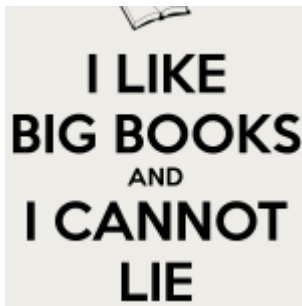


I Like Big Books



A quick update to my pining legions.

The Reader is on a roll. Seventeen books read since Christmas, and almost every one of them a real corker. Two more underway, plus a fourth sojourn through *Infinite Jest*.^{Somebody come pull me out if you don't hear from me for a while. I've tied a rope around my waist just in case.} Here's a quick consumer guide to fuel your bibliophilistic indulgence.

I've already told you about Jane Mayer's superb *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*. I'll say this again: if you hope to understand the current political divide in the U.S., you have to read this book. For example: if someone introduces himself as the Distinguished Professor of Prosperity and Individual Freedom^{Which I actually experienced recently.} and your Koch-radar doesn't start ringing alarm bells, you need this book. Desperately. Just read it already.

Alert fans of the blog have also "enjoyed" my take on the latest Don DeLillo, *Zero K*. His best since *Underworld*.

Given the drought of original thoughts in my head, you'll get a chance to "enjoy" my musings about many of these books in the coming weeks. Here are the potential victims of analytical spasm:

Brief History of Seven Killings, Marlon James

All the King's Men, Robert Penn Warren

Down and Out in Paris and London, George Orwell

The Orphan Master's Son, Adam Johnson

The Dream of Perpetual Motion, Dexter

The Invisible Knight, Italo Calvino

The Sellout and *Tuff*, Paul Beatty

If Beale Street Could Talk, James Baldwin

Wind Up Bird Chronicles, Haruki Murakami

Essays, Wallace Shawn

Creative Clash/Rise of the Creative Class: These were homework for my super-secret work as a double-naught. Provocative, but who cares about neo-urbanism?

Sense of Ending, Julian Barnes

First up will be *On Immunity: An Inoculation*, by Eula Biss. I just finished this one, and it sent me scurrying back to the shelf to pull down and re-read Woolf's *On Being Sick* and Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*. Biss's meditation begins in the vax/anti-vax conflict and moves outward into broader ruminations on how the ways we think about disease – and the language we use to describe it – have implications that go beyond physical health itself. It fits in well in the long lineage of which Woolf and Sontag are a part. Look for this one later this week.

And yeah, sure, a nagging concern about illness and disease is probably also connected to Your Narrator's incessant propulsion towards decrepitude, disintegration, and senescence. Get off my lawn.