6. What does the work suggest about women's creativity? In order to answer this question, biographical data about the author and historical data about the culture in which she lived will be required.
7. What might an examination of the author's style contribute to the ongoing efforts to delineate a specifically feminine form of writing (for example, *écriture féminine*)?
8. What role does the work play in terms of women's literary history and literary tra

TYSON, LOIS. CRITICAL THEORY TODAY: A USER-FRIENDLY GUIDE. NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 2006. PRINT.

Depending or any combina-
tion of thes estion not listed
here. These literary works in
productive f ics will interpret
the same wo minist concepts.
As in every to use feminist
theory to he some important
ideas they il deeply without
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us to our ow agendas.

The followi *Gatsby* is offered
as an exam might yield. It
focuses on w led through the
text's charac hich should be
fairly easy fo he novel's patri-
archal ideology in terms of the changing role of American women during the 1920s because most feminists have come to realize the importance of seeing how specific historical circumstances foster particular ideologies. The historical component of my argument is not complex, however, but rather draws on historical information with which most of you are probably somewhat familiar.

"... next they'll throw everything overboard ...": a feminist reading of *The Great Gatsby*

In a sudden panic over his discovery that his wife has taken a lover, Tom Buchanan, from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), exclaims, "Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white" (137; ch. 7). In addition to Tom's double standard for his own and his wife's behavior (as well as his racism), this statement reveals Tom's assumptions that the moral structure of society rests on the stability of the patriarchal family and that the stability of the patriarchal family rests on the conformity of women to patriarchal gender roles. Of course, through the vehicle of Nick Carraway's narration, the novel clearly ridicules Tom's position: "Flushed with his impassioned gibberish," Nick observes, "[Tom] saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization" (137; ch. 7). Nevertheless, I think it can be shown that *The Great Gatsby* also shares Tom's view of patriarchal gender roles.

The novel was written and is set in the decade following World War I, which ended in November 1918. The Roaring Twenties, or the Jazz Age, a term coined by Fitzgerald, was a period of enormous social change in America, especially in the area of women's rights. Before World War I, American women did not enjoy universal suffrage. In 1920, two years after the end of the war (and after seventy-two years of organized political agitation), they were finally given the vote. Before the war, standard dress for women included long skirts, tightly laced corsets, high-buttoned shoes, and long hair demurely swept up onto the head. A few years after the war, skirts became shorter (in some cases, much shorter), laced corsets began to disappear (indeed, the most bold and unconventional young women wore few, if any, restraining undergarments), modern footwear frequently replaced high-buttoned shoes, and "bobbed" hair (cut short and worn loosely) became the fashion for young women.

Perhaps most alarming for proponents of the old ways, women's behavior began to change. Women could now be seen smoking and drinking (despite Prohibition), often in the company of men and without chaperones. They could also be seen enjoying the sometimes raucous nightlife offered at nightclubs and private parties. Even the new dances of the era, which seemed wild and overtly sexual to many, bespoke an attitude of free self-expression and unrestrained enjoyment. In other words, as we often see during times of social change, a "New Woman" emerged in the 1920s. And, again as usual, her appearance on the scene evoked a good deal of negative reaction from conservative members of society, both male and female, who felt, as they generally do at these times, that women's rejection of any aspect of their traditional role inevitably results in the destruction of the family and the moral decline of society as a whole.

This view of women as the standard-bearers of traditional values, whose presence as nonwage-earning supervisors of hearth and home was deemed necessary to maintain the moral structure of society, became the dominant patriarchal ideology of the industrialized nineteenth century as the home ceased to be the place where the family worked together to earn their living and men went off to earn the family bread at various occupations in the towns. That is, as woman's economic role in the home disappeared, a spiritualized domestic role was created for her in order to keep her, among other things, from competing with men on the job market. Thus, although most Americans believed the survival of America's moral structure depended on traditional gender roles, it was really the nation's economic structure, which gave economic dominance to men, that depended upon the axiom "a woman's place is in the home." Of course, another advantage of keeping women at home, modestly dressed and quietly behaved, was that it reaffirmed men's ownership of women's sexual and reproductive capacities. The threat posed by the New Woman of the 1920s, then, had repercussions on many levels of public consciousness.

