


# Postmodernism



# Dictionary Definition of Post-Modernism

- a late 20<sup>th</sup> century style and concepts in the arts, architecture and criticism that represents a departure from modernism and has its heart a general distrust of grand theories and ideologies as well as a problematical relationship with any notion of “art”


# Meaning of Postmodernism

- ▶ Postmodernism means a number of trends or movements in the arts and literature developing in the 1970s in reaction to or rejection of the dogma principles or practices of established modernism, especially a movement in architecture and influence of the International Style and encouraging the use of elements from historical informal styles and often playful illusion, decoration and complexity.
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# History of Postmodernism

- The term was first used around the 1870s in various areas. For example, John Watkins Chapman avowed “ a Postmodern style of painting” to get beyond French Impressionism. Then J. M. Thompson, in his 1914s article in The Hibbert Journal used the term Postmodernism to describe changes in attitudes and beliefs in the critique of religion.
- The term was then applied to a whole host of movements, many in art, music and literature, that reacted against a range of tendencies in the imperialist phase of capitalism called “modernism”, and are typically marked by revival of historical elements and techniques.

# Postmodern Literature

- Postmodern literature is literature characterized by heavy reliance on techniques like fragmentation, paradox and questionable narrators, and is often defined as a style or trend which emerged in the post World War II era.
  - Postmodern works are seen as a reaction against Enlightenment thinking and Modernist approaches to literature.
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# Postmodernism characteristics

- ▶ Irony, playfulness and black humor
  - ▶ Pastiche
  - ▶ Intertextuality
  - ▶ Metafiction
  - ▶ Historiographic metafiction
  - ▶ Temporal distortion
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- ▶ Technoculture and hipperreality
  - ▶ Paranoia
  - ▶ Maximalism
  - ▶ Minimalism
  - ▶ Faction
  - ▶ Magical realism
  - ▶ Participation
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# Modernism vs Postmodernism

## Modernism

- Began in the 1890 until 1945.
- Modernism was based on using rational, logical means to gain knowledge.
- It was characterized by a hierarchical and organized and determinate nature of knowledge.
- Modernist approach was objective, theoretical and analytic.

## Postmodernism

- Began after world War II.
- Postmodernism denied the application of logical thinking.
- It was based on an anarchical, non-totalized and indeterminate state of knowledge.
- Postmodernism approach was based on subjectivity.



## Modernism

- Modernist thinking is about the search of an abstract truth of life.
- Modernism attempts to construct a coherent world-view.
- During the modernist era, art and literature were considered as a unique creation of the artists.


## Postmodernism


- Postmodernist thinkers believe that there is no universal truth, abstract or otherwise.
- Postmodernism attempts to remove the difference between high and low.
- During the postmodernist era, with the onset of computers, media and advancements in technology, television and computers became dominant in society.

# Postmodernist Author Kurt Vonnegut (1922–2007)



# Biography of Kurt Vonnegut

- ▶ Born in Indianapolis Indiana United States, in November 11, 1922, died April 11, 2007.
  - ▶ Kurt's family was hit very hard by the depression.
  - ▶ He unrolled at Cornell University in 1940 and, under the pressure of his father and his older brother he studied chemistry and biology.
  - ▶ He enlisted in the U.S army in 1943.
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- ▶ His mother killed herself by overdosing on sleeping pills in May 1944.
  - ▶ On December 14, 1944, Vonnegut was captured in the Battle of the Bulge. He was held as a POW in Dresden.
  - ▶ Vonnegut was one of the very few survivors.
  - ▶ May 1945. He returned to the United States And married Jane Marie Cox, his high school girlfriend.
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# Vonnegut's quotes:

