

English



Literary Lens

What questions do we ask?

Question → Interpretation



Lesson 1

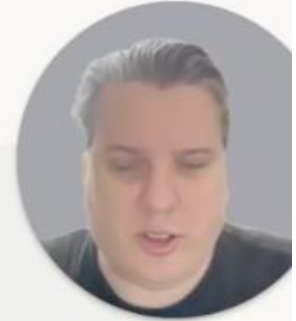
John & Grace

"I can't introduce him. It'll be easier for everybody if he doesn't see us. I'm not ashamed. But it will be easier. It'll be more sensible. It'll only embarrass him to see Grace." By this time he knew he was ashamed, but he felt that his shame was justified, for Grace's father had the smooth, confident manner of a man who had lived all his life among people who were rich and sure of themselves.

Create 10 questions about this text

Literary lens → helps us focus

Five Literary Lenses



- **Formalism** — How does the text create meaning?
- **Psychological Criticism** — What does this reveal about the mind?
- **Marxist Criticism** — How do power and class operate?
- **Feminist Criticism** — Whose experiences are centred, constrained, or overlooked?
- **Reader Response** — How do readers create meaning?

Lesson 2

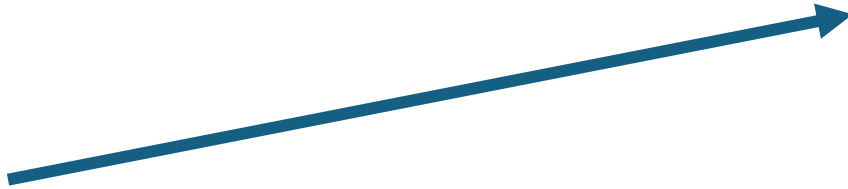
Formalism

Just the text . . . No context!

Can a text be understood without knowing anything about the author?

Start with the author or start with the text?