Literary works often reflect the ideological conflicts of their culture, whether or not it is their intention to do so, because, like the rest of us, authors are influenced by the ideological tenor of the times. Even a writer like F. Scott Fitzgerald, who cut a dashing figure among the avant-garde social set of the 1920s and who was himself married to a New Woman, was subject to the ideological conflicts that characterized his age. One might speculate that it was precisely his experience of "life in the fast lane" that created some (conscious or unconscious) misgivings about the changes occurring in America during the 1920s. Or one might speculate that he was able to accept the New Woman only as long as he could view her as psychologically troubled and in need of his help, a situation illustrated in his semi-autobiographical novel *Tender Is the Night* (1934), as well as in his turbulent life with his wife, Zelda. However, it's not my intention to examine Fitzgerald's life but to examine the ways in which *The Great Gatsby*, his most enduring work, embodies its culture's discomfort with the post–World War I New Woman.

We see this discomfort in the novel's representation of its minor female characters, and we see it in more complex ways in the novel's characterizations of main characters Daisy Buchanan, Jordan Baker, and Myrtle Wilson, who, despite their numerous differences, are all versions of the New Woman. We can assume that Nick's descriptions of these characters represent the novel's ideological biases, and not merely his own, because the text portrays Nick sympathetically, unlike Tom Buchanan. In addition to the sympathy Nick evokes by the author's use of first-person narration—because we see the narrative events through Nick's eyes, we are able to more or less "walk in his shoes" —Nick also gains our sympathy because he tells his story in a sensitive and engaging manner, sharing with the reader his personal feelings: his desires, dislikes, fears, doubts, and affections. Finally, as the only character who is consistently aware of ethical considerations, Nick functions as the moral center of the novel. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that, whether or not Fitzgerald intended Carraway as a reliable narrator, many readers will be strongly influenced by Nick's perspective.

The novel abounds in minor female characters whose dress and activities identify them as incarnations of the New Woman, and they are portrayed as clones of a single, negative character type: shallow, exhibitionist, revolting, and deceitful. For example, at Gatsby's parties we see insincere, "enthusiastic meetings

between women who never knew each other's names" (44; ch. 3), as well as numerous narcissistic attention-seekers in various stages of drunken hysteria. We meet, for example, a young woman who "dumps" down a cocktail "for courage" and "dances out alone on the canvass to perform" (45; ch. 3); "a rowdy little girl who gave way upon the slightest provocation to uncontrollable laughter" (51; ch. 3); a drunken woman who "was not only singing, she was weeping too," her face lined with "black rivulets" created when her "tears . . . came into contact with her heavily beaded eyelashes" (55–56; ch. 3); a drunken young girl who has her "head stuck in a pool" (113; ch. 6) to stop her from screaming; and two drunken young wives who refuse to leave the party until their husbands, tired of the women's verbal abuse, "lifted [them] kicking into the night" (57; ch. 3). Then there are Benny McClenahan's "four girls":

> They were never quite the same ones in physical person, but they were so identical one with another that it inevitably seemed they had been there before. I have forgotten their names—Jaqueline, I think, or else Consuela, or Gloria or Judy or June, and their last names were either the melodious names of flowers and months or the sterner ones of the great American capitalists whose cousins, if pressed, they would confess themselves to be. (67; ch. 4)

In other words, all of these lookalike women who accompanied McClenahan to Gatsby's parties invented names and biographies for themselves to impress their new acquaintances. We should not be too surprised, then, to hear Nick say, "Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply" (63; ch. 3), implying that women don't seem able to help it: perhaps it's just a natural failing, like so many other feminine weaknesses.

The only minor female characters we get to know a little better, both of whom fit the category of the New Woman, are Mrs. McKee—who is described as "shrill, languid, handsome, and horrible" (34; ch. 2)—and Myrtle's sister, Catherine, who perfectly fits the negative stereotype outlined above. The novel gives Catherine a good deal of attention for such a minor character, perhaps because she has been chosen to represent the physical unattractiveness of her type, which is only hinted at in the descriptions of the other minor female characters.