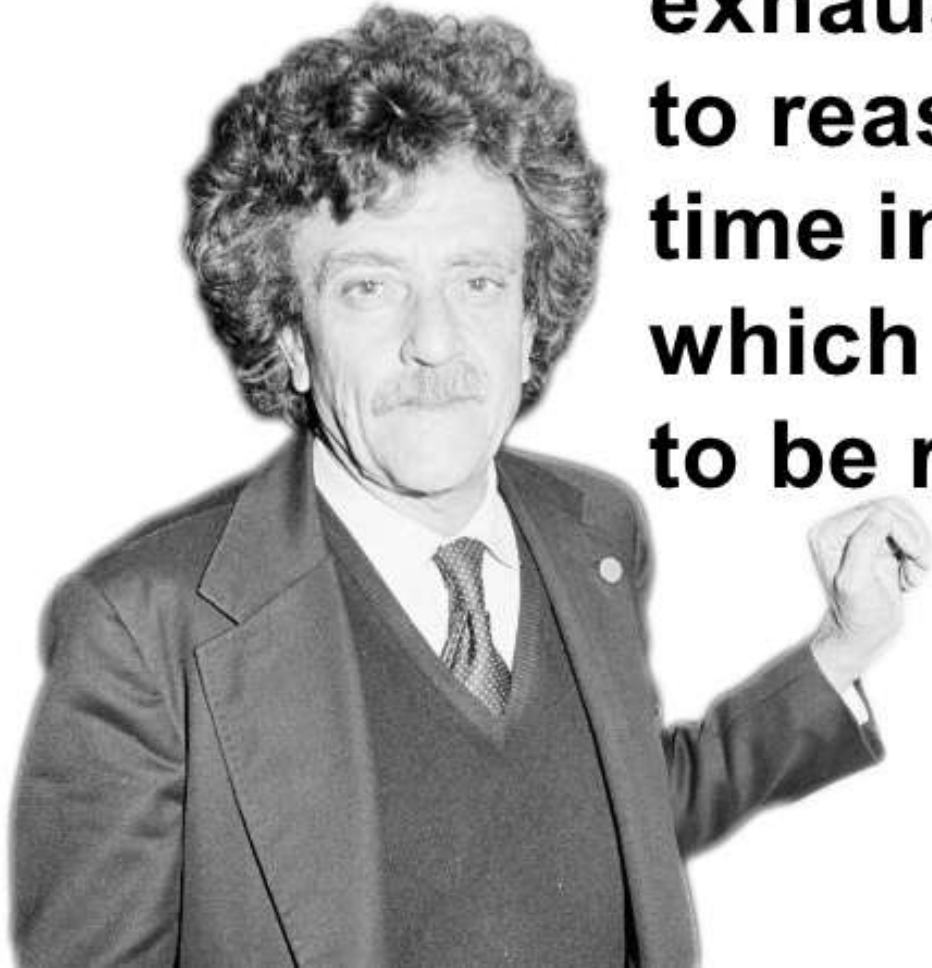


**1. “We must be careful about what we pretend to be.”**

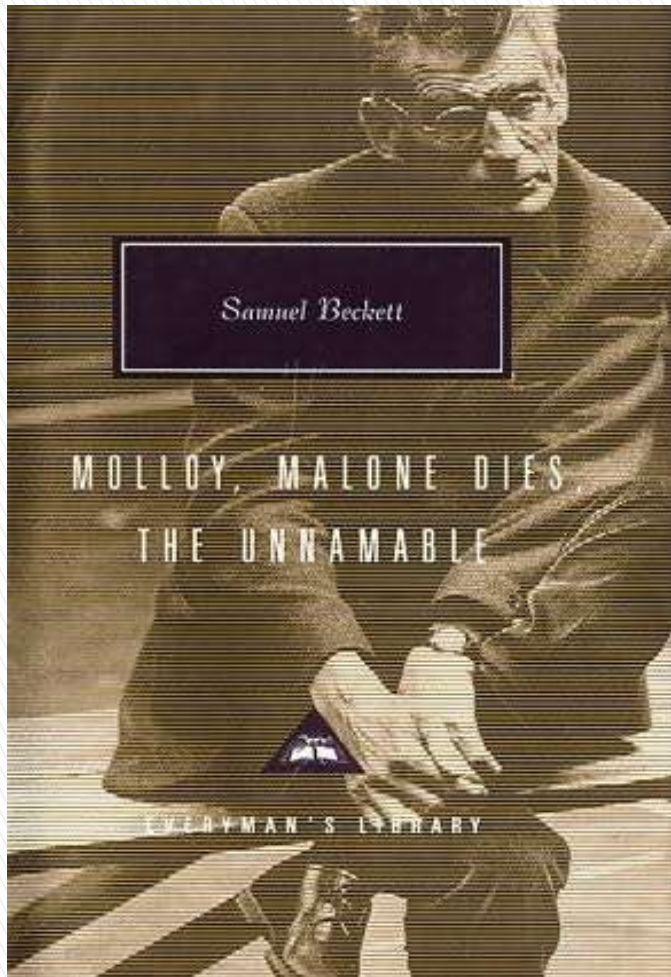
**2. “Another flaw in the human character is that everybody wants to build & nobody wants to do maintenance.”**



