

BOOKS TO AVOID READING - *The Art of Instant Rejection*



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In the face of the avalanche of publishing that engulfs us, the reader is almost, but not entirely, defenceless. However, traditional methods such as skimming or speed-reading are of little value in today's fast-moving society.

Even a moment spent reading a book you don't want to is a moment lost forever. No. Bad books must be fought at the water's edge; at the very bookstore shelf itself. The reader must learn to master the art of Instant Rejection: the ability to look at nothing more than the dust jacket and pick out those little signs that tell him he doesn't want to read another word.

I discovered the value of Instant Rejection quite by accident when I decided not to buy a book simply because the cover announced that it was "destined to become a classic of our time." Since then, I have not read one single classic of our time and I cannot tell you how much better I feel for it.

As I developed my skills, I found that almost any part of the jacket can be used to form the basis of an I.R. For example, books with a colon in the title (as in *Bulgaria at the Cross-roads: The Illusion and the Dilemma*) can always be safely skipped. Artwork should be checked and the book immediately dropped at the first sign of an oil painting of a Southern mansion - especially if there is a lady in a ball gown standing in front.

Even plugs from other writers can be grist for the mill. I have always tried to steer a middle course between the recommendations of both Earl and Edmund Wilson and have spared myself God knows how much heartache.

I have developed my system until it is now ready for publication as a public service. Keep one copy with you at all times and post another inside the medicine cabinet where the whole family can readily refer to it.

DO NOT READ:

Any book entitled *Notes on*

Any book by someone who has personally known Henry Kissinger, Judy Garland, the Kennedys, the Reagans, Clintons, or Hugh Hefner.

Any book that promises to raise your consciousness or lower your weight.

Any book that *reads like a veritable 'Who's Who' of show business.*

Any book by an author who has inherited the mantle of either Damon Runyon or Macaulay.

Any serious book of poetry by a Latin-American author who has won the National Book Award in the past five years. (In the case of Nobel Prize winners, it is best to wait at least seven years.)

Any book by Norman Mailer that purports to be about women.

Any book illustrated by tarot cards or signs of the zodiac.