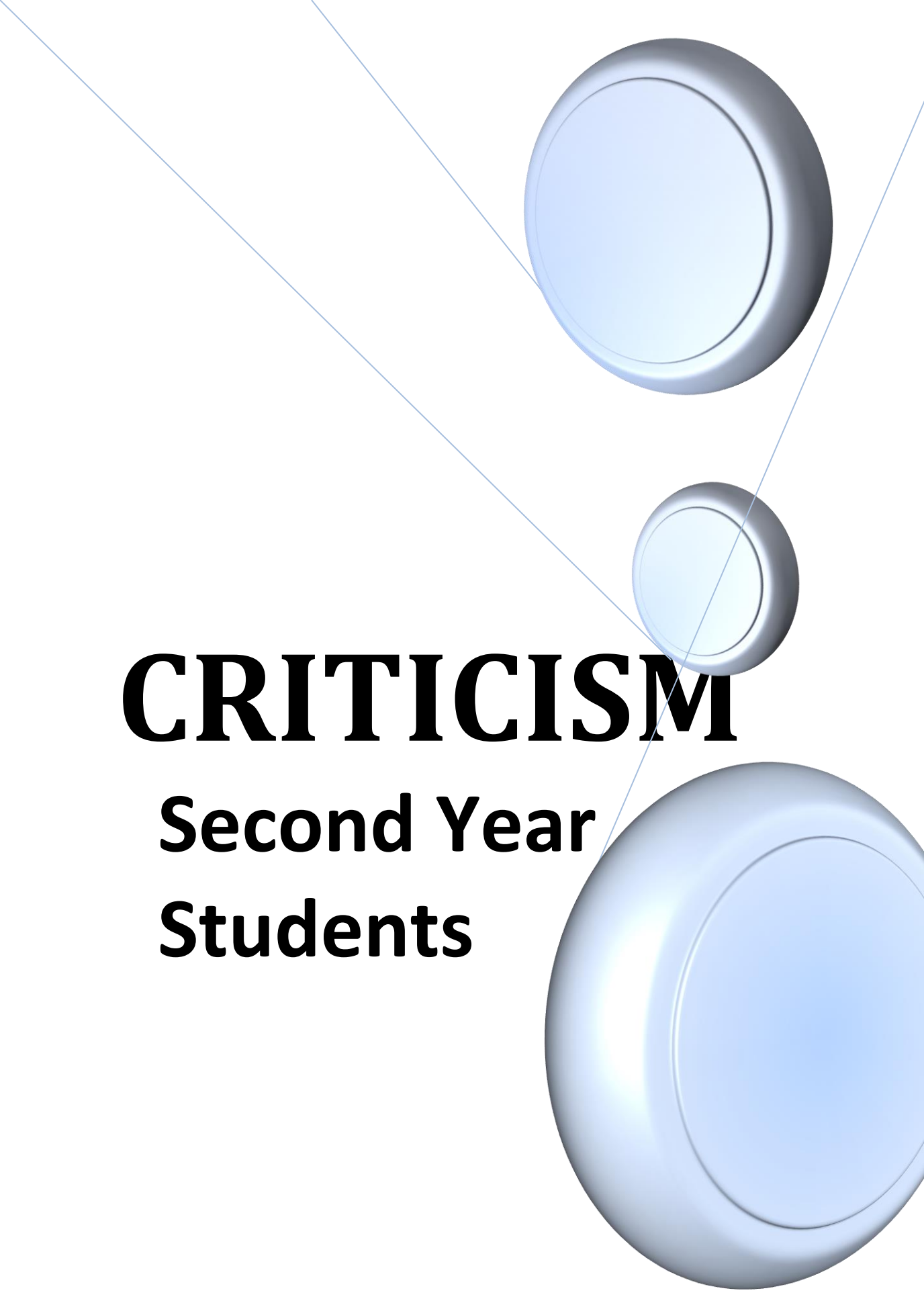
CRITICISM
Second Year
Students

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CRITICISM 2

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“CRITICISM”

The word 'criticism' is derived from the Greek word 'kritikos' and Latin-word 'criticus'. It was Dryden who first used the word 'criticism' in print at least, in the now familiar sense of 'any formal discussion of literature." In the preface of *The State of Innocence* he writes, "Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well." Criticism cannot exist without creation. Creation comes first, criticism next.

The function of criticism is to interpret, and to judge literary works in an unbiased and dispassionate manner so that the creative writers produce excellent works and the readers enjoy literature in an enlightened manner. Abercrombie writes : "Criticism

enables the man who has the energy to create literature, to make the most intelligent, and therefore, the most efficient use of his energy; and just so criticism enables the man who has the capacity to enjoy literature, to make his enjoyment the most intelligent, and therefore the most discriminating and most illuminating, kind of experience." Criticism is, thus, distinct from creation and enjoyment and consists in asking and answering rational questions about literature.

A critic is an ideal judge and reader who brings to bear a trained judgment on whatever he reads. He rationally and intellectually examines a work of art or literature and, then, passes his own judgment about its worth and merit. *Webster's New International Dictionary* defines criticism as "the art

of judging or evaluation with knowledge and propriety the beauties and faults of works of art or literature".

To Matthew Arnold, "Criticism is a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Criticism, says T. S. Eliot, is the "commentation and exposition of works of art by means of written words." He adds that the end of criticism is "the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste." These definitions of criticism throw light on its nature and function.

WHAT IS LITERARY CRITICISM?

Sometimes the word criticism puts people off, because in everyday use it has negative connotations. We usually think of a "critic" as the kind of grumpy person who seems to exist solely to find problems and stress faults. The word means more than that, however. It comes from the Greek verb kritikos, which means to judge or to decide. In its original sense, a critic is simply a person who expresses an informed judgment or opinion about the meaning, value, truth, beauty, or artistry of something.

Let's go more specific. **Literary criticism** is the discipline of **interpreting**, **analyzing** and **evaluating** works of literature. **Literature** is most commonly defined as works of writing that have lasted over the years because they deal with ideas of timeless and universal interest with exceptional artistry and power. This can include poems, stories, novels, plays, essays, memoirs, and so on. Each of the three main activities of literary criticism –

interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating – gives rise to different questions.

The Interpretive Question: What does this work of literature mean? When we **interpret** a work, we set forth one or more of its possible meanings. Reading is like a potluck picnic to which the writer brings the words and the readers bring the meanings. Literary works speak to us all in different ways, and one of the pleasures of talking about books is the chance to check out all the different ideas other readers bring to the picnic.

The Analytic Question: How does this piece of literature work? When we **analyze** a text, we get under the hood to see how the engine operates. Analysis is technical: pulling things apart, examining relationships, figuring out effects. We are not asking **what** a poem means anymore but **how** the author makes it click.

The Evaluative Question: Is this work of literature any good? When **evaluate** a work, we form

a personal judgment about its work: Is this a great novel or a rotten one? Why? Does this poem have any value? Why? What does this work of literature add – or subtract – from the world?

WHAT'S LITERARY CRITICISM?

In literary criticism, a **theory** is the specific method, approach, or viewpoint a critic or reader has staked out from which he or she interprets, analyzes, and evaluates works of literature – and often the world.

There are numerous literary theories. Some you may find useful, some not so useful. That‟s for you to judge. But you should learn how each theory or approach works before you make your final judgment.

Here are the essential questions when looking at literary theories:

What are some of the many different ways a reader can approach a book?

How does each work?

What are the benefits and limitations of each literary lens? Which critical theories make sense and seem useful to you? Which don't?

Why?

SIX APPROACHES TO LITERATURE

1. Historical / Biograph

1. Historical / Biographical Approach

Historical / Biographical critics see works as the reflection of an author‟s life and times (or of the characters „life and times). H/B approach deems it necessary to know about the author and the political, economical, and sociological context of his times in order to truly understand the work (s).

Advantages: This approach works well for some works - - like those of Alexander Pope, John Dryden, and Milton - - which are obviously political in nature. It also is necessary to take a historical approach in

order to place allusions in their proper classical, political, or biblical background.

Disadvantages: New Critics refer to the historical/ biographical critic‟s belief that the meaning or value of a work may be determined by the author‟s intention as “the intentional fallacy.” Thus, art is reduced to the level of biography rather than universal.