**3. “Of course it is exhausting, having to reason all the time in a universe which wasn't meant to be reasonable.”**



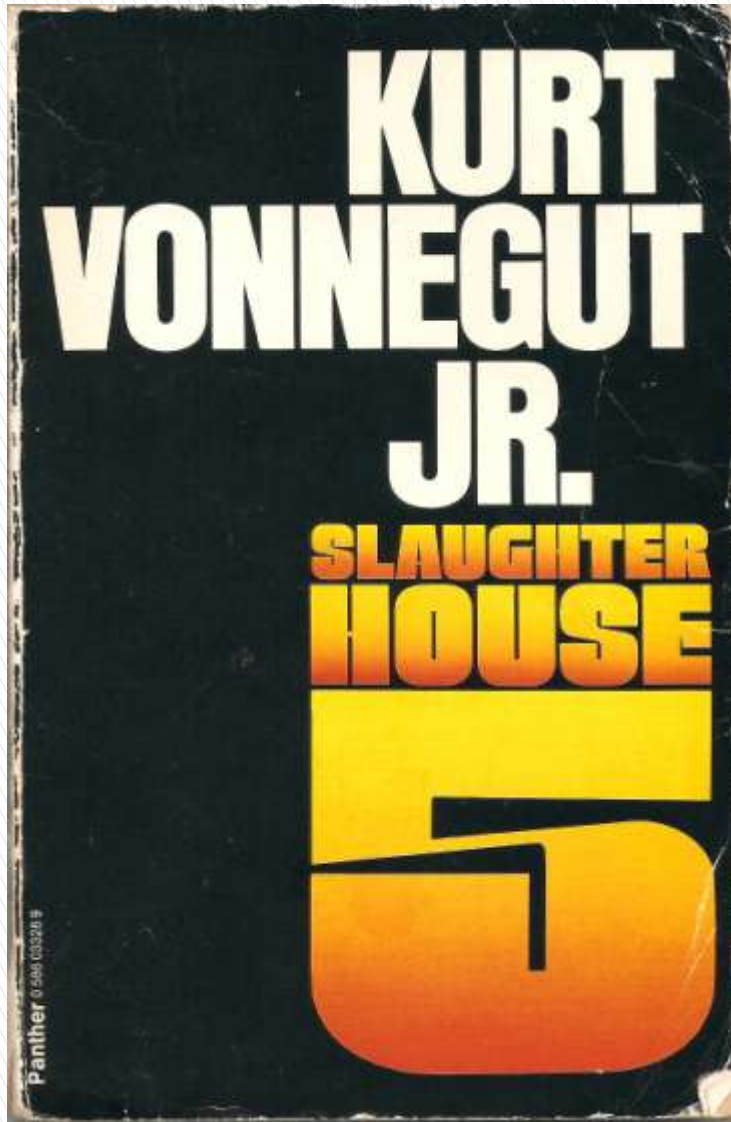
# Postmodernist works :



