

English 2201
The Literary Essay
Worksheet #2

Name:

The Eye of the Beholder
by: Aldous Huxley

1 What are the practical results of the modern cult of beauty? The exercises and the massage and the health motors and the skin foods - to what have they led? Are women more beautiful than they were? Do they get something from the enormous expenditure of energy, time and money demanded of them by the beauty cult? These are difficult questions to answer. For the facts seem to contradict themselves. The campaign for more physical beauty seems to be both a tremendous success and a lamentable failure. It depends how you look at the results.

2 It is a success in so far as more women retain their youthful appearance to a greater age than in the past. "Old ladies" are already becoming rare. In a few years we may well believe that they will be extinct. White hair and wrinkles, a bent back and hollow cheeks will come to be regarded as mediievally old-fashioned. The crone of the future will be golden, curly and cherry-lipped, neat-ankled and slender. *The Portrait of the Artists' Mother** will be indistinguishable, at future art gallery shows from the Portrait of the Artists' Daughter. This desirable consummation will be due in part to skin foods and injections of paraffin-wax, facial surgery, mud baths and paint, in part to improve health due in its turn to a more rational mode of life. Ugliness is one of the symptoms of disease, beauty of health. In so far as the campaign for more beauty is also the campaign for more health, it is admirable and, up to a point, genuinely successful. Beauty that is nearly the artificial shadow of these symptoms of health is intrinsically of poorer quality than the genuine article. Still, it is a sufficiently good imitation to be sometimes mistakable for the real thing. The apparatus for making the symptoms of health is now within the reach of every moderately prosperous person; the knowledge of the way in which real health can be achieved is growing, and will in time, no doubt be universally be acted upon. When that happy moment comes, will every woman be beautiful - as beautiful at any rate, as the natural shape of her features with or without surgical and chemical aids permits?

3 The answer is emphatically: No. For real beauty is as much as an affair of the inner as of the outer self. The beauty of a porcelain jar is a matter of shape, of colour, of surface texture. The jar may be empty or tenanted by spiders full of honey or stinking of slime. It makes no difference to the jar's beauty or ugliness. But a woman is alive and her beauty is therefore not skin deep. The surface of the human vessel is affected by the nature of its spiritual contents. I have seen women who by the standards of

connoisseur of porcelain were ravishingly lovely. Their shape, their colour, their surface texture were perfect. And yet they were not beautiful. For the lovely vase was either empty or filled with some corruption. Spiritual emptiness or ugliness shows through. And conversely there is an interior light that can transfigure forms that the pure aesthete would regard as imperfect or downright ugly.

4 There are numerous forms of physiological ugliness. There is an ugliness of stupidity, for an example, of unawareness (distressingly common among pretty women). An ugliness also of greed, of lasciviousness* of avarice*, all the deadly sins, indeed, have their own peculiar negation of beauty. On the pretty faces of those especially who are trying to have a continuous “good time,” one sees very often a kind of bored sullenness that ruins all their charm. I remember in particular two young American girls I once met in North Africa. From the porcelain specialist’s point of view, they were beautiful. But the sullen boredom of which I have spoken was so deeply stamped into their fresh faces their gait and gestures expressed so weary a listlessness that it was unbearable to look at them. These exquisite creatures were positively repulsive.

**Portrait of the Artist’s Mother* - a famous 1871 painting by James McNeill Whistler depicting the side, seated profile of the artist’s middle aged mother dressed in modest attire, typical of the Victorian era

*lasciviousness - given to expressing lust

*avarice - extreme greed for riches

1. Define *tone*. (1 mark) Identify the tone of the essay and explain 2 examples that Huxley uses to create it. (4 marks)

2. Discuss the effectiveness of the final sentence of the essay. (5 marks)

3. What category/type of essay is *The Eye of the Beholder*? (1 mark) Explain your answer through definition and specific examples from the selection. (4 marks)

4. What method of development is used by Huxley here? (1 mark) Explain your answer with reference to the essay (4 marks).

5. Who is the intended audience here? (1 mark) Support your answer with at least 2 specific references from the selection. (4 marks)

6. Define *coherence*. (1 mark) Identify and give specific reference to any two methods of coherence used in this essay. (4 marks)