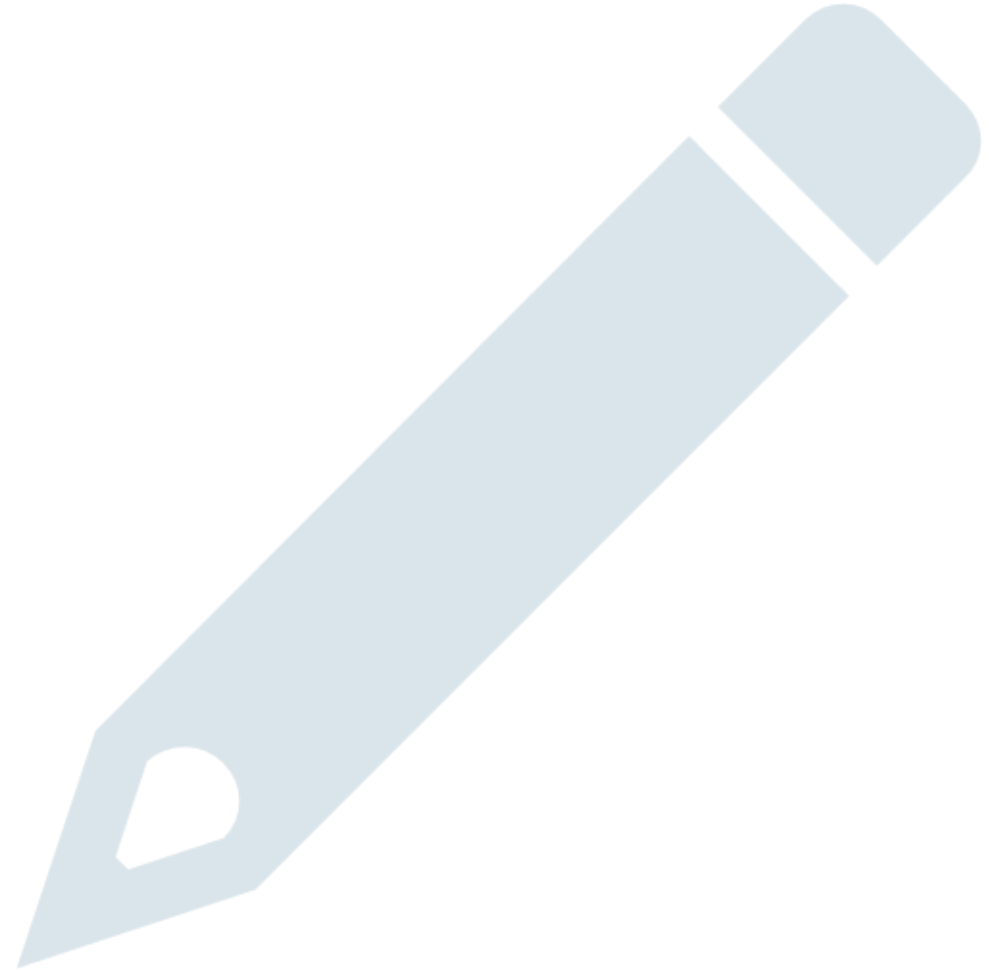
Formalism



Analyze the text → close reading



Lesson 3



Psychological Criticism

Getting into the mind
of the **characters**

Why do they think, feel
and **behave** in a
certain way?



A psychological critic asks:

- **What motivates this character?**
- **What emotions drive these choices?**
- **What fears remain unspoken?**
- **What inner conflict is visible?**

What evidence supports your interpretation?

