew children from fiery furnaces and the next day kill 42 others for making fun of an old man. (Notice also, the similarities between the words "Hebrew" and "Hobbit.")

This book probably will never sell, but it is an interesting look at Tolkien's attempts to create the formula he finally perfected in the Rings trilogy."

Classless gifts sure to please

Uselessness is the thing in Christmas gifts this year, with basic cuteness being the only other criterion for the "in" gift. This list is designed with economy in mind as well as cuteness.

Some magazines, like *Esquire*, offer color spreads of classy useless gifts, but they all cost over \$200, except for a straw basket which sells for \$80 at Macy's.

None of that here. These gifts have no class at all, and are, in fact, in bad taste. Rest assured, nevertheless; lots of people would be delighted to have them.

mark kjeldgaard

you have my word

1) *House junk*. This stuff is intended for the young person, probably a college student, whose abode is decorated in the style known as Countercultural Clutter, which is like Late Victorian, only cheaper. Some examples:

Dumb little dishes with no cigarette holes.

Rocks with colored swirls in them, which you can pick up from along the road.

Polished tin cans, cheap lamps and, of course, posters, candles and incense.

2) *Your own art*. You don't have to be an artist to get away with this. Most college age people will be thrilled to get a work of art, because they think everybody might as well be an artist.

Paintings are easy. Buy a cheap watercolor set and slop out 20 or 30 abstracts. If you want to be more extravagant, buy some colored construction paper and dribble house paint on it.

3) *Semi-clothes*. ID bracelets, tin broaches, bronzed insects, tiny scarves, dickies, joke nose rings, fake fingernails and red lace garters. For men, get bikini briefs in purple peony or red sunflower.

4) *Import bads*. Import shops sell junk which is not called junk because it is expensive and was made in foreign countries. Many people suffer from xenophobia-phobia, and love anything made by foreigners.

Import bads include:

Colored bottles and jars made of cheap glass. These are used to hold matches and dead flowers.

Stinky candles. These are available in a variety of repulsive shapes.

Brittle wooden toys. These include painted boxes with hidden compartments, animals and unbalanced mobiles.

It's an easy era in gift-giving. People are afraid to dislike the wrong things, today more than ever before. Not only will they say "thank you" for anything, they will mean it. Merry Christmas!

Believe it or not!

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