2. Moral /Philosophical Approach

Moral / Philosophical critics believe that the larger purpose of literature is to teach morality and to probe philosophical issues. Practitioners include Mattew Arnold (works must have “high seriousness”), Plato (literature must exhibit moralism and utilitarianism), and Horace (literature should be “delightful and instructive”).

Advantages: This approach is useful for such works as Alexander Pope‟s “An Essay on Man,” which presents an obvious moral philosophy. It is also useful when considering thethemes of works (for example, man‟s inhumanity to man in Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn). Finally, it does not view literature merely as “art” isolated from all moral implications; it recognizes that literature can affect readers, whether subtly or directly, and that the message of a work- - and not just the decorous vehicle for that message - - is important.

Disadvantages: Detractors argue that such an approach can be to “judgmental.” Some believe literature should be judged primarily (if not solely) on its artistic merits, not its moral or philosophical content.

3. Formalism / New criticism

A formalistic approach to literature, once called **New Criticism** involves a **close reading of the text**. Formalistic critics believe that all information essential to the interpretation of a work must be found within the work itself; there is no need to bring in outside information about the history, politics, or society of the time, or about the author‟s life. Formalistic critics spend much time analyzing irony, paradox, imagery, and metaphor. They are also interested in the work‟s setting, characters, symbols, and point of view. **Terms used in New Criticism:**

 Tension – the integral unity of the poem which results from the resolution of opposites, often in irony or paradox

 Intentional Fallacy – the belief that the meaning or value of a work may be determined by the author‟s intention

 Affective fallacy – the belief that the meaning or value of a work may be determined by its affect on the reader

 External form – rhyme scheme, meter, stanza form, etc.

 Objective correlative – originated by T.S. Eliot, this term refers to a collection of objects, situations, or events that instantly evoke a particular emotion.

Advantages: this approach can be performed without much research, and it emphasizes the value of literature apart from its context (in effect makes literature timeless). **Virtually all critical approaches must begin here**. **Disadvantages:** The text is seen in isolation. Formalism ignores the context of the work. It cannot account for allusions. It tends to reduce literature to little more than a collection of rhetorical devices.

4. Psychological Approach

Psychological critics view works through the lens of psychology. They look either at the psychological motivations of the characters or of the authors themselves, although the former is generally considered a more respectable approach: most frequently, Freudian and/or Jungian (archetypes) psychology to works.

(a) Freudian Approach

- **Id** (reservoir of libbil or pleasure principle in the unconscious)
- **Superego** (the moral censoring agency and repository of conscience/pride that protects society)
- **Ego** (the rational governing agent of the unconscious that protects the individual)

Freudian critics steer toward the sexual implications of symbols and imagery, since Freud theorized that all human behavior (drives) derives from libido/sexual energy.

 Concave Images, such as fonts, flowers, cups, and caves = female symbols.

 Convex Images, such as skyscrapers, submarines, obelisks, etc. = male symbols.

 Actions, such as dancing, riding, and flying = sexual pleasure.

 Water = birth, the female principle, the maternal, the womb, and the death wish.

 Oedipus complex = a boy‟s unconscious rivalry with his father for the love of his mother.

 The Electra complex = a girl's unconscious rivalry with her mother for the love of her father.

 Critics may also refer to Freud's psychology of child development, which includes the **oral stage (eating)**, the **anal stage (elimination)**.

Advantages: A useful tool for understanding some works, in which characters manifest clear psychological issues. Like the biographical approach, knowing something about a writer‟s psychological make-up can give us insight into his

work. **Disadvantages:** Psychological criticism can turn a work into little more than a psychological case study, neglecting to view it as a piece of art. Critics sometimes attempt to diagnose long dead authors based on their works, which is perhaps not the best evidence of their psychology. Critics tend to see sex in everything, exaggerating this aspect of literature. Finally, some works do not lend themselves readily to this approach.

(b) Jungian Approach

Jung is also an influential force in myth (archetypal) criticism. Psychological critics are generally concerned with his concept of the process of **individualtion** (the process of discovering what makes one different from everyone else). Jung labeled three parts of the self:

 Shadow - - the darker, unconscious self; rarely surfaces, yet must be faced for totality of self

 Persona - - the public personality/mask (particularly masculine)

 Anima/Animus - - a man‟s / woman‟s “soul image” (the negative that makes a composite whole)

 A **neurosis** occurs when someone fails to assimilate one of these unconscious components into his conscious and **projects** it on someone else. The persona must be flexible and be able to balance the components of the psych

5. Mythological/Archetypal

A mythological/archetypal approach to literature assumes that there is a collection of symbols, images, characters, and motifs (i.e., **archetypes**) that evokes a similar response in all people. According to the psychologist Carl Jung, mankind possesses a **“collective unconscious”** (a cosmic reservoir of human experience) that contains these archetypes and that is common to all of humanity. Myth critics identify these archetypal patterns and discuss how

they function in the works. They believe that these archetypes are the source of much of literature‟s power.

Advantages: Provides a universalistic approach to literature and identifies a reason why certain literature may survive the test of time. It works well with works that are highly symbolic.

Disadvantages: literature may become little more than a vehicle for archetypes, and this approach may ignore the “art” of literature.

6. Feminist Approach

Feminist criticism is concerned with the impact of gender on writing and reading. It usually begins with a critique of patriarchal culture. It is concerned with the place of female writers in the cannon. Finally, it includes a search for a feminine theory or approach to texts. Feminist criticism is political and often revisionist. Feminists often argue that male fearsare portrayed through female characters. They may

argue that gender determines every-thing, or just the opposite: that all gender differences are imposed by society, and gender determines nothing. **Elaine Showalter's Theory** In A literature of Their Own, Elaine Showalter argued that literary subcultures all go through major phases of development. For literature by or about women, she labels these stages the Feminine, Feminist, and Female:

 Feminine Stage - - involves "imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition" and "internalization of its standards."

 Feminist Stage - - involves "protest against these standards and values and advocacy of minority rights …."

 Female Stage - - this is the "phase of self-discovery, a turning inwards freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity."

Advantages: Women have been underrepresented in the traditional cannon, and a feminist approach to literature attempts to redress this problem.

Disadvantages: Feminists turn literary criticism into a political battlefield and overlook the merits of works they consider “patriarchal.” When arguing for a distinct feminine writing style, they tend to neglect women's literature to a ghetto status; this in turn prevents female literature from being naturally included in the literary cannon. The feminist approach is often too theoretical.

9. Conclusion

Literary criticism does not require that we all agree about what a work of literature means, how it works, or whether it‟s effective. We don‟t even have to agree with any expert‟s judgment. We have only two obligations when we assert our opinions. First, we are obligated to explain as clearly as possible the reasons behind our ideas and back them up with evidence from the actual text we‟re discussing. Second, we are obligated to listen respectfully to

critics‟ ideas in the hope that we can learn from learning how others respond to works of literature

Types of Criticism

The word criticism is loosely applied to different kinds of literary inquiry, which are detailed below:

Legislative Criticism : It also includes the rhetoric. It is the earliest kind of criticism. It is that form of critical endeavour which lays down rules for the art of writing, largely based on standard works of literature, especially those of Greek and Latin. It claims to teach the poet how to write or how to write better. It assumes that the critic is the law giver and the writer's duty is to put those rules into practice without any interrogation.

The Augustans thought that the key function of criticism was to frame set rules for the guidance of writers, and then to judge a work on the basis of these rules. Writers must strictly follow these rules when they create, and critics

must judge strictly on the basis of these rules. Aristotle, Horace, Dionysius, Quintillian and Longinus among the ancients; and Vida, Racine, Boileau, Roscommon etc. among the moderns were the masters of criticism, whom the writers must follow with utmost fidelity.

Legislative criticism was practised during the Elizabethan period. Sidney was the only exception. Nearly all Elizabethan critics directed their remarks to poets rather than to readers of poetry.

Aesthetic or Theoretical Criticism :Legislative criticism restrains the poet or writer from the fullest possible development of his genius. The fetters of rules, prescribed by the ancients restrict his imagination and, thus, cast an uncongenial influence on the full blossoming of his talent. Aesthetic criticism, on the other hand, treats literature as an art— an independent activity of the mind, having an end of its own. It has no relation with any other activity in the field of science, religion, morality, politics, economy etc.