> The sister . . . was a slender, worldly girl of about thirty with a solid sticky bob of red hair and a complexion powdered milky white. Her eyebrows had been plucked and then drawn on again at a more rakish angle but the efforts of nature toward the restoration of the old alignment gave a blurred air to her face. When she moved about there was an incessant clicking as innumerable pottery bracelets jingled up and down upon her arms. She came in with such proprietary haste and looked around so possessively at the furniture that I wondered if she lived here. But when I asked her she laughed immoderately, repeated my question aloud, and told me she lived with a girl friend at a hotel. (34; ch. 2)

This is the description of a rather revolting, loud, vulgar young woman whose opening words to Nick are an obvious lie. And Catherine fulfills the expectations such a description raises by the vulgar nature of her conversation with Nick concerning Myrtle and her "sweetie" (39; ch. 2) and by her claim that she doesn't drink, which we learn is a lie when she turns up drunk at George Wilson's garage the night of Myrtle's death. Her vulgarity, as well as her foolishness, is further revealed in her description of her and her girlfriend's experience in Monte Carlo: "We had over twelve hundred dollars when we started but we got gypped out of it all in two days in the private rooms. We had an awful time getting back, I can tell you. God, how I hated that town!" (38; ch. 2).

One could argue that the novel's bias here is not sexist, but classist, for all the women described above belong to the lower socioeconomic strata of society. However, there are several male characters from these same strata who are described sympathetically. For example, George Wilson is portrayed as a simple, hardworking man who, despite his other limitations, is devoted to his wife. Mr. Michaelis, who owns a coffee shop in the "valley of ashes" (27; ch.2), is kind to George and tries to take care of him after Myrtle's death. And even the two party-going husbands mentioned earlier, themselves sober, tolerate their wives' drunken abuse with admirable patience. Thus it is these women's violation of patriarchal gender roles, not their socioeconomic class, that elicits the novel's condemnation.

The novel's discomfort with the New Woman becomes evident, in a more complex fashion, in the characterizations of main characters Daisy Buchanan, Jordan Baker, and Myrtle Wilson. Despite their striking differences in class, occupation, marital status, personal appearance, and personality traits, these three characters are all versions of the New Woman. Like the minor female characters who embody the New Woman in appearance and social freedom, Daisy, Jordan, and Myrtle look and act the part. Their hair and clothing are very modern, and they don't feel, as their mothers and grandmothers surely did, that they must behave modestly in public by avoiding hard liquor, cigarettes, and immodest dancing. In addition, all three women display a good deal of modern independence. Only two are married, and they don't keep their marital unhappiness a secret, although secrecy about such matters is one of the cardinal rules of patriarchal marriage. Jordan has a career of her own and, on top of that, it's in the male-dominated field of professional golf. They all prefer the excitement of nightlife to the more traditional employments of hearth and home. There is only one child among them, Daisy's daughter, Pammy, and while Pammy is well looked after by her nurse and affectionately treated by her mother, Daisy's life does not revolve exclusively around her maternal role. Finally, all three women violate patriarchal sexual taboos: Jordan engages in premarital sex, and Daisy and Myrtle are engaged in extramarital affairs.

That the novel finds this freedom unacceptable in women is evident in its unsympathetic portrayals of those who exercise it. Daisy Buchanan is characterized as a spoiled brat and a remorseless killer. She is so used to being the center of attention that she can think of no one's needs but her own. Although Myrtle's death is accidental, Daisy doesn't stop the car and try to help the injured woman. On the contrary, she speeds off and lets Gatsby take the blame. (One can't help but wonder if some readers, at least in decades past, have said to themselves, "See what happens when you let a woman get behind the wheel of a car?") Once she learns that Gatsby doesn't come from the same social stratum as herself, she retreats behind the protection of Tom's wealth and power, abandoning her lover to whatever fate awaits him. Indeed, much of our condemnation of Daisy issues from her failure to deserve Gatsby's devotion. Although she lets Gatsby believe she will leave her husband for him, Nick observes during the confrontation scene in the New York hotel room that "[h]er eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she . . . had never, all along, intended doing anything at all" (139; ch. 7). Even her way of speaking is frequently so affected—"I'm p-paralyzed with happiness" (13; ch. 1); "You remind me of a—of a rose, an absolute rose" (19; ch. 1); and "Bles-sed pre-cious. . . . Come to your own mother that loves you" (123; ch. 7)—as to make it difficult to take anything she says seriously. Thus, on top of all her other sins, she's a phony.