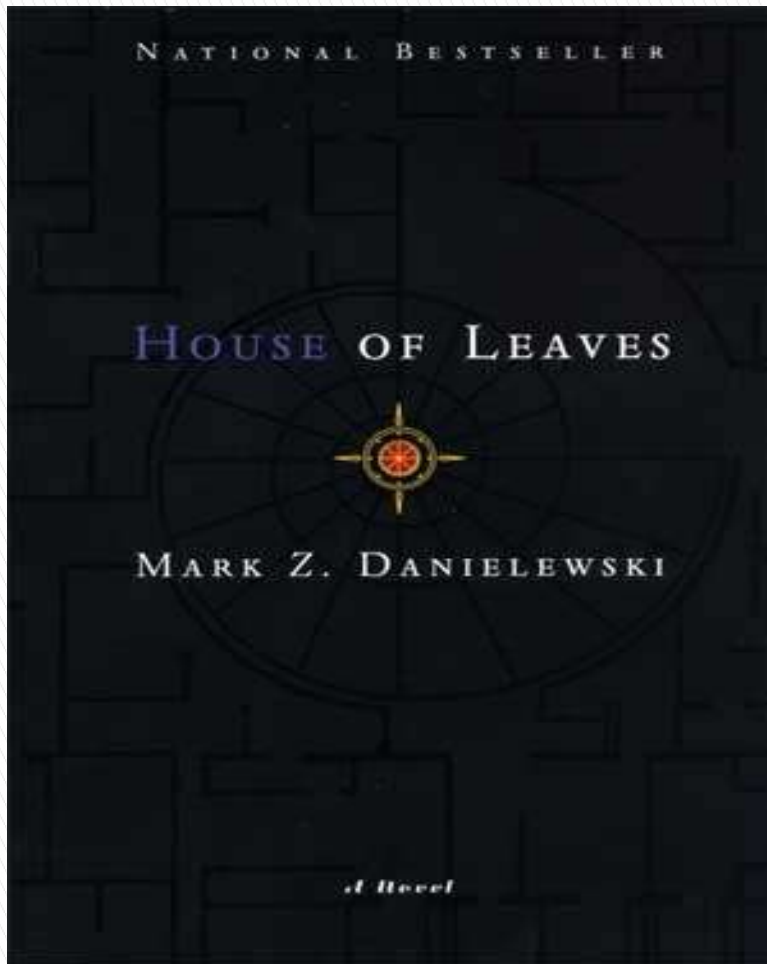
Samuel Beckett

Molloy, Malone Dies,  
The Unnamable



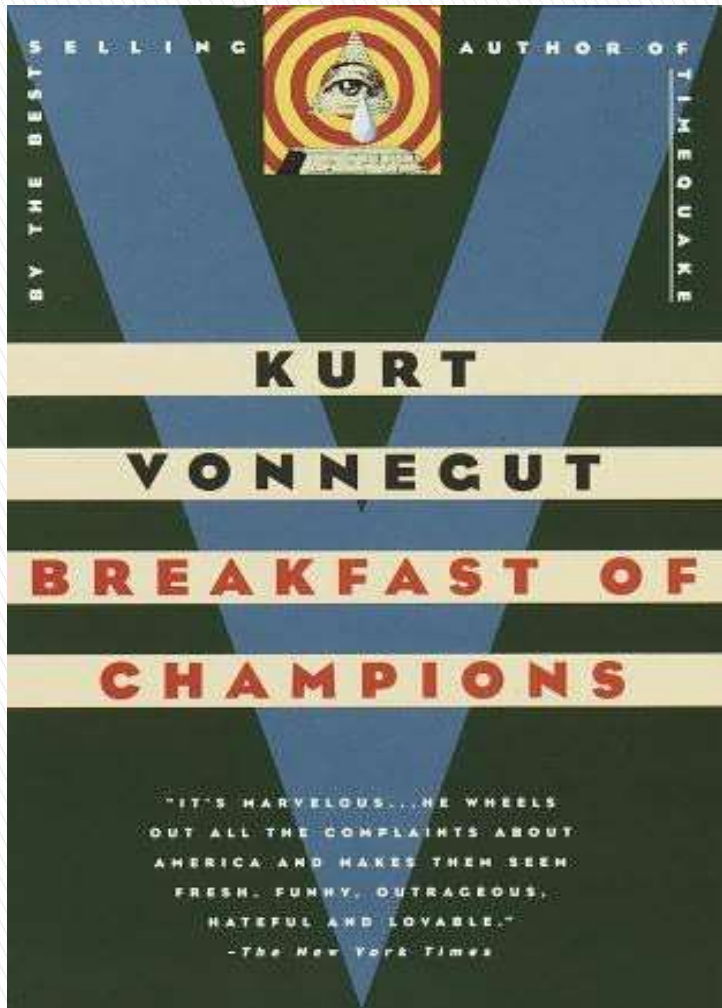


Kurt Vonnegut  
Slaughterhouse  