It probes the nature of the literary art as such and formulates its theories accordingly. Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* (1595), which appeared nine years after his heroic death, is the first great example of aesthetic criticism in English. During the seventeenth century Dryden showed a continuing but occasional interest in the aesthetics. A gradual shift in interest from Platonic issues as the exploration of poetic truth towards psychological questions as the nature of the creative act widened the scope of theoretical criticism from Hobbes onwards. Addison's essays on *Imagination* in the Spectator, Lord Kames' *Treatises,* Burke's *The Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), Sir Joshua Reynold's *Discourses* (1778), Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, the critical writings of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde, I.A. Richards and Collingwood are some of the finest specimens of aesthetic criticism.

Descriptive Criticism : It is the latest and most popular of all the three critical modes. It consists of a study of

individual works, of their aims, methods and effects. Legislative criticism addresses itself to the writer, descriptive criticism is directed to the readers. The poets and writers, who have analysed their own works with a view to explaining their own aims and methods, have been the most powerful exponents of descriptive criticism. It begins, with self-justification of poets who discuss their own works with a view to defending them against hostile criticism.

Descriptive criticism is about some particular text, whether of the critic's own or of another. The critic, instead of propounding general rules or theorizing in general terms, analyses the work in hand, traces the influences that have given rise to it, and then discusses it critically item by item." The earliest example of descriptive criticism in English is Ben Jonsons *Conversations with Drummond*. *Dryden's Essay on Dramatic Poetry* is the first great landmark in descriptive criticism. Pope, Addison, Fielding, Dr. Johnson, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold,

Henry James, T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, F.R. Leavis, William Empson etc. have been the practitioners of descriptive criticism.

Impressionistic Criticism : It records the personal experiences of the writer. An impressionistic critic is not concerned either with the judgement or evaluation of a work of art, either with aesthetic approach or with biographical exploration of a piece of literature.

He only aims at presenting in finished language his own "impression" of a work of art. Walter Pater, one of the most distinguished impressionistic critics, remarks that "in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly."

Oscar Wilde, George Moore, Arthur Symons and Virginia Woolf are famous critics who have attempted impressionistic criticism. It is individualistic and tends to be wayward and erratic. It is to restrain this tendency of

waywardness that T.S. Eliot and other modern critics stress the need of tradition and authority in criticism.

Sociological Criticism : Sociological criticism enjoys much popularity in the twentieth century. It regards a literary work as a product of social factors and forces prevailing in a particular society at a particular time. Taine, the French thinker, pronounced that literature is deeply influenced by the moment, the race and the milieu. It examines a literary work in the context of the social conditions of its author.

A work of art is examined in its social context and it also studies its social effects. Henry Levin rightly points out: "The relations between literature and society are reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social causes, it is also the cause of social effects."

Literature reflects social values. The two can never be divorced. Edmund Wilson traces sociological criticism to Vico's eighteenth century study of Homer's epics, which

revealed the social conditions in which the Greek poet lived. Hicks' *Proletarian Literature* (1935), Cecil Dony Lewis' *The Mind in Chains* (1937), Bernard Smith's *Forces in American Criticism* (1939), V. F. Calvertan's *The Liberation of American Literature* (1931), Ralph Fox's *Novel and the People* (1937), F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941) and L. C. Knight's *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1937) are some of the noticeable studies on sociological criticism.

Marxist criticism of literature is a specialized form of criticism. It is based on the teachings of Karl Marx and Engels. As a systematic doctrine it influenced Russian, American and English writings.

It is frankly didactic and propagandist. It lost its central strength and ceased to be a major force in literary criticism with the outbreak of World War II in l939.

Inductive Criticism : Inductive criticism discards set rules and principles in judging works of literature. Inductive critic approaches literature in the spirit of pure investigation.

In the words of Prof. Richard Moulten : "The inductive critics review the phenomena of literature as they actually stand, inquiring into and endeavoring to systematize the laws and principles by which they are moulded and produce their effects and recognize no court of appeal to the literary works themselves." The laws of art are found in the practice of artists and not in set rules.

Comparative Criticism: It seeks to evaluate a work by comparing it with other works of similar nature, either in one's language or in other languages. Matthew Arnold was the first staunch advocate of comparative criticism.

He asserted that it is the duty of the critic to know the best that has been thought and said, both in ancient and modern literatures. The critic must know passages, extracts,

quotations from different works of literature and must compare them with similar passages of the work under consideration in order to know its real and intrinsic worth. Comparison must be made between works of the same type and genre. Arnold calls it the 'touchstone method which is both illuminating and interesting.

Qualifications of a Critic

A critic's task is very difficult. He has to play many roles. He corrects our tastes, justifies them and sometimes creates new tastes. In order to master his craft he needs a special training. His success depends greatly upon a natural aptitude for it. In short, only an exceptionally qualified and gifted man can perform his task well.

In the first place, a critic must be a man of wide and varied learning, because only then he can have sufficient materials on which to base his judgements. In order to have proper standards of evaluation he must be thoroughly acquainted with the great authors in several languages. According to Matthew Arnold the first great requisite for a critic is the acquisition

of "knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge." He says that "every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better."

T. S. Eliot regards the whole of European literary tradition, from the beginning down to his own day, as one tradition, and enjoins on the critic to acquire as much of it as he can. It is only such knowledge that can enable the critic to judge particular works in a proper perspective.

Secondly, a critic must-have proper training and technical skill in the different branches of literature. It means that a critic must serve a long apprenticeship in learning the fundamentals of his trade. For example, a critic of Shakespeare cannot

write with confidence and authority without a comprehensive knowledge of various types of drama, the England of Shakespeare's age, the University Wits, the Elizabethan theatre, stage etc. All this technical information is essential for him and its right use constitutes technical skill.

Thirdly, a critic should maintain a strictly detached point of view. He should not allow his own preferences to influence his judgement. He should be unbiased and unprejudiced in his approach and he should be able to rise above political, religious and other considerations.

He should not show any obvious bias to any writer, as Dr. Johnson did to Milton, or he should not show excessive fondness to any writer, as Dryden did

to Chaucer. He should have sympathy for a work of art, and try his best to give a fair criticism even of something which he may personally dislike.

Fourthly, a critic must have imaginative sympathy with the writer. He must imaginatively identify himself with the author, and thus, try to see things from his point of view, and share his vision of life. It is only through such imaginative sympathy that a critic can properly understand the real meaning and purpose of an author, and can impartially bring out the real significance of his work.

Unless the critic has some imagination, some share of heavenly spark, he will utterly fail in his task. Imaginative writers like Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, De Quincy, Coleridge and Arnold are good critics. A

good critic must always be close to the artist's point of view, and that he cannot do unless he himself has in him the poetic touch. Ben Jonson rightly observed : "To judge of poets is only the faculty of poets."

Fifthly, a critic must possess a sound knowledge of human life, nature and psychology. Literature mirrors life, so a thorough knowledge of life is essential for a correct judgement and evaluation of literature.

A good and gifted critic must also have the philosophical mind, that is, he must be able to distinguish between reality and appearance. It is this capacity which makes Hazlitt, De Quincey and Lessing great critics. They had also the gift of communicating that distinction in the most

appropriate language. So a critic must have the teaching or communicating capacity.

He must have the capacity of expressing his ideas in a readable and appealing language. Some of the prominent critics like Dryden, Johnson, Hazlitt, Arnold, Pater, Ruskin, T. S. Eliot were illustrious writers of prose. Summarising the qualities of a great critic Oscar Wilde writes : "Who is the true critic but he who bears within himself the dreams, and ideas, and feelings of myriads of generations and to whom no form of thought is alien, no emotional impulse obscure ? And who the true man of culture, if not he who by fine scholarship and fastidious rejection has made instinct self-conscious and intelligent, and can separate the work that has distinction from the work that has it not, and so by contact and comparison

makes himself master of the secrets of style and school, and understands their meanings and listens to their voice, and develops that spirit of disinterested curiosity which is the real root, as it is the real flower, of the intellectual life, and thus, attains to intellectual clarity, and, having learned, "the best that is known and thought in the world", lives with those who are immortals."

Renaissance Criticism

Introduction

A product of the revival of classical Greek and Roman culture known as humanism, Renaissance literary criticism took root in defenses of poetry and dialogues on language and literary imitation in Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries. It reached maturity, however, and first achieved independence as a discourse in 16th-century Italy, where the recovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* occasioned a series of commentaries that extended to the elaboration of comprehensive theories of poetry, such as that of Lodovico Castelvetro (b. 1505–d. 1571), and to the application of these theories to vernacular works by Dante, Ariosto, Tasso, and others. The influence of Italian criticism meanwhile spread swiftly across Europe, where such figures as Joachim Du Bellay (b. 1522–d. 1560) and Philip Sidney (b. 1554–

d. 1586) enlisted it, along with the other resources of humanism, in the establishment of vernacular traditions of literature and criticism.

