

**A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES**, by John Kennedy Toole; Louisiana State University Press, 338 pp., \$12.95.

Reviewed by  
**ALLEN H. PEACOCK**

John Kennedy Toole died by his own hand in 1969, the unknown, unmourned author of an unpublished, boisterous and brilliant manuscript entitled "A Confederacy of Dunces."

Eleven years later, thanks to the unflagging efforts of his determined mother and the good graces of one of our finest and most successful novelists, Walker Percy, Toole's neglected novel has now been printed by the Louisiana State University Press.

The editors there should be congratulated for making available a work rejected by uncounted other more commercially-minded publishers (who undoubtedly saw little purpose in promoting an unheard of author whose total output was already determined), a book that puts to shame the bulk of the other fictional endeavors that dance before the eye of the jaundiced reader of contemporary fiction.

Set in New Orleans, this book describes in hilarious detail the picaresque adventures of Ignatius J. Reilly, an over-weight, over-educated but thoroughly sympathetic bumpkin who is writing a history of western civilization (in his spare time, at the rate of six paragraphs a month.) That he feels civilization itself collapsed with the medieval system should give some indication of his point of view.

Before you pick up that new pot-boiler or old stand-by, take a stab at a modern classic, a work written with humor and wisdom and completed more than a decade ago, but one as fresh, lively and true as any novel available today.

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