Five



Mark Z. Danielewski

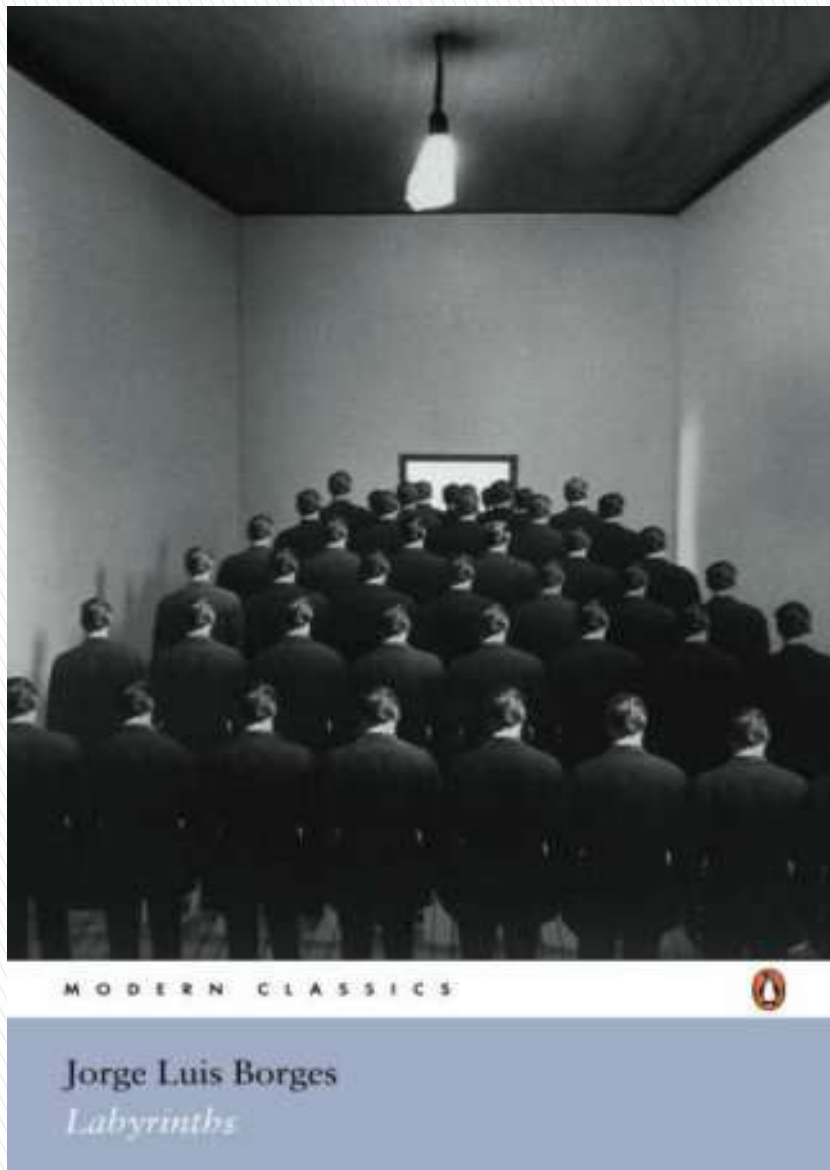
House of Leaves

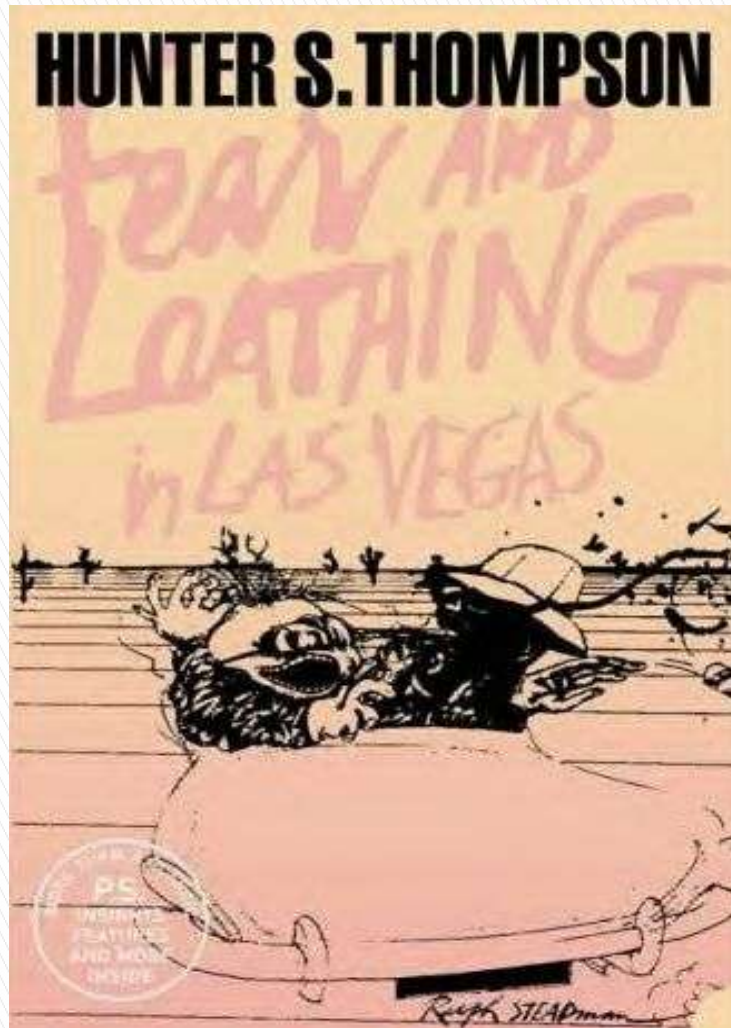


# Breakfast of Champions

Kurt Vonnegut