Fundamentally classical, Renaissance criticism showcases its debts to Horace, Aristotle, and Plato, roughly in that order. But it was the questions left unanswered by these authorities that crucially led Renaissance critics to synthesize, adapt, and extend classical poetics to meet the demands of contemporary Christian writers and readers. Going back to Dante, their first priority was the defense of poetry against the incursions of its ancient and modern opponents and the defense of the vernacular as a poetic medium. Defending poetry entailed defining it and establishing its formal criteria, both of which hinged on imitation. Following Aristotle,

critics tended to define poetry itself as an imitation, the status, source, and purpose of which they debated with recourse to other classical philosophers, critics, and rhetoricians. Invoking Horace and plying the formalism of Aristotle and such rhetorical treatises as the *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian, ambitious critics such as Julius Caesar Scaliger (b. 1484–d. 1558) composed encyclopedic *artes poeticae* that sought in unprecedented ways to systematize the art of poetry with standards of prosody, figure, and genre derived from classical models. The question of which models to imitate, and how, gave rise to heated disputes over the imitation of Cicero, the employment of quantitative meter and rhyme, and the relative merits of romance and epic. Renaissance literary criticism thus reflects the intellectual culture

of the age by confronting at every turn the complex dynamics of imitation, both practically and theoretically.

Literary Criticism of Sir Philip Sidney

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586) is often cited as an archetype of the well-rounded "Renaissance man": his talents were multifold, encompassing not only poetry and cultivated learning but also the virtues of statesmanship and military service. He was born into an aristocratic family, was eventually knighted, and held government appointments which included the governorship of Flushing in the Netherlands. He was involved in war waged by Queen Elizabeth I against Spain and died from a wound at the age of 32. His friends included the poet Edmund Spenser; he wrote

a pastoral romance, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1581), and he was original in producing a sonnet cycle in the English language, influenced by the Italian poet Petrarch, entitled *Astrophel and Stella* (1581–1582).

Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* (1580–1581) is in many ways a seminal text of literary criticism. It is not only a defense but also one of the most acclaimed treatises on poetics of its time. While its ideas are not original, it represents the first synthesis in the English language of the various strands and concerns of Renaissance literary criticism, drawing on Aristotle, Horace, and more recent writers such as Boccaccio and Julius Caesar Scaliger. It raises issues – such as the value and function of poetry, the nature of imitation, and the concept of nature – which were

to concern literary critics in numerous languages until the late eighteenth century. Sidney's writing of the *Apologie* as a defense of poetry was occasioned by an attack on poetry entitled *The School of Abuse* published in 1579 by a Puritan minister, Stephen Gosson. As mentioned earlier, Sidney rejects Gosson's Protestant attack on courtly pleasure, effectively defending poetry as a virtuous activity for the aristocracy (Matz, 22).

Among the English critics, Philip Sidney holds a very important place. His Apology for Poetry is a spirited defense of poetry against all the charges laid against it since Plato. He considers poetry as the oldest of all branches of learning and establishes its superiority.

Poetry, according to Sidney, is superior to philosophy by its charm, to history by its universality, to science by its moral end, to law by its encouragement of human rather than civic goodness. Sidney deals with the usefulness of other forms of poetry also. (The pastoral pleases by its helpful comments on contemporary events and life in general, the elegy by its kindly pity for the weakness of mankind, the satire by its pleasant ridicule of folly, the lyric by its sweet praise of all that is praiseworthy, and the epic by its representation of the loftiest truths in the loftiest manner).

Reply to four charges:

Stephen Gosson in his School of Abuse, leveled four charges against poetry. They were :

- A man could employ his time more usefully than in poetry,
- It is the ‘mother of lies’,
- It is immoral and ‘the nurse of abuse’ and
- Plato had rightly banished poets from his ideal commonwealth.

Sidney gallantly defends all these charges in his ‘Apology for Poetry’. Taking the first charge, he argues that poetry alone teaches and moves to virtue and therefore a man cannot better spend his time than in it. Regarding the second charge, he points out that a poet has no concern with the question of veracity or falsehood and therefore a poet can scarcely be a liar.

He disposes of the third charge saying that it is a man's wit that abuses poetry and not vice versa. To the fourth charge, he says that it is without foundation because Plato did not find fault with poetry but only the poets of his time who abused it.

The Value of his Criticism:

Though Sidney professes to follow Aristotle, his conception of poetry is different from Aristotle's. To Aristotle, poetry was an art of imitation. To Sidney, it is an art of imitation for a specific purpose : it imitates 'to teach and delight'. (Those who practice it are called makers and prophets).

Sidney also unconsciously differs with Aristotle in the meaning he gives to imitation. Poetry is not so much an art of imitation as of invention or

creation. (It creates a new world altogether for the edification and delight of the reader). This brings him again close Plato. According to him, the poet imitates not the brazen world of Nature but the golden world of the Idea itself. So, Plato's chief objection to poetry is here answered in full. Sidney makes poetry what Plato wished it to be – a vision of the idea itself and a force for the perfection of the soul.

The Significance on an Apology for Poetry:

An Apology for Poetry is one of the most important contributions to literary theory written in English during the Renaissance. Sidney advocates a place for poetry within the framework of an aristocratic state, while showing concern for both literary and national identity.

Sidney responds in Apology to an emerging antipathy to poetry as expressed in Stephen Gosson's The Schoole of Abuse. Gosson offers what is in essence a puritan attack on imaginative literature. What is at stake in Sidney's argument is a defense of poetry's nobility. The significance of the nobility of poetry is its power to move readers to virtuous action. True poets must teach and delight – a view that dates back to Horace.

In an era of antipathy to poetry and puritanical belief in the corruption engendered by literature, Sidney's defense was a significant contribution to the genre of literary criticism. It was England's first philosophical defense in which he describes poetry's ancient and indispensable place in society, its mimetic nature, and its ethical function. Among

Sidney's gifts to his contemporaries were his respect for tradition and willingness to experiment.

An example of the latter is his approach to Plato. He reconfigures Plato's argument against poets by saying poets are "the least liar".Poets never claim to know the truth, nor "make circles around your imagination," nor rely on authority. As an expression of a cultural attitude descending from Aristotle, Sidney, when stating that the poet "never affirmeth," makes the claim that all statements in literature are hypothetical or pseudo-statements. Sidney, as a traditionalist, however, gives attention to drama in contradistinction to poetry. Drama, writes Sidney, is "observing neither rules of honest civility nor of skillful poetry" and thus cannot do justice to this genre.

Sidney employs a number of strategies to assert the proper place of poetry. For instance, he argues against the way in which poetry was misaligned with youth, the effeminate and the timorous. He does so by introducing the idea that "poetry is the companion of camps" and by invoking the heroes of ages past.

Sidney's reverence for the poet as soldier is significant because he himself was a soldier at one time. Poetry, in Apology, becomes an art that requires the noble stirring of courage.

Sidney writes An Apology for Poetry in the form of a judicial oration for the defense, and thus it is like a trial in structure. Crucial to his defense is the descriptive discourse and the idea that poetry creates a separate reality. Sidney employs forensic rhetoric

as a tool to make the argument that poetry not only conveys a separate reality, but that it has a long and venerable history, and it does not lie. It is defensible in its own right as a means to move readers to virtuous action.

Sidney's method:

Censorship is one issue Sidney had to overcome through his use of rhetorical devices in the Apology. Sidney was also versed in the phenomenon of courtiership. As part of his strategy against the threat of censorship, Sidney uses the structure of classical oration with its conventional divisions such as exordium and peroratio.

Sidney's use of classical oration stems from his humanist education. He uses this method to build his

argument, by making use of the rhetorical methods in such guides as Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique. Sidney also uses metaphor and allegory, to conceal and reveal his position. For instance, his use of horsemanship as imagery and analogy substantiates his vision of the transformational power of poetry.

Sidney, as author, enters his work undetected in that the etymology of his name "Philip" is "horse-lover". From the opening discourse on horsemanship, Sidney expands on the horse and saddle metaphor throughout his work by the "enlarging of a conceit". It is Sidney who then guards against a falling out with the "poet-whippers".

