

Cult Fiction

“Cult,” from Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary:

5a: a great devotion to a person, idea, object, movement or work (as a film or book)†.

Many of these books were considered controversial when they were initially published, some inspired legal action to be taken against them, some were whispered about and sold with false covers in back alleys, and later tucked away under mattresses and read under the covers with flashlight. Some of the books fell out of print almost as soon as published and were only later rediscovered and kept alive by word of mouth.

In the list below you’ll find books that you might not come across in every bookstore, but perhaps you’ll be browsing the stacks one day and come across a mammoth blue spine with the words *Infinite Jest* in bold down the spine and you’ll tell a friend about it, perhaps that friend will tell his daughter, who’ll tell her American lit professor...

Abbey, Edward. *The Monkey Wrench Gang*

Acker, Kathy. *Blood and Guts in High School*

Adams, Douglas. *A Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*

Adams, Richard. *Watership Down*

Algren, Nelson. *The Man With the Golden Arm*

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Bannon, Ann. *Beebo Brinker*

Barnes, Djuna. *Nightwood*

Barth, John. *The Sot-Weed Factor*

Brautigan, Richard. *Trout Fishing in America*

Bukowski, Charles. *Post Office*

Burgess, Anthony. *A Clockwork Orange*

Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*

Card, Orson Scott. *Ender’s Game*

Celine, Louis Ferdinand. *Journey to the End of the Night*

Coover, Robert. *A Public Burning*

Ellis, Bret Easton. *American Psycho*

Farina, Richard. *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me*

Fuentes, Carlos. *Terra Nostra*

Gaddis, William. *The Recognitions*

Gass, William H. *Omensetter's Luck*

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*

Heinlein, Robert. *Stranger in a Strange Land*

Herbert, Frank. *Dune*

Hesse, Herman. *Siddhartha*

Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*

Miller, Walter M. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*

Heller, Joseph. *Catch-22*

Iceberg Slim. *Pimp*

Kerouac, Jack. *On the Road*

Kesey, Ken. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

Lawrence, D.H. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

Markson, David. *Reader's Block*

Moore, Alan. *The Watchmen*

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*

O'Brien, Flann. *At Swim-Two-Birds*

Palahniuk, Chuck. *Fight Club*

Perec, Georges. *A Void*

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*

Pynchon, Thomas. *Gravity's Rainbow*

Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead*

Reage, Pauline. *The Story of O*

Robbins, Tom. *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*

Sade, Marquis de. *The Mystified Magistrate and Other Tales*

Salinger, J.D. *The Catcher in the Rye*

Stein, Gertrude *The Making of Americans*

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*

Toole, John Kennedy. *A Confederacy of Dunces*

Vollmann, William T. *Rainbow Stories*

Vonnegut, Jr., Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five or the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death*

Wallace, David Foster. *Infinite Jest*

For Further Exploration:

The Outlaw Bible of American Literature
edited by Alan Kaufman, Neil Ortenberg & Barney Rosset

†Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. Merriam-Webster, Inc. Springfield, MA, USA. 2003.

Prepared by the staff of the Nashville Public Library, 2006