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# 淡江大學 98 學年度博士班招生考試試題

系別：英文學系 A 組

科目：美國文學

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**Answer FOUR of the following five questions. 25% each.**

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson returns, again and again, to the “one doctrine” that informs all his work: “the infinitude of the private man.” In “The American Scholar,” for instance, he declares that “[t]he main enterprise of the world for splendor, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man.” Assess any of Emerson’s works in light of his theory of the rise of the common man.
  
2. Explicate the following lines from Section 5 of Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself”:  
I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning,  
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn’d over upon me,  
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my  
bare-stript heart,  
And reach’d till you felt my beard, and reach’d till you held my feet.  
  
Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the  
argument of the earth,  
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,  
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,  
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my sisters and  
lovers. . . .
  
3. In Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the Mississippi River takes on a mythic quality as the plot of the novel develops. In fact, it is argued that “the river, the fluid element and the medium of escape for Huck and Jim, is Twain’s version of the mythic wilderness.” What is your response to the argument?
  
4. Ralph Ellison, so argues critic Richard Moreland, sees some modernist writers like Ernest Hemingway evading social issues, such as race and democracy, by means of a “superstitious” attention to literary experimentation and technique. In contrast, Ellison has appreciated William Faulkner’s continuing to address such issues. According to Moreland, this is the “realist dimension of Faulkner’s modernism.” Please comment.
  
5. Modernist or postmodernist writing tends to be self-reflexive; that is, it considers itself or constituent elements of itself as a subject. A literary work is said to be self-reflexive when the author deliberately draws attention to the fictional nature of the work. Use the definitions as your guide and analyze the self-reflexivity of one AMERICAN modernist or postmodernist work.