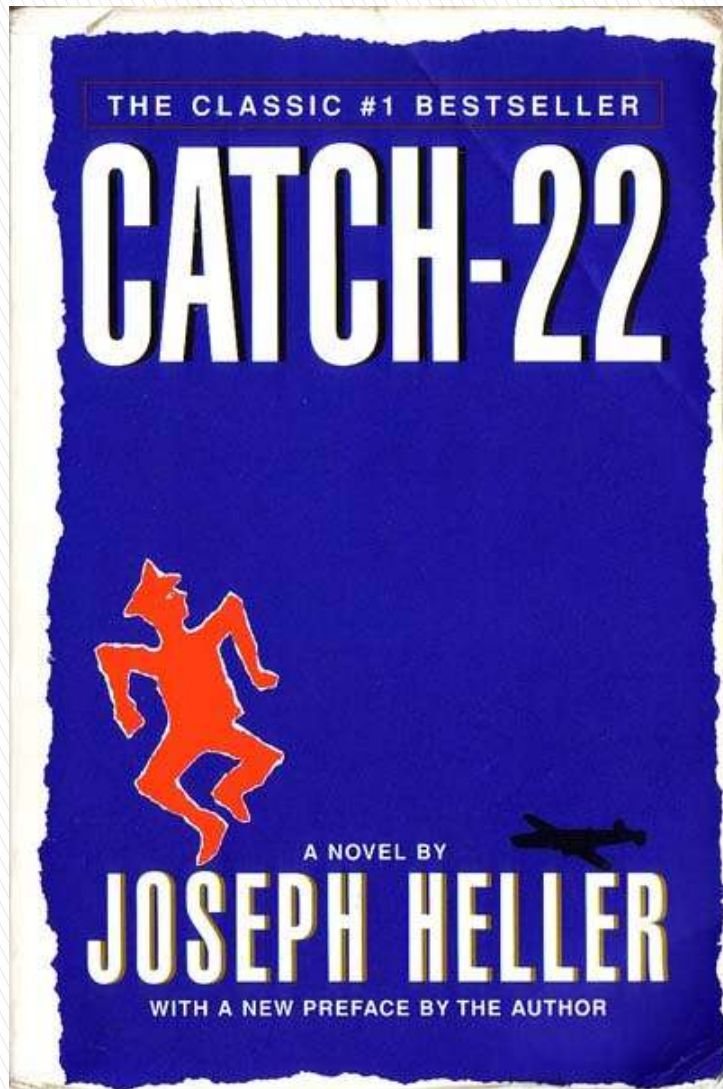
Jorge Luis Borges  
Labyrinths





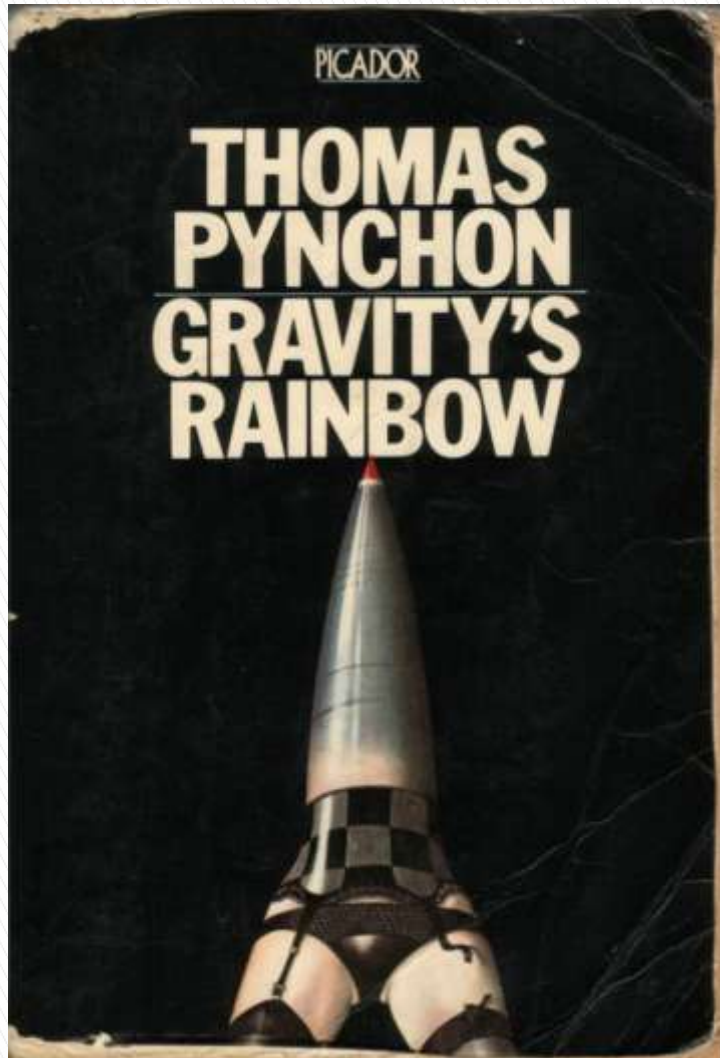
Hunter S. Thompson

Fear and Loathing in  
Las Vegas

