**Literary Theory—Ways of Interpreting a Work of Literature**

**1. “Formal” Analysis**

**Three main areas of study:**

**1. form and unity**

**2. diction**

**3. incongruities or inconsistencies**

**Examining Cinderella from a perspective of “Form”**

**Look for symbolic, or some other, significance for the specific items and animals chosen (for the**

**coach and staff) and/or the numbers of each chosen.**

**• Compare the speech patterns of Cinderella and the stepmother and stepsisters. Are there noticeable differences in cadence? Do any use more (or less) figurative or poetic language than the others? Do any speak noticeably more (or less) than the others?**

**2. “Psycho-analytical” Analysis (Freudian)**

**There are strong Oedipal connotations in Freudian theory:**

**Main areas of study/points of criticism of the first view are:**

**• the son’s desire for his mother**

**• the father’s envy of the son and rivalry for the mother’s attention**

**• the daughter’s desire for her father**

**• the mother’s envy of the daughter and rivalry for the father’s attention.**

**Of course, these all operate on a subconscious level to avoid violating serious social mores.**

**Examining Cinderella from a Freudian perspective:**

**• Consider Cinderella as a representative of the id**

**—expressing desire.**

**• Consider the stepmother and stepsisters as representatives of the superego—preventing the id from fulfilling its desire.**

**• Consider the fairy godmother and the prince as representatives of the ego—negotiating between the id and the superego and allowing the desires of the id to be fulfilled in a socially acceptable manner.**

**3. Feminist Theory:**

**1. differences between men and women**

**2. women in positions of power and power dynamics between men and women**

**3. the female experience**

**Examining “Cinderella” from a Feminist Perspective**

**• Consider the potentially misogynist theme of abused-girl-waiting-to-be-rescued-by-prince.**

**• Consider the values conveyed in the portrayal of the “good girl” as physically beautiful and the “wicked girls” as physically ugly.**