ST MARY’S UNIVERSITY

TWICKENHAM, LONDON

BA/BSc Degree Examination students registered for

Level **FOUR**

Title: **An Introduction to Narrative: Contemporary Fiction**

Code: **ENG4022**

Semester: **TWO**

Date: **May 16th 2019**

Time: **9:30 – 11:30 AM**

TIME ALLOWED: **TWO** HOURS

You must answer two questions. 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’ *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.

1. ‘One feature of contemporary fiction is that, try as they might, characters can never atone for, or be forgiven for, past mistakes.’ Discuss.
2. ‘Childhood and youth are phases of life in which we lose (rather than find) ourselves.’

Assess this pessimistic view of childhood and/or youth with reference to one or more novels you have read on this module.

1. ‘”Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy tale!”’ (Alsana speaking in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*.)

Discuss the representation of ethnic, cultural or national identity in one or more novels you have read on this module.

1. ‘Contemporary fiction tends not have one authorial or narrative “voice”, but many, the better to reflect the complex world it.’ Discuss, with reference to one or two novels you’ve read on this module.
2. ‘Far from representing the successes of feminism and the emancipation of women, contemporary fiction – whether written by male or female authors – gives us female characters who are oppressed either by new forms of patriarchy, or by their own desires.’ Do you agree? Discuss with reference to one or more novels you had read on this module.
3. ‘Early in the morning, late in the century, Cricklewood Broadway…Squeezed between an almighty concrete cinema complex at one end and a giant intersection at the other, Cricklewood was no kind of place. It was not a place a man came to die. It was a place a man came in order to go other places via the A41.’ (Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*.)

Discuss the role of place or location – either real or imaginary – in any one or more novels you have read on this module.

1. ‘She [Briony] knew what was required of her. Not simply a letter, but a new draft, an atonement, and she was ready to begin.

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London 1999’ (Ian McEwan, *Atonement.*)

Write an essay on ‘meta-fiction’ or ‘reflexivity’ in one or more novels you have read on this module.

1. ‘Let bygones be bygones’ (Traditional saying.)

‘The past is in this sense like Freud’s idea of the repressed unconscious: it will always return to haunt you.’ (Terry Eagleton)

Discuss these two contrasting ideas of the past with reference to one or more novels you have read on this module.

1. ‘We’re used to thinking about characters in novels developing or progressing personally and morally; usually, however, they don’t.’

To what degree do you think this true of any one or two novels you’ve read on this module?

**END OF EXAMINATION**