

## MOCK MIDTERM: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN NOVEL

Choose One

1.) Vladimir Nabokov has written that "'reality' [is] one of those few words which mean nothing without quotes." Explain the pertinence of this statement for one of the novels we have read so far. Be sure to explain what the quote is saying (interpret it) and how this idea applies to the novel you choose (analyze its implications).

2.) In his article on existentialism, Gordon Bigelow writes, "Precisely because there is no God to give purpose to the universe, each man [read person as well] must accept individual responsibility for his own becoming, a burden made heavier by the fact that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men 'the image of man as he ought to be.'" Each of the novels we have read deals in some way with the dilemma of choosing who and what one will be and accepting responsibility for that choice. Examine the dilemma of selecting a self in one of the novels we have read and analyze how the writer presents it and what its implications are.

3.) Alain Robbe-Grillet has noted that the purpose of the contemporary novel is to raise questions, questions for which the author may have no answer or only provisional answers. Choosing one of the novels we have read, analyze what questions the fiction provokes. Are there answers or resolutions to these questions? If there are no firm answers, what purposes do these questions serve for the reader and the novel?

N.B.

Remember that your job is to analyze the material you select. Extensive plot summary is unnecessary; if necessary, summarize selectively and with a clear purpose. Be sure your paper is also clearly focused and specifically developed (quote from the text or paraphrase accurately and carefully).