Jordan Baker is characterized as a liar and a cheat. Nick catches her lying about having left a borrowed car out in the rain with its top down, and apparently she was caught cheating during a golf tournament, though she managed to get away with it under circumstances that imply the use of bribery or coercion: "The thing approached the proportions of a scandal—then died away. A caddy retracted his statement and the only other witness admitted that he might have been mistaken" (62–63; ch. 3). Like Daisy, Jordan exhibits a lack of concern for others that manifests itself in a refusal to take responsibility for herself, as we see when Nick reports that she drove her car "so close to some workmen that our fender flicked a button on one man's coat" (63; ch. 3). Her response to Nick's admonition that she should drive more carefully or not drive at all is a careless remark that "They'll [other people will] keep out of my way. . . . It takes two to make an accident" (63; ch. 3). When Nick says, "Suppose you met somebody just as careless as yourself" (63; ch. 3), Jordan's manipulativeness is revealed in her response: "I hope I never will. . . . I hate careless people. That's why I like you" (63; ch. 3). And her manipulation works: "for a moment I thought I loved her," Nick admits (63; ch. 3). Of course, the fact that Jordan must cheat to succeed at golf also implies that women can't succeed in a man's field purely on their own ability. And her physical description completes the stereotype that women who invade the male domain are rather masculine: "She was a slender, small-breasted girl with an erect carriage which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet" (15; ch. 1). The word most frequently used to describe her appearance is *jaunty*. In other words, Jordan looks like a boy.

Surely, the most unsympathetic characterization of the three is that of Myrtle Wilson. She's loud, obnoxious, and phony, as we see in her "violently affected" (35; ch. 2) behavior at the party in the small flat Tom keeps for their rendezvous. She cheats on George, who is devoted to her—so she doesn't even have the excuse Daisy has of an unfaithful husband—and she bullies and humiliates him as well. She has neither the youth nor the beauty of Daisy and Jordan: "She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout. . . . Her face . . . contained no facet or gleam of beauty" (29–30; ch. 2). And unlike the other two women, she is overtly sexual: "[S]he carried her surplus flesh sensuously" (29; ch. 2), and "there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering" (30; ch. 2). In addition, she's much more sexually aggressive than Daisy or Jordan. When Tom and Nick show up unexpectedly at Wilson's Garage,

> [s] he smiled slowly and, walking through her husband as if he were a ghost, shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Then she wet her lips and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice:
>
> "Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit down."
>
> "Oh sure," agreed Wilson. . . . A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity—except his wife, who moved close to Tom. (30; ch. 2)

In fact, Myrtle is the only woman in the novel we "see" having sex: when Nick returns to their flat after his errand to buy cigarettes, she and Tom have disappeared into the bedroom and emerge only as the rest of their company begins to arrive. Furthermore, Myrtle's interest in Tom is clearly mercenary. She was first attracted to him by the expensive quality of his clothing, she begins spending his money the instant they meet in town, and she wants him to divorce Daisy and marry her so that she can move out of the garage apartment she's shared with George for the past eleven years.

It is important to note that, in addition to being negatively portrayed (few if any readers find Daisy, Jordan, or Myrtle likeable), in all three cases, these transgressive women are punished by the progression of narrative events. That Daisy gets stuck with Tom in a loveless marriage seems, at that point in the narrative, only right and proper: she doesn't deserve any better, and we can be relatively certain, given Tom's desire for extramarital affairs, that her punishment will fit her crime. Tom will continue to be unfaithful to her just as she has been unfaithful to him and, more important, unfaithful to Gatsby. Jordan is punished when Nick "throw[s] [her] over" (186; ch. 9) during a telephone conversation just before Gatsby's murder. Later, at the end of Nick's farewell visit to Jordan,

he says, "[S]he told me without comment that she was engaged to another man. I doubted that though there were several she could have married at a nod of her head" (185–86; ch. 9). Jordan also tells Nick, during that visit, "I don't give a damn about you now but [being rejected] was a new experience for me and I felt a little dizzy for a while" (186; ch. 9). The way in which Jordan insists she doesn't care merely underscores the fact that she is finally "brought down a peg or two."

