

Beat the pretentious at their own game

With the possible exceptions of political science undergraduates and journalism professors, there are no people in all of academia more smarmy, pretentious and annoying than those who dedicate their post-graduate life to the study and practice of literary criticism.

Still bitter about the fact that they couldn't get admitted to a Master of Fine Arts writing program, these sorry individuals dedicate themselves not only to tearing down the writing of others, but also the very reading habits of the average person.

What follows is a list of books so obscure and cool that reading them will instantly elevate you beyond the level of the average lit/crit jerk. So the next time you run into one of these people, instead of letting them make you feel stupid or getting into a lot of trou-

ble for kicking the crap out of them, beat them at their own game.

• Mikhail Bulgakov, "The Master and Margarita": Published in 1966 (after being suppressed by Soviet censors for 26 years), the book is set in the USSR of the 1930s and early First Century A.D. Jerusalem, and chronicles the adventures of Jesus Christ, Pontius Pilate, Satan, various Soviet literati, a woman named Margarita, her lover (a mad and brilliant writer known only as the Master), and a loud-mouthed, fast-talking, vodka-drinking tomcat named Behemoth.

Cool because it can be interpreted as abusive of both the Godly and the Godless, this book will get you serious points in any argument with members of the obscure literature set.

• Francisco Hinojosa, "Hectic Ethics": The stories in this 1996

GUEST COMMENTARY

Leon Tovey

collection — written by a Mexican critic and writer of children's books so talented that no one I've ever talked to has ever even heard of him — mesh to form a beautiful satire about the multi-faceted stupidity of modern life. The author's name alone will win you points on the coolly obscure literature scale.

• Erich Maria Remarque, "Im Westen Nichts Neues": Probably better known by its English title, "All Quiet on the Western Front," this is the classic 1928 tale of World War I that raised the bar for powerful war novels.

The fun thing to do with this is to read the original, German ver-

sion (which is totally possible for anyone with more than half a term of first-year German and a copy of the book in both languages to do) and tell every comparative lit major you know that "it loses sooo much in the translation." That really pisses them off.

• David Foster Wallace, "Infinite Jest": Most people who know of its existence will be impressed if you can tell them you finished this 1,000-plus-page, 1995 novel, much less arrived at any conclusion about its artistic merit.

A must-read for haters of corporate and consumer culture, Wallace's book is set in the near-future (when years are no longer numbered, but named after corporate sponsors — thus most of the story takes place in the Year of the Depends Adult Undergarment) and revolves around the inhabitants of

a Boston halfway house and an elite tennis academy, whose efforts to save the world from a video so addictive that anyone who sees it is rendered incapacitated are only part of the story. This is the A-Bomb of "I'm cooler than you because I read..." literature.

Of course there are more, but just finding these four titles might take you long enough, to say nothing of actually reading them. Remember that it is summer, and you can't spend all your time reading coolly obscure books just to win arguments with people who have no lives outside of their graduate comparative literature programs.

As Nietzsche said, "He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster."

Leon Tovey is a freelance columnist. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

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190 OPPORTUNITIES

GTF Position Announcement

Employment Period: Academic Year 2002 - 2003
The Center for the Study of Women in Society invites applications for a GTF position (.40 FTE) for the 2002-2003 academic year. This position has been created to work on NIH and CDC funded projects.

Job Description
To serve as Data Analyst on two federally funded research projects in the area of women's reproductive health. Under the supervision of Marie Harvey this individual will be responsible for conducting analyses of data from several research studies. These analyses will primarily address the measurement of constructs, treatment effects of the intervention, and tests of the theoretical model(s) underlying the projects.

Qualifications
UO graduate student with excellent skills and graduate level training in quantitative research methods; experience and expertise in statistical analyses; experience with SPSS; ability to work independently. Experience in conducting research in women's health/public health is desired. Post MA level graduate student in the social sciences or related discipline is preferred.

Salary is determined by the UO GTF bargaining contract. The assistantship includes a waiver of tuition.

Deadline
Friday, August 2, 2002, by 5:00 p.m.

How to Apply
Send resume and cover letter to S. Marie Harvey, Center for the Study of Women in Society, 1201 University of Oregon, Eugene OR, 97403 or deliver same to CSWS, 340 Hendricks Hall, University of Oregon. Faxed applications are acceptable at 346-5096. Direct questions to Marie Harvey at 346-4120 or mharvey@oregon.uoregon.edu.

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 25). You're smart and energetic, but you can't do it all. Get a mechanically inclined person to help. Somebody who knows how to draw up plans and fix things. Then, learn how to follow directions. This won't be an easy year, but you could learn how to build.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) _ Today is a 9 _ When friends and family don't agree, you get to mediate. Make sure they fight fair and play by the rules.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) _ Today is a 5 _ Slow and easy does it. Don't ask for favors, but ask for what you've rightfully earned.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) _ Today is an 8 _ You're highly productive, but make sure to set an agenda. Otherwise, you'll spend all day running back and forth.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) _ Today is a 5 _ Part of your income is from the benefits you've acquired. Count them when you're assessing how well you've done. You'll feel even better.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) _ Today is an 8 _ Think it's time to make your move or speak your mind? Well, you're right. Suggest something that will benefit another person, too.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) _ Today is a 4 _ Steer things the way you want them to go by using

smiles rather than confrontation. Don't go for domination, just minimize damage.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct 22) _ Today is a 10 - Your popularity is high. Your social calendar should be packed. If it's not, it's because you're hiding out. You'll be pleasantly surprised if you participate.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) _ Today is a 5 _ Finally, the word comes through. What you'll be doing soon becomes obvious. Meanwhile, get your place ready for a romantic Friday night.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) _ Today is a 7 _ You're anxious to get started, but don't be reckless. You don't want to get over there, then find out you've left something important over here.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) _ Today is a 5 _ Keep gathering the goodies, and keep holding down the costs. That's the secret of success: buy low, sell high.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) _ Today is a 7 _ The other guy gets in a few good points. Don't let that throw you off stride. You'll get the final word. Make the best of that chance. Amaze them.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) _ Today is a 5 _ You may feel like a yo-yo, as you keep going back to the drawing board. A little less here, a little more there. Being a great artist isn't always easy.



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