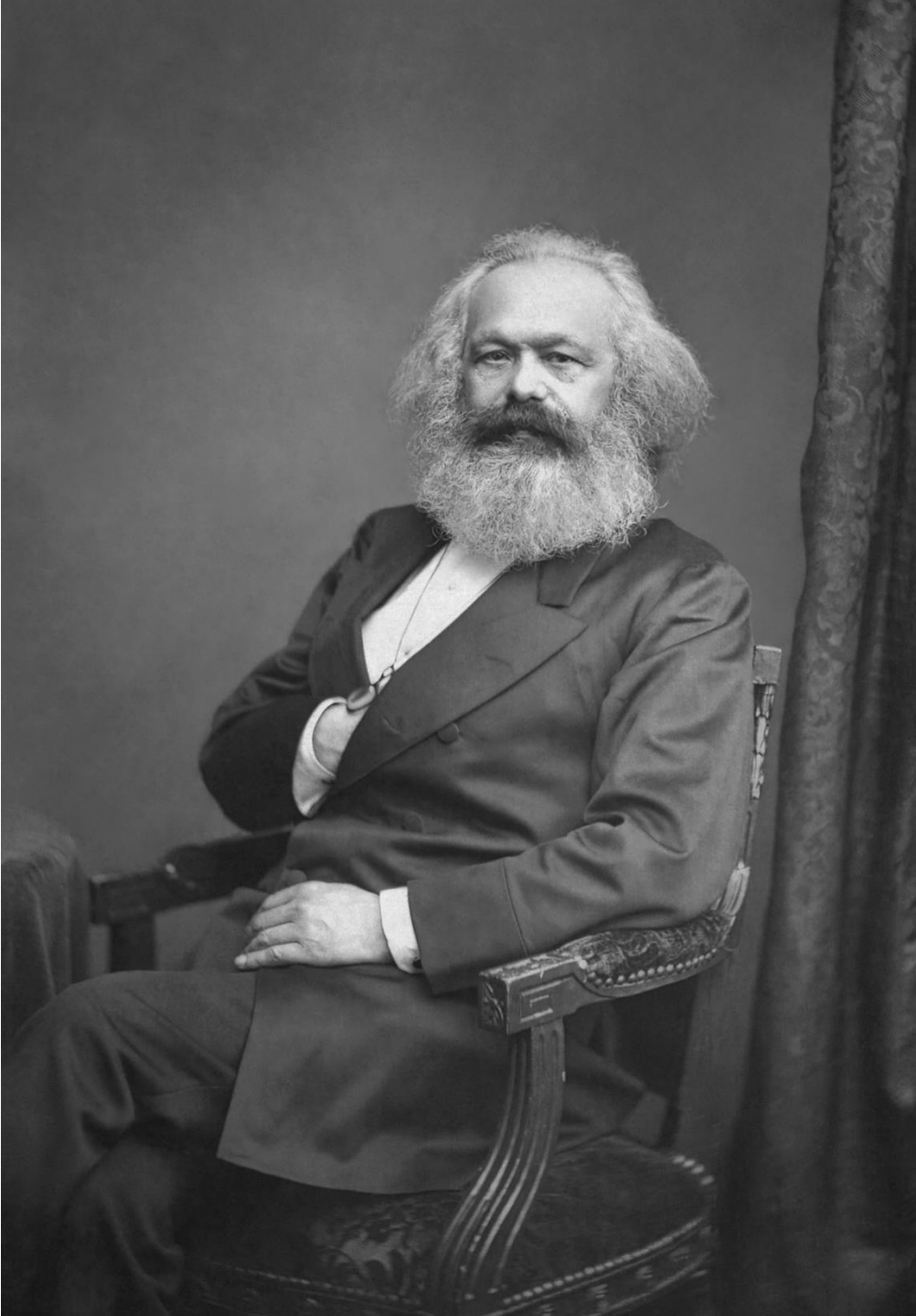


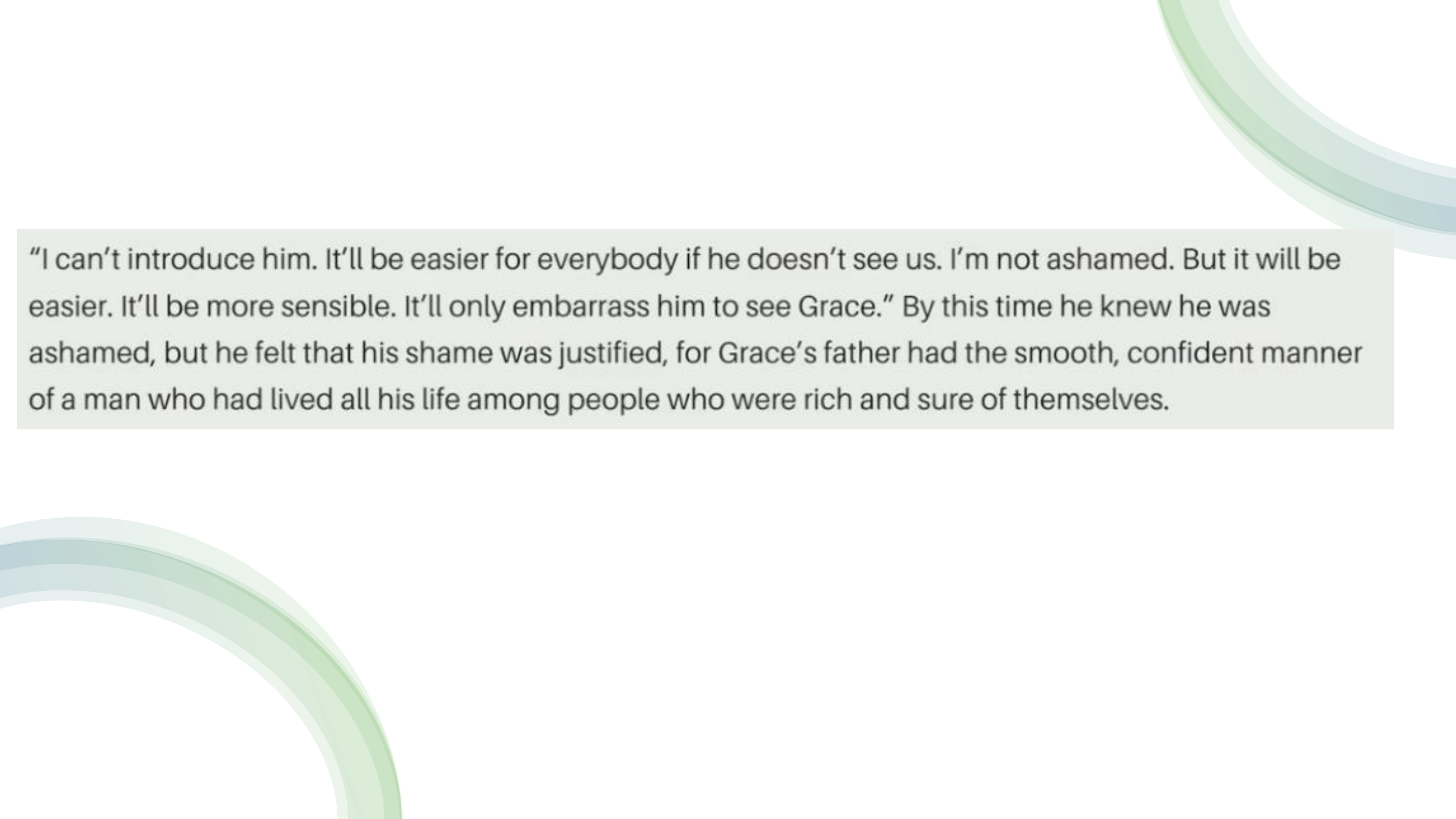
Lesson 4 - Marxist



1818-1883 (Power)

- German Philosopher & economist
- All about **class struggle**
- Capitalism bad
- Communism good



