

## Final Examination Review

The midterm is worth 20% of your final grade for the semester. The examination will be held on Thursday, December 13th from 11:50 to 1:40 in Eisenhower Hall 219. Please bring a blank blue book or blank loose-leaf paper for your answers. You may also bring with you one 4" x 6" index card with notes, a card that you will hand in with your answers. There will be three parts to the exam.

Part 1. Identifications. This section will be worth twelve (12) points. I will give you five quotations from texts we've read this semester. You will need to identify four of them by providing the name of the author, the title, and an explanation of the quotation's significance.

Part 2. Short Answer. This section will be worth eight (8) points. It will have some short answer questions.

Part 3. Essay Question. This section will be worth eighty (80) points. I will provide you with questions selected from the following list. You will write an essay in response to **two** of them. The final arrangement of the questions will allow for some choice. Please make your answer as specific as possible.

1. In what ways, if any, does sentimentalism change in the twentieth century? How does it remain similar to the sentimentalisms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Write an essay on twentieth-century sentimentality that makes use of the literary works we studied in this class.
2. In what ways, if any, does realism change in the twentieth century? How does it remain similar to the realism of the nineteenth century? Write an essay on twentieth-century realism that makes use of the literary works we studied in this class.
3. One of the questions that has dominated the study of sentimentalism has been, in Jane Tompkins's words, "But is it any good?" Write an essay that explains and defends the value and significance of sentimental literature. Use one of the sentimental texts we studied this semester to illustrate and support your key ideas. References to the theory and criticism on sentimentalism or to more than one sentimental text might make sense for your essay, depending on your approach, but they are not required.
4. Despite their many differences as literary modes, realism and sentimentalism have both been engaged with society and social issues, and both have been interested in the representation of marginalized peoples – rural African Americans, poor whites, urban Puerto Ricans, and Chinese American immigrants, to mention four non-random examples. Using a selected realist or sentimental text from the twentieth century, write an essay that examines the problems, the challenges, the possibilities, and/or the advantages of using a realist or sentimental literary style to represent an oppressed or marginalized social group.

5. What are the aesthetics of sentimental literature? What are the elements, qualities, attributes, features, or components that make a literary text both sentimental and artistic? Write an essay that defines the aesthetics of sentimental literature and uses specific literary texts to illustrate and support the essay's claims.

[Note: Aesthetics typically raises questions such as: What is nature of "art"? What is it? How do we recognize it? How do we evaluate it? What purposes does it serve? What are the elements or qualities that make something a work of art? Thus, this question asks you to think about the artistic elements that make up the texts we think of as sentimental.]

6. Explain one of the following concepts:

- Sympathy (Smith)
- "there is no distinction to be made between sentimentality and antisentimentality" (Sedgwick)
- Sentimentality (Howard)

Illustrate this idea using examples drawn from texts we studied this semester.

7. Explain one of the following concepts:

- Dialogic (Bakhtin)
- Reality Effect (Barthes)
- Naturalism (Zola, Parrington, Figg, and many others)

Illustrate this idea using examples drawn from texts we studied this semester.

8. The standard view of religion in realism and sentimentalism is this: sentimental texts are conventionally religious, if theologically confused or vague, while realist texts typically ignore or attack religion (because it encourages one to adopt unproven and un-provable beliefs, because it idealizes, etc.). Is this common view more or less correct? Or do specific texts challenge this view or provide evidence that it needs adjustment? Write a short essay on the place of religion in realism and sentimentalism in American literature.

9. Think back to the eight primary literary texts we read this semester. Which one best exemplifies sentimentalism as a literary style? Which one best epitomizes the aims of literary realism? And which one seems to most elude easy categorization as "realist" or "sentimental"? Answer all three questions, provide reasons for your selections, and use specific examples to illustrate your ideas.

10. What are the social aims of realist literature? Write an essay that explains not the meaning of a realist literary text but its social purpose or cultural work. What does this text attempt to *do*? Use one of the realist texts we studied this semester to illustrate and support your key ideas. References to the theory and criticism on realism or to more than one realist text might make sense for your essay, depending on your approach, but they are not required.