The most severe punishment, however, is meted out to the woman who threatens patriarchy the most: Myrtle Wilson. I say she threatens patriarchy the most because she violates patriarchal gender roles so unabashedly and because, despite the powerlessness of her situation as a woman from the lower strata of society, her sexual vitality is portrayed as a form of aggressiveness, a personal power much greater than that of Daisy or Jordan. Her husband all but disappears in her presence, and her "intense vitality" (35; ch. 2) makes her the only thing in the garage to stand out from the "cement color of the walls" into which her husband "mingl[es] immediately" (30; ch. 2). Even as Nick speeds past Wilson's garage on his way to town with Gatsby, he can't help but notice "Mrs. Wilson straining at the garage pump with panting vitality" (72; ch. 4). As Michaelis observes, "Wilson was his wife's man and not his own" (144; ch. 7). Indeed, Michaelis believes "there was not enough of him for his wife" (167; ch. 8). Myrtle even stands up to Tom, insisting that she has a right to "mention Daisy's name": ' "Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!' shouted Mrs. Wilson. 'I'll say it whenever I want to!' " (41; ch. 2).

Her punishment for saying Daisy's name is swift and merciless: "Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand" (41; ch. 2). But Nick quickly trivializes the incident, effectively forestalling any sympathy we might feel for Myrtle. "Then there were bloody towels upon the bathroom floor and women's voices scolding" (41; ch. 2), he reports. Mr. McKee is so unimpressed by the event that he slowly rambles out the door, and Nick follows him, leaving Mrs. McKee "and Catherine scolding and consoling as they stumbled here and there among the crowded furniture with articles of aid" (41–42; ch. 2). In other words, the breaking of Myrtle's nose is no big deal, just another mess for women to clean up, nothing important enough to concern men, and what's more, Myrtle had it coming.

Of course, Tom's abuse of Myrtle is slight in comparison to the novel's punishment of her: as Myrtle flees her husband and attempts to flag down the car she believes carries her lover, she is hit by that car and killed. It is important to note that her death includes sexual mutilation—"when they had torn open her shirtwaist still damp with perspiration they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap" (145; ch. 7)—which underscores the notion that Myrtle's sexual vitality, that is, her aggressiveness, was her real crime. Indeed, the description of her death closes with a reference to her vitality: "The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long" (145; ch. 7). Thus, although Myrtle's misconduct is much less serious than that of Daisy or Jordan—she doesn't, like Daisy, commit vehicular homicide and then let her lover take the blame; and she is not, like Jordan, fundamentally dishonest—her punishment is by far the most severe. Obviously, the novel finds aggressiveness, especially sexual aggressiveness, the most unattractive and unforgivable quality a woman can have. Daisy and Jordan may be "bad girls" from time to time, but Myrtle's sexual aggressiveness makes her a "bad girl" all the time.

The Great Gatsby's discomfort with the post–World War I New Woman, which, I have argued, is responsible for its negative characterizations and punitive treatment of the modern women it portrays, persists in some of the patriarchal ideology still operating in American culture today. Certainly, women are no longer generally condemned for wearing their hair or their skirts short, for dancing wild dances, or for frequenting raucous nightclubs (unless violence is perpetrated against them under these circumstances, in which case they may be blamed for "bringing it on themselves"). But women are still often looked at askance for other violations of patriarchal gender roles, such as opting to have children out of wedlock and raise them on their own, being sexually assertive, being "too" success-oriented on the job, or putting career before marriage and family: all of these behaviors are frequently considered "too aggressive" for women and are often satirized by the television and movie industries. Like Myrtle Wilson, American women today are often punished for what is perceived as their aggressiveness. Indeed, some Americans want to blame women's increased aggressiveness, or at least what is perceived as such, for the increase in crimes of violence against women in this country. At the same time, however, the public doesn't want to admit that women's gender is a factor in the crimes of violence committed against them.

Although, finally, laws have been passed to protect women from sexual harassment on the job, to protect them from sexual abuse and other forms of domestic violence in the home, and to censure rape as a crime of violence rather than tacitly condone it as a crime of passion, public awareness and willingness to support the victims of such mistreatment still lag far behind the legislation. For example, there is the lingering belief that the victim must somehow be responsible: "How low-cut was her dress?" "Did she aggravate her husband before he beat her?" This is called *blaming the victim*: we want to believe that it is women's aggressive or inappropriate or foolish behavior, not their gender, that can get them into trouble. Even the FBI's definitions of crime categories, quoted in my university's pamphlet on campus security, ignores the role of gender in its definition of hate crimes, which it describes as "crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based

on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity" ("Campus Security Information," Grand Valley State University, 1995).

