**Critical Theory**

Below is a list of questions, divided by the type of criticism, which you should ask yourself when approaching a specific type of analysis. Use the questions below as a guide to help you focus on the specific critical approach. Keep them for your own reference.

**Archetypal**

* What incidents in the text seem common or familiar enough that they might be considered symbolic or an archetype (something that has been imitated over time)?
* What kind of character types appear in the work, and how might they be classified?
* What creatures, elements of nature, or human objects playing a role in the work might be symbolic?
* What changes do the characters undergo, and how can these changes be characterized or named? To what might they be compared or related?
* Which religious traditions might the text’s plot, characters, elements, or objects be compared or affiliated with and why?

**Feminist**

* How is the relationship between men and woman portrayed?
* What are the power relationships between men and woman?
* How are male and female roles defined and portrayed within the work?
* What does the work reveal about the operations (economically, politically, socially, psychology) of patriarchy?

**Psychoanalytic/Jungian**

* How can the characters’ behavior, narrative events, or images be explained in terms of the struggle of the Id, Ego, and Superego?
* Are there any Oedipal, or other family dynamics, at work in the text?
* Is evidence of repression present in the text and, if so, what is its impact?
* What does the work suggest about the psychological motivations of the writer?
* Do any dreams or dream-like states occur in the narrative? If yes, examine the imagery and symbolism in these excerpts. How can they be explained in terms of psychoanalytical concepts?

**Formalism**

* What point of view is used and how does this impact the readers’ understanding of the text?
* What are the author’s techniques for developing character?
* How do paradox and irony work in the text?
* What is the impact of the setting of the text?
* Is there a central passage that can be said to summarize the key message of the text?
* How do symbols and/or motifs function within the text?
* How are parts of the text interconnected?

**Socio-political**

* What social classes do the characters represent?
* Who does the “work” on the text, and who benefits from that labor?
* How do characters from different classes interact or conflict?
* Which (or whose) values does the text reinforce? Which does it subvert?
* How does the author’s stance on the socio-political setting of the novel come through the text?