

INSTRUCTIONS: You may omit one of the following five questions, in which case your answers will count 25% each, or you may answer all five, with each answer counting 20%.

- 1) In his critical study of Hawthorne, Henry James notes the absence in America of the literary traditions that condition European belles lettres. How has this relative absence affected American literature before and after James?
- 2) In *Love and Death in the American Novel*, Leslie Fiedler charges that American literature has manifested an inveterate juvenile quality. Accordingly, it projects a world that is at once asexual and terrible: "a world of fear and loneliness, a haunted world. . . ." Discuss this "juvenile" aspect of Twain, Salinger, and at least one other American writer of your choice.
- 3) This question concerns the "democratic" elements that pervade the Whitmanesque tradition of American literature. These lines from Whitman's "Song of Myself" convey the perhaps contradictory blend of individualism and equality that is to be found in much of Whitman's poetry:

I celebrate myself
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

It could be said that Whitman brought Emerson's transcendental democratism down to earth. Some readers, however, feel that he brought it down so far as to be undignified or even vulgar. That sometimes sordid aspect of Whitman's legacy was revived--most notably in the poetry of Allen Ginsburg--by Beat Generation and countercultural poetics of the 1950s and 1960s.

Discuss some of the pros and cons of this "democratic" strain of American poetics from Whitman to the present. Also mention some of the distinctly undemocratic aspects of modernist poets and critics who tried to suppress the Whitmanesque tradition. To what extent do you find this tradition reaffirmed or disaffirmed in postmodern poetics?

(背面仍有題目,請繼續作答)

543002

- 4) In early postwar America the dominant school of critical practice was the New Criticism. This standard of evaluation vastly enhanced the reputations of some authors at the expense of others. Discuss the basic tenets of the New Criticism as it relates to fiction. What kind of novelists would it tend to promote, and what kind would it derogate? Among the authors listed below, indicate which were the "winners" and which the "losers" when the New Critical standard was applied. Briefly give your reasons in each case.

Stephen Crane
Henry James
William Faulkner
Theodore Dreiser
Norman Mailer

Ernest Hemingway
James Farrell
Sherwood Anderson
John Steinbeck
Frank Norris

- 5) Malcolm Bradbury points out that in the late 1960s the American novel developed in two contradictory but related directions: a) toward a closer nonfictional encounter with "facts," and b) toward a highly reflexive self-consciousness where the subject of fiction is fiction itself. The latter orientation has sometimes been called "surfiction" or "fabulation," but is usually referred to as "metafiction."

Discuss these twin orientations in terms of postmodern literary theory. Why do you suppose Bradbury sees these seemingly opposite courses of development as related?