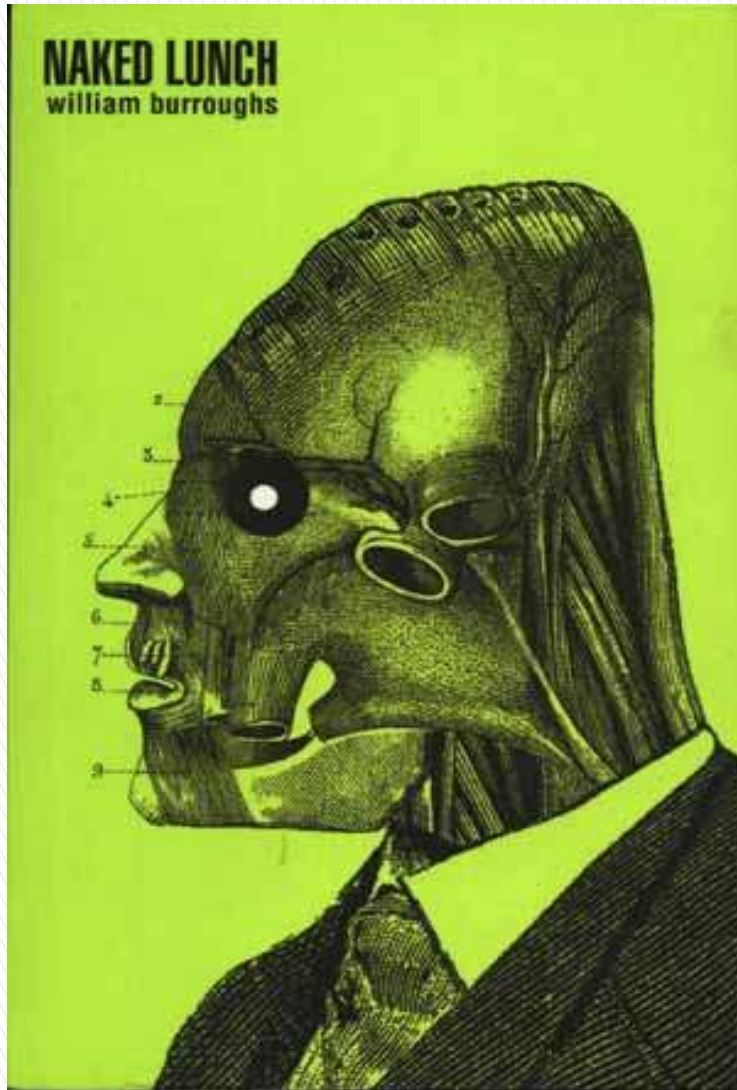


Joseph Heller

Catch-22



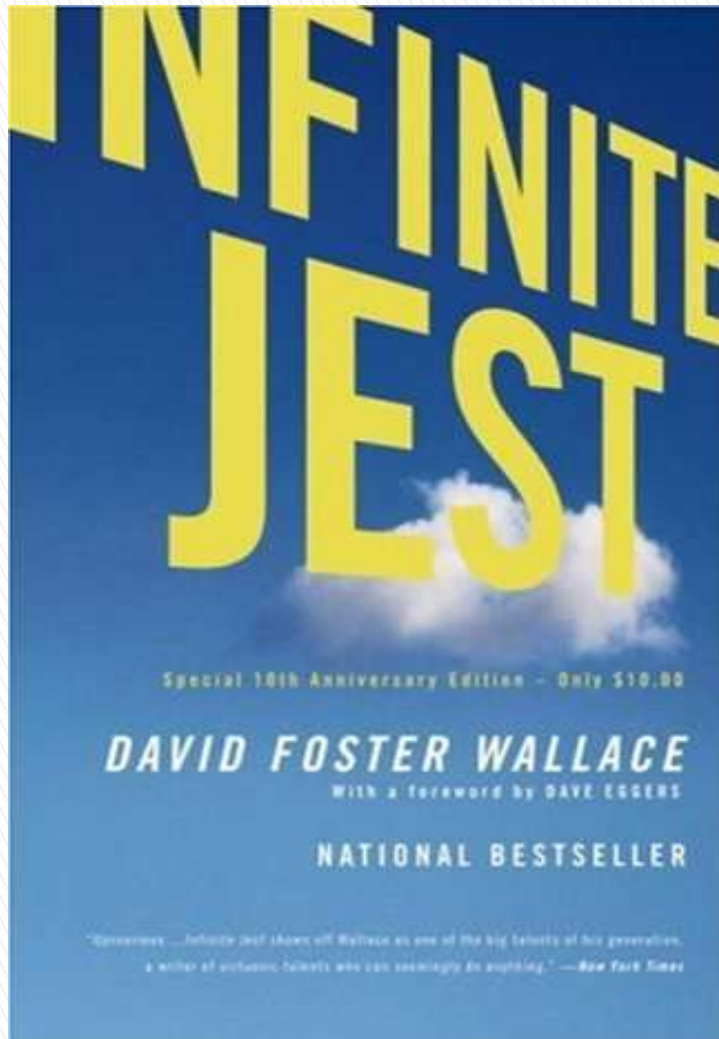
Thomas Pynchon  
Gravity's Rainbow



William S. Burroughs

