

American Literature

I. Identifications (40 points):

A. In one or two sentences (or clauses), explain the meaning of each of each of these terms or phrases (2 points each):

1. slave narrative
2. local color
3. oversoul
4. new criticism
5. leatherstocking tales
6. metafiction
7. the lost generation
8. Harlem Renaissance
9. the Great Awakening
10. the Beat writers

B. For each of the following quotations, please identify the author and the work in which it appears (2 points each):

1. After great pain, a formal feeling comes--
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs--
The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?
2. Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada
in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada
as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues
nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee.
3. Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the
see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away,
but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is
pebbly with stars.
4. Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
5. Threading its way out from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down
one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing,
you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that
perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree,
when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a
single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom, ere running off
into the soil, leaving the tree greenly alive, but branded.

(背面仍有題目,請繼續作答)

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6. And for a salesman, there is no rock bottom to the life. He don't put a bolt to a nut, he don't tell you the law or give you medicine. He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine. And when they start not smiling back—that's an earthquake. And then you get yourself a couple of spots on your hat, and you're finished. Nobody dast blame this man. A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory.

7. I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle.
Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd
from,
The scent of these armpits aroma finer than prayer,
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the creeds.

8. Death is the mother of beauty, mystical,
Within whose burning bosom we devise
Our earthly mothers waiting, sleeplessly.

9. Standing on the bare ground,--my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted
into infinite space,--all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-
ball. I am nothing. I see all.

10. [He] believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes
before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—to-morrow we will run
faster, stretch out our arms farther...and one fine morning--
So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the
past.

II. Essay Questions: Answer any *four* of the following questions (15 points each):

1. One distinctive characteristic of many nineteenth century American writers (or their characters) is their rejection of repressive social standards and traditions, their tendency to try to escape from society by going to sea, moving to the woods, or following the receding frontier. Discuss this tendency as it is expressed in any three or four of the following writers: James Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Mark Twain.
2. Almost any scholar would agree that Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson are the two greatest American poets of the nineteenth century, yet a more striking contrast in form, style, and themes can scarcely be imagined between two writers. Discuss the contrasts in specific detail.

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3. The most influential American thinker of the nineteenth century was without question Ralph Waldo Emerson. After briefly explaining what Emerson's most important and influential ideas were, explain as specifically as you can how subsequent American writers like Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, Hawthorne, and James reacted to his work, either embracing and building upon it or criticizing and rejecting it.
4. Compared to more traditional poets like Edwin Arlington Robinson or Robert Frost, what specific changes were brought about in the art of poetry by modernists like Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and Hart Crane? What new conception(s) of the nature or purpose of poetry led them to make the kind of innovations that they did?
5. Like the novelists of the period, American dramatists became increasingly interested in the internal feelings and psychological states of their characters as the twentieth century went on. Discuss this interest and some of the new theatrical techniques that were developed to express it in the works of such leading playwrights as Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Thornton Wilder, and Arthur Miller.