Explanation of Theories:

**Moral/Philosophical:** For you as a critic, literature is a vehicle for discussion of themes and morals- a text should be studied for its important issues and deep meanings. (Bridging English 156)

**Formalism:** As a formalist, you prize the autonomy of the literary work, independent of its historical context, and believe in the importance of demonstrating its unity through close reading. You are interested in the form or how of a work than its content or what.(Bridging English 156)

**Freudian:** You believe that literature is a vehicle for insight into the author’s unconscious, and our response to it reveals something of our own psychology. Freudian concepts include the levels of consciousness, the structure of the psyche (id, ego and superego), defense mechanisms, complexes (Oedipus, Electra), and dream interpretations. (Bridging English 156)

**Feminist:** You concern yourself with images of women and the feminine in literature and how women are portrayed and differentiated from me. You intend to raise consciousness about sexual exploitation and alienation. (Bridging English 156)

**Marxism:** You view art as a projection of social history; interpretations of literature center around issues of justice and whether a work supports or challenges typical power relationships. You believe that art must direct our attention to social matters, not act as an opiate to remove us from them. (Bridging English 156)

**Deconstruction**: You believe reality is a social construction; there is no correct reading of a text. Scrutiny aims to destabilize, to find inconsistencies and challenges within a text to that text’s own assertions. (Bridging English 156)

**Queer: “**Queer theory assumes that our personal identities are unstable and in constant flux. What it means to be male or female is always in flux. Queer theory challenges the assumptions of sexual identity, gender, and sexual difference, maintaining that our identities are connected to what we do and who we are, not to our supposed essence” (Bressler 320).

**Jungian:** Discusses the struggle or tension between the opposing attitudes of the ego and the unconscious.

**Gender:**  A term sometimes used synonymously with feminism; however this field of study broadens traditional feminist criticism to include an investigation of not only femaleness but also maleness. (Bressler 307)

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