**Literary Theory and Schools of Criticism**

Based on your reading from the chapter “Critical Strategies for Reading,” see if you can place these “questions” into an appropriate school of thought. (Hint: A list of similar questions are in the following chapter, on pages 1473-5!)

Choose from the following schools (another hint: I tried to pose two questions for each “answer”).

Formalism, Psychoanalytic/Psychological Criticism, New Historicism/Cultural Criticism, Marxist Criticism, Post-Colonial Criticism, Feminist Criticism, Gay/Lesbian Criticism (Queer Theory), Mythological Criticism, Reader-Response Criticism, Deconstruction

1. How do characters from different classes interact or conflict?
2. How does the literary text, explicitly or allegorically, represent various aspects of colonial oppression?
3. What language/characters/events present in the work reflect the current events of the author’s day?

1. Are there prominent words in the piece that could have different or hidden meanings? Could there be a subconscious reason for the author using these "problem words"?

1. What does the work contribute to our knowledge of queer, gay, or lesbian experience and history, including literary history?
2. How might we interpret a literary text to show that the reader's response is, or is analogous to, the topic of the story?
3. How are archetypal images like rebirth embodied in the work?
4. How might my own cultural assumptions influence how I read the text?
5. How do paradox, irony, ambiguity, and tension work in the text?
6. How is the relationship between men and women portrayed?
7. What other texts might one read in addition to the specific piece of literature to help understand the culture of the period?
8. How is language thrown into freeplay or questioned in the work?
9. What elements in the text exist in the middle, between the perceived masculine/ feminine binary? In other words, what elements exhibit traits of both (bisexual)?
10. Are there any specific allusions to myths that shed light on the text’s theme?
11. How do the operations of repression structure or inform the work?

1. What is left out of the text that if included might undermine the goal of the work?

1. Whom does it benefit in society at large if the work or effort is accepted/successful/ believed, etc.?
2. What does the work reveal about the operations (economically, politically, socially, or psychologically) of patriarchy?

1. How do the parts and their collective whole contribute to or not contribute to the aesthetic quality of the work?

1. How does the interaction of text and reader create meaning?

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Today we’ll get introduced to a few more schools of criticism. Then in breakout groups, try to come up with your own sample questions that theorists of critical schools might ask in order to shed light on either or both stories for this week.

Come up with at least ONE question/line of inquiry for each of these five basic critical schools:

* New Historicist OR cultural criticism
* Mythological criticism
* Gender criticism (either feminist or g/l)
* Reader response criticism
* Deconstruction

Some suggestions:

* Look over your notes/annotations of the story/stories. What jumps out at you? Why did you underline what you did? Why did you find it important?
* Read carefully the examples in the book that discuss “Story of an Hour.” These are very helpful readings and you may be able to extrapolate from that discussion.
* Read over the questions in chapter 48 to jog your questioning skills