ST MARY’S UNIVERSITY

TWICKENHAM, LONDON

BA/BSc Degree Examination students registered for

Level **FOUR**

Title: **Contemporary Fiction**

Code: **ENG4022**

Semester: **Resit**

Date: **4th July 2019**

Time: **09:30- 11:30 AM**

TIME ALLOWED: **TWO HOURS**

Answer **TWO** questions. Each question is worth 50% of the marks. In the exam as a whole, you should make substantial reference to at least two novels, of which at least one must be either Julian Barnes’s *The Sense of an Ending* or Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*; you may also draw on any of the other novels we have read on the course.

Please mark clearly on your answer book which questions you are attempting.

All questions carry equal marks.

1. ‘Modern narrative, like the modern world, is constructed out of a plurality of voices’. Discuss.
2. To what extent do characters in any one or two texts you have read on this module grow *wiser* when they grow older?
3. ‘Contemporary fiction is often ‘reflexive’ or ‘meta-fictive’; that is to say, it often consists more of stories about stories, rather than stories about the world.’ Discuss.
4. Write an essay on characters’ attempts to atone for past mistakes, in any one or two novels you have read on this module.
5. ‘In fiction, location is often a kind of character in itself; and, in contemporary fiction, both cities and the countryside are usually represented as dark, isolating, alienating places’. Discuss the presentation of location in one or two novels we have read on this course, concentrating if you wish on ‘the city’ and/or ‘the countryside’.
6. ‘Despite successive waves of literary feminism in the twentieth century, female characters in contemporary fiction are all too often little more than plot devices or aids to the main consciousness of the novel, which is dominatingly masculine.’ How far do you agree with this pessimistic assessment of the gender politics of contemporary fiction?
7. Discuss the construction and representation of ethnic or cultural identity in any text or texts you have read on this course.
8. When Irie Jones in *White* Teeth walks into Marcus Chalfen’s study, she thinks of the space as ‘free’ from the historical baggage that characterises her own life. To what extent can characters in any one or two texts you have read on this module be said to be ‘free’?
9. ‘In our culture, many of us like to think of childhood and youth as a special, almost ‘golden’ time before the corruption of adulthood. In contemporary fiction, this is never the case.’ Do you agree?

**END OF EXAMINATION**