Naked Lunch

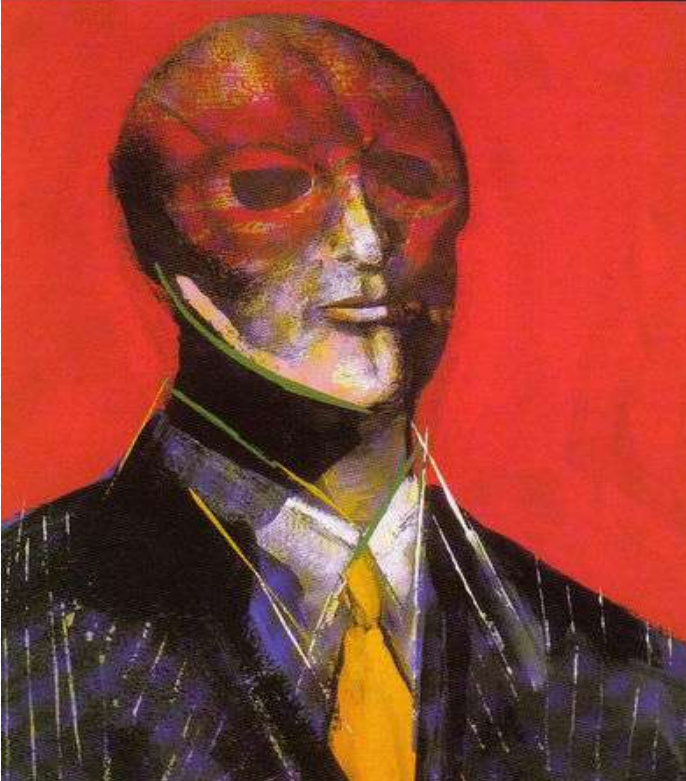




David Foster Wallace

Infinite Jest

**AMERICAN PSYCHO**  
BRET EASTON ELLIS



Bret Easton Ellis

American Psycho