Sidney also attends to the rhetorical concept of memory. Poetry, apart from its ability to delight, has an affinity with memory.

Method and style are thus key components of the Apology to overcome the problem of censorship. For this reason, Sidney consciously defends fiction, and he attacks the privilege that is accorded to "fact." He argues that the poet makes no literal claims of truth, is under no illusions, and thus creates statements that are in a sense "fictional" and as true as any others.

What is at stake then is not only the value of poetry in the sense of its utility, but also its place in

a world replete with strife, the contingent and the provisional.

Some parts of this book are compiled from the various internet and electronic sources so as to fulfill the requirements of the second year students.

Critical and Literary Terms

The following is a list of technical terms commonly used in the critical study of art and literature. The list is short, and the definitions are purposely brief. Students seeking a more complete listing--or a more detailed and comprehensive set of definitions and examples--should consult a good literary dictionary or encyclopedia (e.g, The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics). Supplemental online resources are also available.

Allegory: it is a universal symbol or personified abstraction. Example: Death portrayed as a cloaked "grim reaper" with scythe and hourglass, or Justice depicted as a blindfolded figure with a sword and balances. Also a literary

work or genre (e.g., John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress) that makes widespread use of such devices.

Alliteration: it is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in a line or succeeding lines of verse. Example: Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet: "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds/ Towards Phoebus' lodging!"

Allusion: it is an indirect or oblique reference within a text to another text or work. Hence a subtle artistic quotation or homage. For example, the opening sentence of Cat's Cradle--"Call me Jonah"--alludes to both an Old Testament prophet and the opening line of Melville's Moby Dick.

Apocalyptic literature: it is used to refer to the writings that aim to reveal the future history of the world and the ultimate destiny of the earth and its inhabitants. Examples: the prophetic books of the Old Testament;

Revelations. From the sermons of Puritan ministers to the latest popular work of science fiction, American literature has always had a pronounced apocalyptic tendency.

Assonance: it is the repetition of similar vowel sounds within a line or succeeding lines of verse. Example: the short /i/ and /e/ sounds in Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra: "then is it sin/ To rush into the secret house of death/ Ere death dare come to us?"

Autobiography: it is the author's own life history or memoir. Example: The Education of Henry Adams. Thoreau's Walden is also an example of autobiography, and Whitman's Leaves of Grass, though it is not specifically an autobiography, contains numerous autobiographical elements.

Blank Verse: it is a verse form consisting of unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter. Shakespeare's plays are largely in blank verse.

Black humor: it is comedy mingled with horror or a sense of the macabre; extremely bitter, morbid, or shocking humor. Examples (increasingly common in post-WWII film and literature) include Kurt Vonnegut's novel Cat's Cradle and the recent films Pulp Fiction and Misery.

Catalogue: it is a traditional epic device consisting of a long rhetorical list or inventory. Homer's catalogue of ships in the Iliad is probably the most famous example, though almost any poem by Whitman will supply a prize specimen or two.

Classicism, classical: it is used to refer to the art and culture of ancient Greece and Rome.

Comedy: it is a film or dramatic work depicting the uphill struggle and eventual success of a sympathetic hero or heroine; usually about ordinary people in difficult but non-life-threatening predicaments. Examples: Shakespeare, As You Like It; Shaw, Pygmalion.

Consonance: it is the repetition of the same or similar consonant sounds in a line or succeeding lines of verse. Example: the r and s repetitions in Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream: "Or, if there were a sympathy in choice/ War, death, or sickness did lay seige to it . . ."

Drama: a literary work designed for presentation by actors on a stage. Examples: Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice; Miller, Death of a Salesman.

Dramatic romance: a play which adapts the themes, characters, and conventions of narrative romance for the stage. Example: Shakespeare's The Tempest.

Epic: a long narrative poem usually about gods, heroes, and legendary events; celebrates the history, culture, and character of a people. Examples: Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Milton's Paradise Lost.

Essay: literally a "trial," "test run," or "experiment" (from the French essayer, "to attempt"); hence a relatively short, informal piece of non-fiction prose that treats a topic of general interest in a seemingly casual, impressionistic, and lively way. Montaigne was the great originator of the form; Emerson was its most influential 19th-century American practitioner.

Fantasy fiction: modern adventure novels or tales that adapt many of the conventions and devices of medieval romance (e.g., imaginary worlds, creatures, heroes). Though often considered a sub-category of science fiction, fantasy literature usually doesn't involve the concern with modern

science and technology that distinguishes true SF. Example: Tolkein's Lord of the Rings.

Farce: a comedy that makes extensive use of improbable plot complications, zany characters, and slapstick humor. Examples: films by the Marx brothers and the Three Stooges; George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's You Can't Take It with You.

Form: metaphorically, the "container" or "mold" of a work of art, as opposed to its material or contents; hence any of the structural patterns or organizing principles that underlie and shape a work. Forms can be traditional and very rigid and specific--e.g., the sonnet in poetry, the sonata in classical music--or vague and flexible, as in most modern works.

Free Verse: poetry without any fixed pattern of meter, rhythm, or rhyme, but which instead exhibits its own natural

rhythms, sound patterns, and seemingly arbitrary principles of form. Example: most of the poems in Leaves of Grass.

Genre: a collective grouping or general category of literary works; a large class or group that consists of individual works of literature that share common attributes (e.g., similar themes, characters, plots, or styles). Examples: drama, epic, lyric poem, novel, etc.

Iambic pentameter: popular English verse form consisting of five metrical feet--with each foot consisting of an iamb (i.e., an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable: daDUM). Rhymed pairs of iambic pentameter are called heroic couplets (a form associated with Chaucer and Pope). Unrhymed iambic pentameter is called blank verse (a form associated with Shakespeare and Milton).

Image: a word or phrase in a literary text that appeals directly to the reader's taste, touch, hearing, sight, or smell. An image is thus any vivid or picturesque phrase that evokes

a particular sensation in the reader's mind. Example: Whitman's "vapor-pennants" and evocations of "golden brass" and "silvery steel" in "To a Locomotive in Winter"; Bryant's "lone lakes" and "autumn blaze" in "To an American Painter. . . ."

Irony: originally a deceptive form of understatement (from the Greek eiron, a stock comic character who typically equivocated, misled his listeners, or concealed complex meanings behind seemingly simple words); hence an attribute of statements in which the meaning is different or more complicated than it seems. A subtle form of sarcasm, verbal irony is a rhetorical device in which the speaker either severely understates his point or means the opposite of what he says (as when a guest politely describes a host's unimpressive wine as "nicely chilled" or a conspicuously dull person is described as "not a likely Mensa candidate." Dramatic irony arises in situations where two or more individuals have different levels of understanding or

different points of view. More specifically, it occurs when the audience or certain characters in a play know something that another character does not--as when Oedipus, ignorant that he himself is the person he seeks, vows to track down Laius's killer.

Lyric: a short, highly formal, song-like poem, usually passionate and confessional, often about love; a song expressing a private mood or an intense personal feeling. The sonnet and the ode are two specific types of lyric.

Melodrama: a film or literary work marked by "good guys" vs. "bad guys," unexpected plot twists, surprise endings, action and suspense. Examples: Most horror movies and detective thrillers.

Meter: the expected pattern or theoretical number and distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of verse of a given type. For example, in iambic pentameter the

prescribed pattern is da DUM, da DUM, da DUM, da DUM, da DUM--five iambs.(See Rhythm.)

Mock epic: a long narrative poem that lightly parodies or mimics the conventions of classical epic. Whitman's elaborate "invocation" of a muse in "Song of the Exposition" is a mock-epic device.

Modernism: European and American literary and artistic movement that arose and flourished during the first half of the twentieth century. Modernism can be understood as in large part an avant-garde reaction to mass culture and to middle-class Victorian values and tastes. Its techniques and aesthetic principles are illustrated in the works of Picasso, Stravinsky, Klee, Proust, Joyce, Eliot, Faulkner, and others.

Neo-classicism: eighteenth-century literary and artistic movement dedicated to the recovery and imitation of

classical (i.e., Greek and Roman) styles and models. Neo-classical architectural principles are evident in most of the federal government buildings in Washington, D.C. Joel Barlow's Columbiad (1807--a fulsome poetical extravagance widely admired in its time but seldom read or even mentioned today) is an example of neo-classical epic.