Yet when the women engineering students were lined up against a classroom wall at a Canadian university several years ago and shot by a male intruder, wasn't that a hate crime against women? And when, shortly thereafter, women engineering students at an American university began to receive anonymous threatening letters, wasn't that a hate crime against women? Aren't rape, sexual harassment, and wife-beating hate crimes against women? Yes, of course they are, but they are still not generally recognized as such. In other words, the patriarchal ideology responsible for the oppression of women can't be effectively addressed until there is public as well as legal recognition that it still exists.

I can understand very well the difficulty involved in recognizing patriarchal ideology because I've had difficulty learning to recognize it myself, even when I've been its victim. In the white, working-class household in which I was raised, the emphasis was on economic survival, on issues of class rather than gender. My parents taught me to see the ways in which political leaders, and our social system as a whole, favored the rich and penalized the middle classes, especially the middle-middle and lower-middle classes. While I was very strongly encouraged to go to college and not to feel that marriage was an inevitable goal, my parents nevertheless believed that it would be to my best advantage to be trained as a schoolteacher because the hours and the nature of the work would not interfere with my future duties as a wife and mother should I choose to marry. Perhaps the absence of a focus on gender issues, combined with a very strong focus on other political issues, helped blind me to the operations of patriarchy.

I'm sure, however, that I was also blinded by my own desire to avoid pain: I didn't want to know all the ways in which I was oppressed because I didn't think there was anything I could do about it. So when I was fired from a job after twice turning down a date with my married boss, I simply thought he had no more use for my services. When I didn't receive a job offer from the man whose hand I removed from my left breast during the job interview, I simply felt sorry for whatever poor woman might end up working for him. And when I noticed that one of my professors seemed extremely uncomfortable whenever I approached him and would quickly leave whatever group he was talking with when I came near, it didn't occur to me that it might have something to do with my being the only woman in the graduate program in philosophy at that time or with my being a head taller than he was.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that when I first read *The Great Gatsby* in my early twenties and found the female characters—especially Myrtle—heartless, amoral, and unsympathetic, it didn't occur to me that the novel had a patriarchal agenda. I didn't see any connections between the novel's portrayals of women and the countless sexist portrayals of women I'd seen in the other male-authored works I loved (works I still value highly for different reasons today) because I didn't see how sexist these portrayals really are. The process of "opening my eyes" has been a long and painful one, and it's still in progress. I know from talking with numerous students, friends, and colleagues that my experience has been shared by many women and by some men as well.

Clearly, there is an important connection between our ability to recognize patriarchal ideology and our willingness to experience the pain such knowledge is liable to cause us. Perhaps this is one reason why feminism is still regarded so suspiciously by many women and men today: it holds a mirror not just to our public lives but to our private lives as well, and it asks us to reassess our most personal experiences and our most entrenched and comfortable assumptions. For this reason, works like *The Great Gatsby* can be very helpful to new students of feminist criticism. By helping us learn to see how patriarchal ideology operates in literature, such works can prepare us to direct our feminist vision where we must eventually learn to focus it most clearly: on ourselves.

Questions for further practice: feminist approaches to other literary works

The following questions are intended as models. They can help you use feminist criticism to interpret the literary works to which they refer or other texts of your choice.

1. How does Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) critique patriarchal ideology, specifically as it manifested itself in nineteenth-century marriage and medical practices?
2. How does Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) reflect patriarchal ideology through Marlow's comments about and attitude toward women and through his sexist representations of the numerous minor female characters that populate the novel (including his aunt, Kurtz's intended, the "savage" woman, the native laundress, and the women in black at company headquarters in Europe)? Does the novel invite us to accept or criticize Marlow's sexism? Is the novel even aware of his sexism?
3. How does Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) reveal the ways in which race intersects with gender in creating women's experience? How does the work underscore the importance of sisterhood, of women's community? How might we argue that the novel offers us an example of *écriture féminine*?
4. When Kate Chopin's "The Storm" was written in 1898, it was generally considered unnatural for women to have sexual desire. How does Chopin's story critique this patriarchal belief? What other patriarchal ideology does the story critique? What does the story suggest about the intersection of patriarchy, religion, and socioeconomic class?
5. In what ways might we say that William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1931) plays with traditional gender categories, revealing the biases and limitations of traditional definitions of gender?

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