SECOND PAPER TOPICS--170E

Choose One

1.) A central theme in many works of literature from the classical period up to the twentieth century is that of determinism, a concept which holds that “all ostensible acts of the will are actually the result of causes that determine them.” The central point here is that what often appears to be individual choice is actually the result of forces outside human control. Deterministic factors could be genetic, social, economic, hereditary, etc. Consider either Crane’s “The Open Boat” or Anderson’s “Death in the Woods”; what is the determinist element(s) in either? How does the element(s) affect the characters and the situations that unfold; where is the influence of the element most keenly seen? In addressing this topic, provide a solid working definition of determinism (a handbook or glossary of literary terms will help considerably) and then be sure to apply aspects of your definition to the story. Your job is to demonstrate where and how determinism is operating in the tale.

2.) James Joyce is responsible for introducing the word “epiphany” to the critical lexicon, but he is hardly the inventor of this technique. Choose two stories by writers other than Joyce and discuss their treatment of the epiphany. Consider issues such as what the nature of the revelation or illumination may be, for whom, and to what effects. You may also use a story of Joyce’s for illustration but the discussion of the other two stories must form the basis of the paper’s argument.

Length--5 pages
Due–Wednesday, November 20

NB
In each case be sure to avoid extended plot summary and instead concentrate on analyzing and developing your ideas through an examination of specific details and passages. Furthermore, be certain to follow the formatting guidelines described in the syllabus; failure to do so will lower your grade.