Novel: a long fictional narrative in prose, usually about the experiences of a central character. Examples, Dickens's David Copperfield, Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment, Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury.

Ode: a classical lyric form, typically of medium length with complex stanzas and ornate prosodic effects. Ancient odes were usually written to commemorate ceremonial occasions such as anniversaries or funerals. The Romantic poets wrote odes in celebration of art, nature, or exalted states of mind.

Onomatopoeia: literally "name poetry"; in verse, the use of words (e.g., clank, buzz, hiss, etc.) that imitate natural sounds. Example, Shakespeare, The Taming of the Shrew: "Have I not in a pitched battle heard/ Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?"

Parody: a literary or artistic work that mimics in an absurd of ridiculous way the conventions and style of another work. Also known as travesty, lampoon, or burlesque. Twain's Connecticut Yankee is in part a parody of Mallory's Morte d'Arthur. Vonnegut's Cat's Cradle parodies everything from calypso lyrics and commercial advertising to detective fiction and Moby Dick.

Pastoralism: a cultural outlook that values (or at least sympathizes with) the disciplines and routines of rural living over those of urban life. In pastoral literature the author typically adopts the perspective of a country dweller in order to expose the numerous shams, absurdities, and nuisances of life in the city or the court. Examples of traditional pastoral

include Virgil's Eclogues and Spenser's The Shepherd's Calendar. Pastoral elements can also be found in Walden and "Leaves of Grass."

Plot: in narrative or dramatic works the sequence of events or episodes that link up to provide a sense of unified action.

Post-modernism: catch-phrase or jargon term used extensively in film and literary studies to identify certain trends in contemporary media and fiction. Post-modernist works tend to be highly self-referential and are typically saturated with irony and allusion. Such works also tend to subvert traditional models of unity and coherence and instead try to capture the sense of discontinuity and apparent chaos characteristic of the electronic age.

Post-modernism is typically associated with writers like William Gaddis, Thomas Pynchon, and John Barth, with

film-makers like David Lynch and Quentin Tarantino, and with so-called deconstructionist forms of criticism.

Prosody: the technical analysis of all the sound elements (e.g., rhythm, alliteration, rhyme) in poetry or speech.

Rhyme: the use of the same or similar sounds either internally or at the ends of lines in order to produce an audible echo effect; when this effect is regularly repeated over the course of a poem or stanza and obeys a precise and predictable formal pattern, it is called a rhyme scheme. To avoid rhyming notes that are too blatant or insistent, modern poets sometimes use near rhyme (e.g., bald, cold; brim, stream), which produces a subtler musical effect.

Rhythm: in prosody, the actual number and distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of verse of a given type when it is naturally spoken. (As

opposed to the ideal or theoretical number and distribution as specified by the metrical form.) (See Meter.)

Romance: a literary genre typically involving fantastic or perilous adventures. Medieval verse romances were usually about knights and ladies, sorcerers and dragons, daring deeds, and secret love. Example: the tales of King Arthur and his knights.

Romanticism: an intellectual and artistic movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Originating in Europe, where it was associated with Rousseau, Wordsworth, Goethe, and other artists and philosophers, the influence of Romanticism eventually spread to America, where it found adherents in figures like Bryant, Emerson, and Thoreau. Valuing imagination over intellect, passion over reason, and artistic self-expression over reverence for tradition, the Romantics reacted to what they viewed as the excessive rationalism and classicism of the European Enlightenment.

Satire: a genre or mode that exposes and ridicules human vice and folly. Its characters are usually braggarts, bullies, shady tricksters, and scalawags--often detestible and seldom commendable or sympathetic. Examples: Swift's Gulliver's Travels; Orwell's Animal Farm.

Science fiction: prose fiction usually set in the future or in some remote region of the universe; often adapts the characters of conventions of ancient myth or medieval romance to the modern age of science and technology. Example: Jules Verne, Twenty Thousand Leagues Beneath the Sea; H.G. Wells, The Time Machine.

Sonnet: a lyric form consisting of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter (usually divided into an eight-line octave and a six-line sestet) and exhibiting a regular rhyme scheme. Example: Bryant's "Sonnet--To an American Painter Departing for Europe."

Symbol: an object, sign, or image that is used to stand for something else, as a flag may be used to symbolize a nation. Whitman uses the hermit-thrush as a symbol of American poetry; Henry Adams uses the dynamo as a symbol of vast, inhuman power.

Symbolism: the systematic use of recurrent symbols or images in a work to create an added level of meaning. Example: most of the characters and incidents in Melville's Moby Dick can be interpreted symbolically. Similarly, the raft, the river, the towns, and "the territory" combine to provide a pattern of symbolic meaning in Twain's Huckleberry Finn.

Theme: a controlling idea or a subject for philosophical reflection in a literary work. Themes can be mythical and archetypal (e.g., the fall of man, symbolic death and rebirth, a quest for knowledge) or moral and psychological (passion vs. reason, the futility of anger, the vanity of selfishness, the need for love, etc.). Thus the same

themes can be found in works by different authors in different eras in a variety of genres and styles.

Tragedy: drama or film portraying the doomed struggle and eventual downfall of an admirable but flawed hero. Usually about powerful leaders or extraordinary individuals torn between opposing goals or difficult choices. Examples: Sophocles, Oedipus the King; Shakespeare, Hamlet.

Tragicomedy: drama or film in which the serious actions, harsh truths, and threatening situations of tragedy are combined with the lighter tone and generally happy conclusions of comedy. Example: Shakespeare, Measure for Measure; M. Nichols, Carnal Knowledge.

Utopian literature: prose fiction which aims at a richly detailed and generally realistic depiction of an ideal society or alternative world. Strictly speaking, utopian literature depicts attractive alternatives; whereas dystopian

literature presents nightmarish or hellish visions of the future. Examples: Huxley, Brave New World; Orwell, 1984.

PRACTICE CRITICISM

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;

Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou growest:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Summary: Sonnet 18

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Translate Shakespeare's words into moden

English language:

1- Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

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2- Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

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3- Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

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4- And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

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5-Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

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6- And often is his gold complexion dimm’d;

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7- And every fair from fair sometime declines,

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8-By chance or nature’s changing course untrimm’d;

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9-But thy eternal summer shall not fade

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10-Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;

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11- Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade,

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12- When in eternal lines to time thou growest:

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13- So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

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14- So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

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Historical/Biographical Approach

Give a biography on William Shakespeare

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Give a historical background of the poet and his Renaissance Age

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How does the poem, “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” reflect the author’s time and biography

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2. Moral /Philosophical Approach

In this sonnet, Shakespeare asserts the importance of art to immortalize and register love and beauty more than any thing else can do.

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His philosopy that art is immortal, unforgettable and eternal this is clear in line .. when he says,

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3. Formalism / New criticism

Form of the poem

Figure of speech	Line	Explanation
Simile		
metaphor		
Image		
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Rhyme scheme		
Rhythm		

Tension		
Intentional Fallacy		
Affective fallacy		

4. Psychological Approach

<u>Jungian Approach</u>

Apply Anima/Animus theory on the poem

Image of the man and image of the woman in the poem

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5. Mythological/Archetypal approach

Collect in the poem a collection of symbols, images, characters, and motifs that led to a special response in the readers

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6. Feminist Approach

From a feminist stage how do you see the image of the woman by Shakespeare? Justify your answer.

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II

THE NECKLACE

Short Story by

Guy de Maupassant

She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as if by an error of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of becoming known, understood, loved or wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and so she let herself be married to a minor official at the Ministry of Education.

She dressed plainly because she had never been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy. Women don't belong to a caste or class; their beauty, grace, and natural charm take the place of birth and family. Natural delicacy, instinctive elegance and a quick wit determine their place in society, and make the daughters of commoners the equals of the very finest ladies.

She suffered endlessly, feeling she was entitled to all the delicacies and luxuries of life. She suffered because of the poorness of her house as she looked at the dirty walls, the worn-out chairs and the ugly curtains. All these things that another woman of her class would not even have noticed, tormented her and made her resentful. The sight of the little Brenton girl who did her housework filled her with terrible regrets and hopeless fantasies. She dreamed of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestries, lit from above by torches in bronze holders, while two tall footmen in knee-length breeches napped in huge armchairs, sleepy from the stove's oppressive warmth. She dreamed of vast living rooms furnished in rare old silks, elegant furniture loaded with priceless ornaments, and inviting smaller rooms, perfumed, made for afternoon chats with close friends - famous, sought after men, who all women envy and desire.