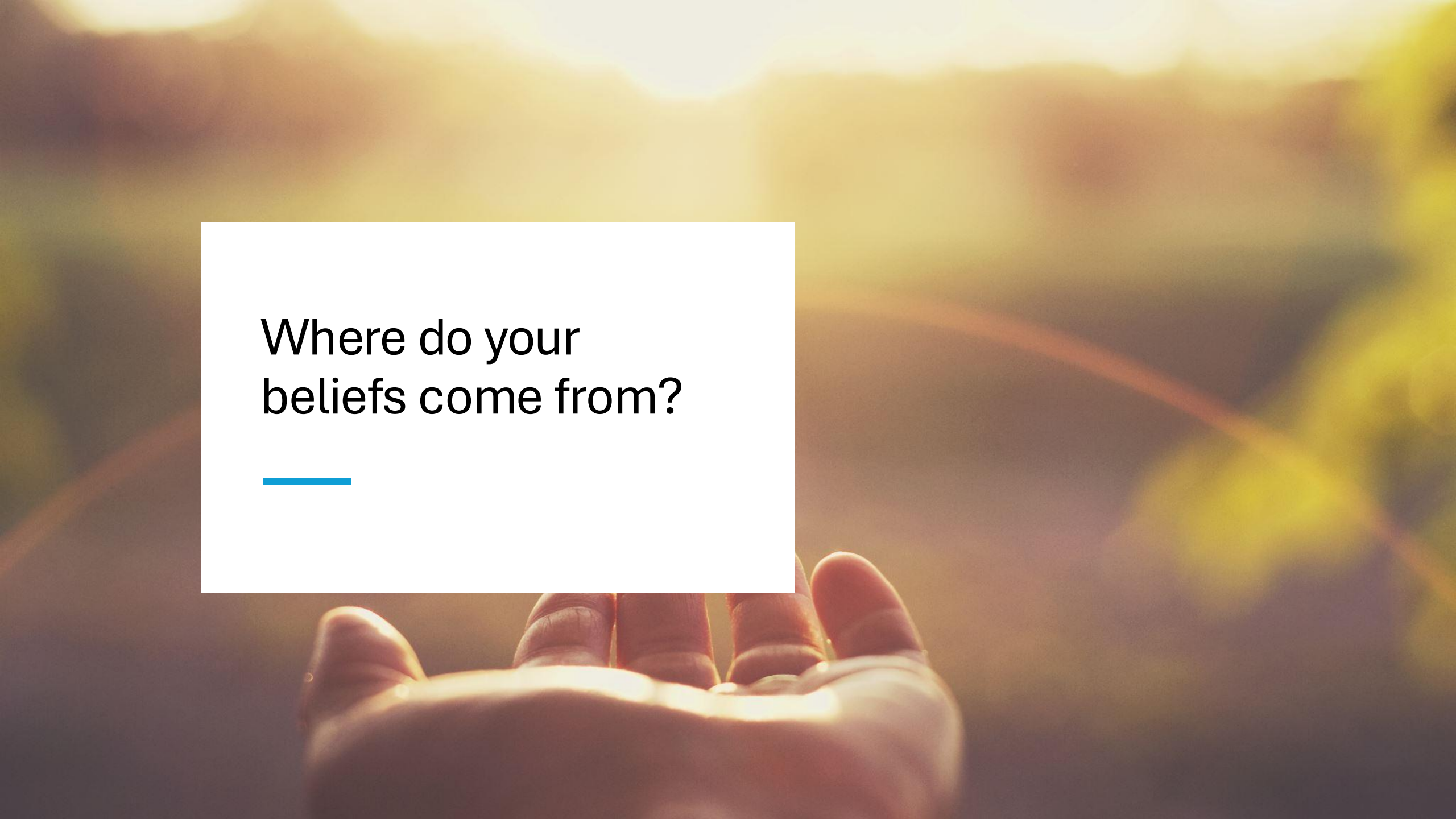


“I can’t introduce him. It’ll be easier for everybody if he doesn’t see us. I’m not ashamed. But it will be easier. It’ll be more sensible. It’ll only embarrass him to see Grace.” By this time he knew he was ashamed, but he felt that his shame was justified, for Grace’s father had the smooth, confident manner of a man who had lived all his life among people who were rich and sure of themselves.



The Marxist Lens – Encourages questions

Listen to lesson 4 and develop
5 questions

A hand is shown from the bottom, reaching upwards towards a bright sun. A rainbow is visible in the background, arching across the sky. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the hand and the sun.

Where do your
beliefs come from?

Societies form systems that shape people

What values does this society reward?

What ideas seem unquestioned?

Which institutions shape these beliefs?

How does the text reinforce or challenge those ideas?

Influence of society – the world

Consider...

- Why is John ashamed of his father?
- Who taught John to feel this way?
- Why does Grace's family represent success?
- Why do these ideas feel so natural to him?

Marxist criticism asks how societies shape the beliefs people come to accept as natural.

It explores

- power
- social class
- institutions
- opportunity
- values
- assumptions

Lesson 5 - Feminist







Agency

Agency asks:

Who has the power to make meaningful choices?

Consider:

- Who drives the action?
- Who reacts instead of acts?
- Whose decisions influence others?
- What limits each character's choices?

How do gender and power influence the stories we tell—and the ones we believe?

- representation
- identity
- agency
- social expectations
- voice
- power

Consider:

- Whose thoughts are explored?
- Whose motivations matter?
- Whose experiences receive attention?
- Which characters remain in the background?

Lesson 6
Reader response
Criticism



How does the reader
shape meaning?

"I can't introduce him. It'll be easier for everybody if he doesn't see us. I'm not ashamed. But it will be easier. It'll be more sensible. It'll only embarrass him to see Grace." By this time he knew he was ashamed, but he felt that his shame was justified, for Grace's father had the smooth, confident manner of a man who had lived all his life among people who were rich and sure of themselves.

- Which sentence stands out to you most?
- Which character do you sympathize with?
- What emotion feels strongest?
- What seems to be the central conflict?

