Review of Critical Concepts:

With a group, identify and rank these Old School / New School sample responses.

Examples of critical responses:

1. I liked the story regarding Kamapua’a the pig demigod. It reminded me of other stories from myths and legends where the god is constantly harassing some other goddess or mortal woman—that shows a sexist undertone in previous cultures, a sexist mentality that still happens today.

2. Westerveldt’s retelling of Kamapua’a intrigues me; after all, there are various elements of the tale that we can still see today: we can witness Koko Head far away in the distance from this very campus—this, according to the text, may in fact have features of The Cave of Kapo-koe-le-le, or perhaps Koko Head Crater itself, “this crater is Kohe-lepe-lepe, a word that translates as “inner inner yoni”; i.e. the inner labia - not a surprising fact when we consider the looks of the crater’s outer rim.” (Camphausen 02)

   What’s particularly interesting about the block-quote above is the fact that few of us in the busy modern world actually take the time to think deeply about places and the stories behind them; even fewer of us, of course, would think that a dry, mountainous terrain might actually resemble an ancient goddess’ genitalia. Perhaps we are meant to pay more attention to such mysteries.

3. The story about the beastly Kamapua’a is gross. There are elements of outright rape, detachable vaginas, and some indication that these stories have some bearing on today’s geographical features. Ho hum. There are probably some redeeming features in the story, but none that I can discern—the hypersexualized elements are gross and not worth mentioning; I am just appalled. A terrible read.

4. The ancient Hawaiians clearly had no major qualms about oral traditions that revealed sexually-explicit content—perhaps that could be a result of the lack of shame regarding such naturalistic processes; our culture today now seems to revel in that shame, shame about our bodies and the desires that those bodies might have. Kamapua’a’s tale is intriguing because according to modern, European standards of behavior, he would never be considered moral nor decent, never be considered ‘heroic.’ I did some follow-up research and found out about this peculiar fixation on sex in the modern era versus sex in ancient times, and Rufus C. Camphausen attacks that cultural bias against so-called ‘naughty content’:

   Faced with myths in which Gods and Goddesses are involved in adultery, bisexuality, incest and orgies, most people simply assume that the presence of such ‘tales’ or ‘legends’ in a religious tradition is an indication of ‘lower’ development; of less civilization. The opposite is usually true. Rather, it is our present ‘civilization’ that is neither mature nor wise:
   • we let birth mainly occur in hospitals and often under sedation;
   • we surround our nude bodies, passion, sexuality and lust with shame;
   • we stifle the development of our young ones by not truly initiating them;
   • we hide away our infirm and are scared to death by death. 01

5. Kamapua’a’s story was da bomb! Any guy today would love to go up to some chicks in the bar, try and get with them, and then have another one throw her nani past his head. The shetty part, and I can kinda relate, is the fact that in the end, he didn’t get any. Bummer.