When she sat down to dinner at a round table covered with a three-day-old cloth opposite her husband who, lifting the lid off the soup, shouted excitedly, "Ah! Beef stew! What could be better," she dreamed of fine dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestries which peopled the walls with figures from another time and strange birds in fairy forests; she dreamed of delicious dishes served on wonderful plates, of whispered gallantries listened to with an inscrutable smile as one ate the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

< 2 **>**

She had no dresses, no jewels, nothing; and these were the only things she loved. She felt she was made for them alone. She wanted so much to charm, to be envied, to be desired and sought after.

She had a rich friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, whom she no longer wanted to visit because she suffered so much when she came home. For whole days afterwards she would weep with sorrow, regret, despair and misery.

*

One evening her husband came home with an air of triumph, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Look," he said, "here's something for you."

She tore open the paper and drew out a card, on which was printed the words:

"The Minister of Education and Mme. Georges Rampouneau request the pleasure of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the Ministry, on the evening of Monday January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table resentfully, and muttered:

"What do you want me to do with that?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go out, and it will be such a lovely occasion! I had awful trouble getting it. Every one wants to go; it is very exclusive, and they're not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole ministry will be there."

She stared at him angrily, and said, impatiently:

"And what do you expect me to wear if I go?"

He hadn't thought of that. He stammered:

"Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It seems very nice to me ..."

He stopped, stunned, distressed to see his wife crying. Two large tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth. He stuttered:

< 3 >

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

With great effort she overcame her grief and replied in a calm voice, as she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no dress and so I can't go to this party. Give your invitation to a friend whose wife has better clothes than I do."

He was distraught, but tried again:

"Let's see, Mathilde. How much would a suitable dress cost, one which you could use again on other occasions, something very simple?"

She thought for a moment, computing the cost, and also wondering what amount she could ask for without an immediate refusal and an alarmed exclamation from the thrifty clerk.

At last she answered hesitantly:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could do it with four hundred *francs*."

He turned a little pale, because he had been saving that exact amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a hunting trip the following summer, in the country near Nanterre, with a few friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

However, he said:

"Very well, I can give you four hundred *francs*. But try and get a really beautiful dress."

*

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, restless, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. One evening her husband said to her:

"What's the matter? You've been acting strange these last three days."

She replied: "I'm upset that I have no jewels, not a single stone to wear. I will look cheap. I would almost rather not go to the party."

"You could wear flowers, " he said, "They are very fashionable at this time of year. For ten *francs* you could get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there is nothing more humiliating than looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" her husband cried. "Go and see your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough for that."

She uttered a cry of joy.

"Of course. I had not thought of that."

The next day she went to her friend's house and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to her mirrored wardrobe, took out a large box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Madame Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

First she saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a gold Venetian cross set with precious stones, of exquisite craftsmanship. She tried on the jewelry in the mirror, hesitated, could not bear to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"You have nothing else?"

"Why, yes. But I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with uncontrolled desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her neck, over her high-necked dress, and stood lost in ecstasy as she looked at herself.

Then she asked anxiously, hesitating:

"Would you lend me this, just this?"

"Why, yes, of course."

She threw her arms around her friend's neck, embraced her rapturously, then fled with her treasure.

*

The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was prettier than all the other women, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy. All the men stared at her, asked her name, tried to be introduced. All the cabinet officials wanted to waltz with her. The minister noticed her.

< 5 >

She danced wildly, with passion, drunk on pleasure, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness, made up of all this respect, all this admiration, all these awakened desires, of that sense of triumph that is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She left at about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been dozing since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a good time.

He threw over her shoulders the clothes he had brought for her to go outside in, the modest clothes of an ordinary life, whose poverty contrasted sharply with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wanted to run away, so she wouldn't be noticed by the other women who were wrapping themselves in expensive furs.

Loisel held her back.

"Wait a moment, you'll catch a cold outside. I'll go and find a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and ran down the stairs. When they were finally in the street, they could

not find a cab, and began to look for one, shouting at the cabmen they saw passing in the distance.

They walked down toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those old night cabs that one sees in Paris only after dark, as if they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day.

They were dropped off at their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly walked up the steps to their apartment. It was all over, for her. And he was remembering that he had to be back at his office at ten o'clock.

In front of the mirror, she took off the clothes around her shoulders, taking a final look at herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace round her neck!

< 6 **>**

"What is the matter?" asked her husband, already half undressed.

She turned towards him, panic-stricken.

"I have ... I have ... I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace."

He stood up, distraught.

"What! ... how! ... That's impossible!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. But they could not find it.

"Are you sure you still had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes. I touched it in the hall at the Ministry."

"But if you had lost it in the street we would have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes. That's probably it. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you, didn't you notice it?"

"No."

They stared at each other, stunned. At last Loisel put his clothes on again.

"I'm going back," he said, "over the whole route we walked, see if I can find it."

He left. She remained in her ball dress all evening, without the strength to go to bed, sitting on a chair, with no fire, her mind blank.

Her husband returned at about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to the police, to the newspapers to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere the tiniest glimmer of hope led him.

She waited all day, in the same state of blank despair from before this frightful disaster.

Loisel returned in the evening, a hollow, pale figure; he had found nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "tell her you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. It will give us time to look some more."

She wrote as he dictated.

*

At the end of one week they had lost all hope.

And Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must consider how to replace the jewel."

The next day they took the box which had held it, and went to the jeweler whose name they found inside. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold the necklace; I must simply have supplied the case."

And so they went from jeweler to jeweler, looking for an necklace like the other one, consulting their memories, both sick with grief and anguish.

In a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which seemed to be exactly what they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand *francs*. They could have it for thirty-six thousand.

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days. And they made an arrangement that he would take it back for thirty-four thousand *francs* if the other necklace was found before the end of February.

Loisel had eighteen thousand *francs* which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

And he did borrow, asking for a thousand *francs* from one man, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, made ruinous agreements, dealt with usurers, with every type of money-lender. He compromised the rest of his life, risked signing notes without knowing if he could ever honor them, and, terrified by the anguish still to come, by the black misery about to fall on him, by the prospect of every physical privation and every moral torture he was about to suffer, he went to

get the new necklace, and laid down on the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand *francs*.

When Madame Loisel took the necklace back, Madame Forestier said coldly:

"You should have returned it sooner, I might have needed it."

< 8 **>**

To the relief of her friend, she did not open the case. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she have taken her friend for a thief?

*

From then on, Madame Loisel knew the horrible life of the very poor. But she played her part heroically. The dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know the drudgery of housework, the odious labors of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, staining her rosy nails on greasy pots and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she hung to dry on a line; she carried the garbage down to the street every morning, and carried up the water, stopping at each landing to catch her breath. And, dressed like a commoner, she went to the fruiterer's, the grocer's, the butcher's, her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, fighting over every miserable *sou*.

Each month they had to pay some notes, renew others, get more time.

Her husband worked every evening, doing accounts for a tradesman, and often, late into the night, he sat copying a manuscript at five *sous* a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid off everything, everything, at usurer's rates and with the accumulations of compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become strong, hard and rough like all women of impoverished households. With hair half combed, with skirts awry, and reddened hands, she talked loudly as she washed the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and thought of that evening at the ball so long ago, when she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows, who knows? How strange life is, how fickle! How little is needed for one to be ruined or saved!

< 9 **>**

*

One Sunday, as she was walking in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after the week's work, suddenly she saw a woman walking with a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel felt emotional. Should she speak to her? Yes, of course. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her.

"Good morning, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be addressed so familiarly by this common woman, did not recognize her. She stammered:

"But - madame - I don't know. You must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh! ... my poor Mathilde, how you've changed! ..."

"Yes, I have had some hard times since I last saw you, and many miseries ... and all because of you! ..."

"Me? How can that be?"

"You remember that diamond necklace that you lent me to wear to the Ministry party?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. It wasn't easy for us, we had very little. But at last it is over, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier was stunned.

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes; you didn't notice then? They were very similar."

And she smiled with proud and innocent pleasure.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

< 10 >

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Mine was an imitation! It was worth five hundred *francs* at most! ..."