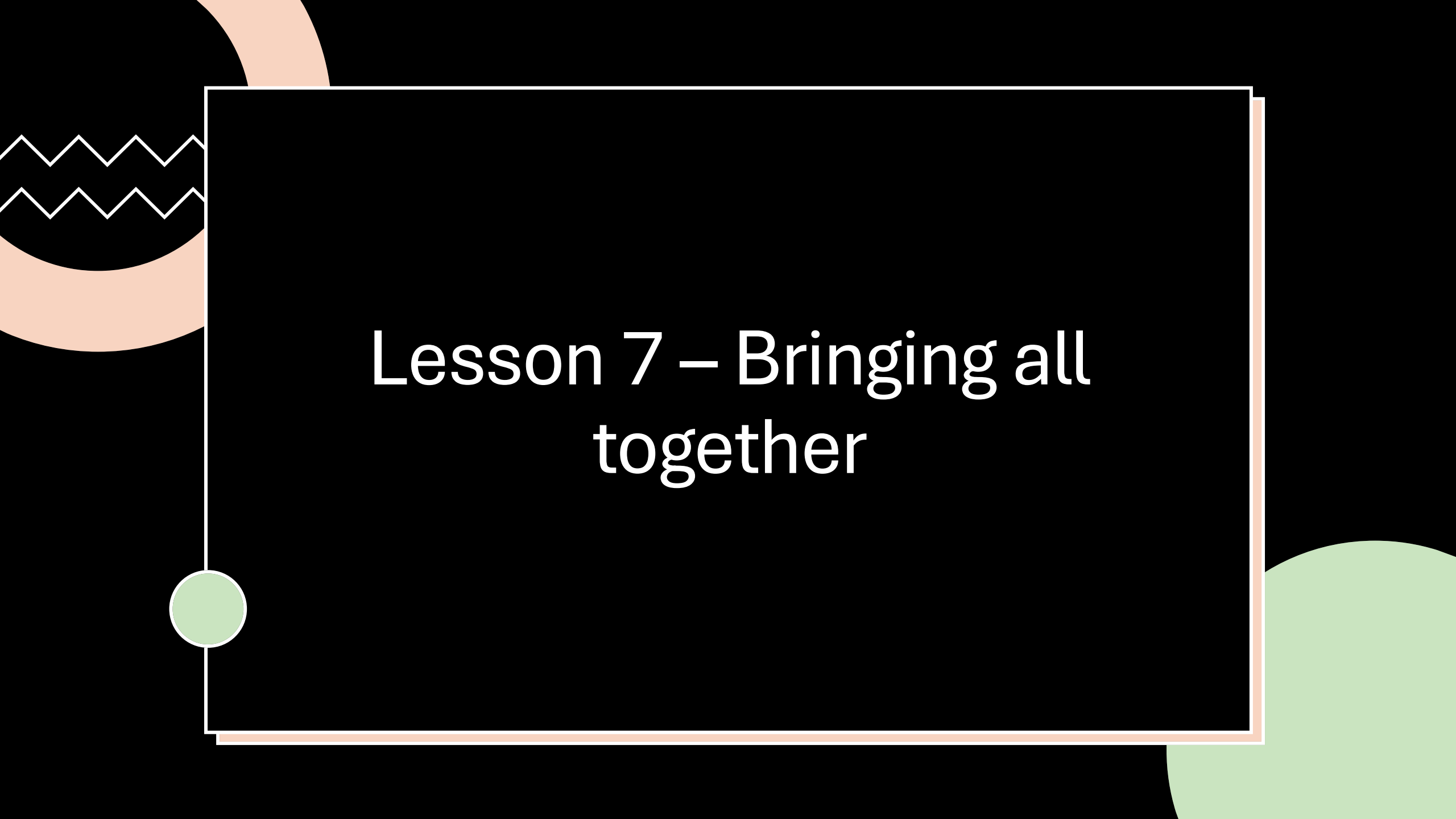
Interpreting a text

- experiences
- memories
- emotions
- beliefs
- values
- culture
- expectations

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Text → Author → Reader →

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Lesson 7 – Bringing all together

Literary Lens	Primary Question	What It Helps Us Understand
Formalism / New Criticism	How is the text constructed?	Language, structure, imagery, symbolism, and artistic choices.
Psychological	What motivates the characters?	Thoughts, emotions, fears, and desires.
Marxist	How do social systems influence behaviour?	Class, wealth, institutions, ideology, and power.
Feminist	How do gender and representation shape meaning?	Identity, agency, voice, gender expectations, and power.
Reader Response	How does the reader shape interpretation?	Readers' experiences and perspectives.

- **Formalism** - John's repeated denial that he is "not ashamed" emphasizes the emotional conflict at the centre of the passage.
- **Psychological** - John's embarrassment reflects an internal struggle between how he sees himself and how he fears others see him.
- **Marxist** - John's shame is connected to class differences and his desire to belong within a wealthier social world.
- **Feminist** - John's behaviour may also reflect expectations surrounding masculinity, independence, and social respectability.
- **Reader Response** - Different readers may connect with different aspects of the passage depending on their own experiences.



Combining two or more
lenses