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American Literature, Post-1945

This list understands postwar American literature as that which constantly questions the veracity of its representations. When mapped onto the novels of this literary moment, this process of calling into question is often tied to the fallibility of memory—an idea that most notably manifests itself in terms of the narrative and formal experimentation that characterizes the period. Accordingly, whether historical, familial, or personal memory, the novels on this list require narrators, characters, and readers to cynically frame the epistemology of each narrative. Likewise, the poetry on this list follows a similar theme and displays a fragmentation that is indicated by an increasingly free and para-textual. Experimentation in both of these literary forms ultimately translates to what this list understands as the increasingly ergodic nature of postwar American literature.

**Primary Works:**

1. Invisible Man—Ellison (1952)
2. Howl and Other Poems—Ginsberg (1956)
3. Naked Lunch—Burroughs (1959)
5. Ariel—Plath (1965)
7. The Crying of Lot 49—Pynchon (1966)
8. Lost in the Funhouse—Barth (1968)
9. In the Mecca—Brooks (1968)
10. Slaughterhouse Five—Vonnegut (1969)
12. Mumbo Jumbo—Reed (1972)
13. Crash—Ballard (1973)
15. The Woman Warrior—Kingston (1975)
17. Song of Solomon—Morrison (1977)
22. Snow Crash—Stephenson (1992)
Secondary Works:

1. The Sense of an Ending—Kermode (1967)
5. A Poetics—Bernstein (1992)