A Feminist Critique

ittle girls are told tales of Cinderella, Snow White and other princesses from an early age. The origin of these stories are difficult to trace due to retellings through generations. The

details may change but major themes persist. One of the most common is an impoverished but beautiful young woman who meets good fortune through happenstance. These girls never use hard work to advance in life but rely on marriage to improve their social status. Their prince is rich, smart and good looking. He exists only to sweep the damsel in distress away from her tragic situation. These stories have become part of our narrative with comparisons in sports to a "cinderella story" or calling daughters "daddy's little princess". Analyzing the classic fairy tale leads to disturbing social norms for women. A woman who takes these stories to heart may never value her own cleverness and mettle.

*"*The Necklace*"* by Guy de Maupassant is a short story about a girl who imagines herself a princess. Feeling she deserves the best, Mathilde Loisel pines over the best dresses and jewelry. Her father is not wealthy and so she missed the coming out at court. This decreases her chance of a good marriage. She views it as a grave injustice as she is "pretty and charming". Mathilde plans on marrying up to increase her social status. Ultimately, she "let herself be married" to a lowly clerk. They settle into a nice existence but still Mathilde wants more. They live on a good street and are fortunate enough to employ a maid. This is not enough

to make Mathilde happy. She covets what others have and dreams of what might have been.

As an adult, Mathilde continues to believe she is the heroine of a fairy tale. While watching her maid scrub the floor, she bemoans her lifestyle. She "suffered ceaselessly" believing her life unfair. Never once does she consider that her life is better than others. When her husband goes to great pains to get tickets for the Ministry ball, she turns into a true diva. Manipulating her husband into giving her as much money as possible for a dress and she then attempts to get more for jewelry. When borrowing jewelry from her friend, her ignorance of jewelry becomes evident. She discards all of Mme. Forestier's best pieces for gaudy costume jewelry. Her happiness at being allowed to take the necklace indicates her ignorance of its true value.

While at the ball, Mathilde dances with anyone who asks and see herself as the belle of the ball, staying until the very end. So enchanted with the extravagance of the evening, she forgets how plain her shawl looks compared to rich furs. In her embarrassment, she rushes out into the cold night just as Cinderella did at midnight. Her husband pleads with her to wait inside because he knows they will have a difficult time obtaining a cab. Her haste results in them

walking quite a distance and into a poorer neighborhood. She tells her husband at one point that there is “nothing more humiliating that to look poor among other women who are rich”.

When they finally return home, Mathilde despondently scrutinizes her living situation. Before getting ready for bed, she attempts to cement the vision of herself in her memory. When looking in the mirror, she realizes the necklace is gone. Her poor husband runs out and retraces their steps. When he cannot find it, he posts an ad in the paper and tells Mathilde to concoct a story for her friend. Mathilde follows his advice, having done nothing to find it herself. A more honorable woman would discuss the situation with her friend. Mathilde feeling shame at needing to borrow it in the first place, prefers to secretly make things right. The Loisels run around town trying to determine the necklace’s value so they can replace it.

It takes ten years to earn the money spent on replacing that necklace — ten years of scrubbing her own floors, bargaining for produce and her husband working ceaselessly. The years are hard on Mathilde Louisel yet she is happier than ever before. Her hands are no longer soft and her face has aged, but she faced those years with “heroism”.

During a walk in the park Mathilde comes across Mme. Forestier by chance. She confesses the entire story of the necklace to explain her appearance. Mme. Forestier is horrified by her friend's change and at the reason given by Mme. Loisel. All those years, all the money paid for the necklace and the loans was for naught. Mme. Forestier describes the true value of that necklace as "paste. It was worth at most five hundred francs!".

Many stories have been written highlighting the problems within fairytales. "The Necklace" is almost a reverse Cinderella. Other stories such as "Cinder Edna" illustrate the potential paths a girl can take without relying on a prince charming. The majority of society places too much value on looks and monetary wealth. At a very early age girls learn how to look cute and smile pretty for bargaining. Patriarical societies place great value on the rags to riches narrative. The message is if you are pretty and lucky a prince will find and rescue you. Women should therefore, do their father's bidding and worry only about their physical beauty. Once the prince arrives, the father hands the girl off and they ride off into the sunset and live happily ever after. Fostering this expectation undermines a woman's intellect, sense of self and ability to stand on her own. As Mathilde

learns, women are capable of anything if they leave the fairy tale nonsense behind.

Seeking my place in the world, questing for understanding, and forever pushing the boundaries on what is possible. Writing makes me happy.

YOU DO

- **As the same previous feminist critique, discuss "The Necklace" from a historical, psychological, archetypical approach**
- **Discuss Surprise and Mystery in "The Necklace"**
- **Discuss Irony in the short story**

QUIZZ 1

Question 1.
How much was the necklace actually worth?
(a) forty thousand
(b) thirty six thousand
(c) five hundred
(d) none of the above

Question 2.
Did her friend recognise her years later?
(a) yes
(b) no
(c) they did not bump into each other

(d) none of the above

(Question 3.
What all did they do to repay?
(a) sent away the maid
(b) change their lodgings
(c) husband working the evenings and nights too
(d) all of these

Question 4.
What did they do to buy themselves time?
(a) stopped answering the friend's calls
(b) wrote to her that the jewel needs repair
(c) distracted her from the necklace
(d) none of the above

Question 5.
Why did she utter a cry?
(a) seeing other ladies wrapping themselves in fur
(b) poverty
(c) the jewels were not to be seen when she reached home
(d) none of the above

Question 6.
How did she look on the day of the ball?
(a) elegant
(b) gracious

(c) full of joy
(d) all of these

Question 7.
What solution did her husband come up with?
(a) helping her find a dress
(b) telling her to wear natural flowers in the name of jewels
(c) he didn't suggest anything
(d) none of the above

Question 8.
Did he agree to give her that money?
(a) yes
(b) no
(c) maybe
(d) none of the above

Question 9.
What did his face look like upon hearing the amount her wife asked from him?
(a) pale
(b) fine
(c) unbothered
(d) none of the above

Question 10.
Why did she throw away the letter?
(a) she had nothing to weak
(b) she had no jewellery to carry
(c) she had no bag to carry
(d) both A and B

Question 11.
How did the husband expect her to react on handing her the letter?
(a) happy
(b) sad

(c) jealous
(d) none of the above

Question 12.
When would she weep for whole days?
(a) after dinner
(b) after lunch
(c) after visiting her friend
(d) any time

Question 13.
What tortured and angered her?
(a) shabby walls
(b) worn chairs
(c) poverty
(d) all of these

Question 14.
What does she think she deserves?
(a) suffering
(b) luxury
(c) delicacies
(d) both 2 and 3

Question 15.
She was born into a family of _____.
(a) Scientists
(b) doctors
(c) engineers
(d) clerks

Question 16.
Who is the writer of the lesson 'The Necklace'?
(a) Robert W. Peterson
(b) Guy de Maupassant
(c) Sinclair Lewis
(d) K.A. Abbas

Question 17.
What was the actual cost of Mme Forestier's necklace?
(a) five hundred francs
(b) ten thousand francs
(c) one hundred francs
(d) five thousand francs

Question 18.
How did the loan affect Mrs Loisel's life?
(a) she learned the odious work of a kitchen
(b) she washed the dishes
(c) she took down the refuse to the street
(d) all of the above

Question 19.
How much Loisels had to spend to replace the necklace?
(a) eighteen thousand francs
(b) thirty-six thousand francs
(c) forty thousand francs
(d) fifty thousand francs

Question 20.
What spoiled Mr and Mrs Loisel pleasure?
(a) the loss of necklace
(b) the loss of the dress
(c) the loss of money
(d) all of the above

Question 21.
Matilda always remained :
(a) happy
(b) unhappy
(c) contended
(d) delighted

Question 22.
What did Mrs Loisel borrow from Mme Forestier?
(a) a bracelet
(b) a necklace

(c) a Venetian Cross
(d) all of the above

Question 23.
For what had Loisel saved four hundred francs?
(a) to buy a gun
(b) to buy a T.V.
(c) to buy a shirt
(d) to buy a bicycle

Question 24.
How did Loisel feel on receiving the invitation?
(a) sad'
(b) elated
(c) puzzled
(d) surprised

Question 25.
Whom was Matilda married to?
(a) a petty clerk
(b) a minister
(c) an officer
(d) a businessma

Question 26.
Matilda was born into a family of :
(a) ministers
(b) officers
(c) clerks
(d) shopkeepers