

Profs. Rader Literary Tour



20
26



helmsleep.com
emmxrugh@gmail.com

J Patrick
Rader

profrader.com
professorrader07@gmail.com

The Picture of
Dorian
Oscar Wilde



ABC 1102: Advanced Book Club

Prof. J Patrick Rader, M.F.A.

A TO Z

TERMS WE WILL USE

When discussing literature or “art,” people only talk about a few things.

When literature or art critics opine, they are talking about:

□ TEXT:

- Any piece of written or spoken work that can be analyzed for its meaning. It could be a book, poem, play, song, or any other form of communication.

□ NARRATIVE:

- A story or an account of events. It's the way in which a text is structured to tell a particular tale.

□ SUBTEXT:

- Any meaning or alternative narrative uncovered in a text through literary theory and criticism.

TOOLS WE WILL USE

Narrative Elements:

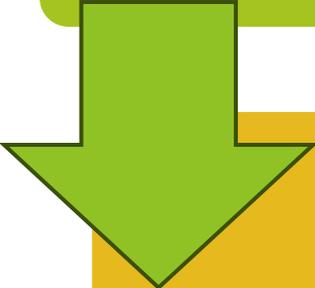
The building blocks that make up a story. These include *character*, *setting*, *plot*, *conflict*, and *theme*.

Analyzing these elements helps us understand how a narrative is constructed and what messages or meanings it may contain.



Semiotics

The study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.
A tool used in the application of a Literary Theory.



“Death of the author”

A narrative’s true meaning is derived by the reader.

“death of the author”

- ❑ “Death of the Author” means, a text’s true meaning is derived by the relationship between the reader and the text.
- ❑ Unless an author is present during one’s reading of a text, their intent behind a text is meaningless.
- ❑ In today’s digitally anonymous culture, critical thinking skills become all the more important and utile, because authorial intent is often unknowable.



Dr. Seuss's Intent:

**“To write a best-seller using less than
100, different words.”**

"10 stories behind Dr. Seuss stories." cnn.com.

CNN, 23 Jan 2009. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/wayoflife/01/23/mf.seuss.stories.behind/index.html>.

Accessed 26 Jan. 2009.

50 WORDS

*a, am, and, anywhere, are, be, boat, box, car, could,
dark, do, eat, eggs, fox, goat, good, green, ham, here,
house, I, if, in, let, like, may, me, mouse, not, on, or,
rain, Sam, say, see, so, thank, that, the, them, there,
they, train, tree, try, will, with, would, you.*

WHAT IS LITERARY CRITICISM?

Literary Criticism does NOT mean finding fault, expressing dislike or saying what is “wrong” with a text.

- ❑ **Interprets:** What does this work of literature MEAN?
 - ▶ What is the author’s intent? What do *they* mean?
 - ▶ What is the reader’s response? What does it mean to *you*?
- ❑ **Analyzes:** How does this piece of literature WORK?
 - ▶ Allegorically, how does the text work as a whole?
 - ▶ How do the Narrative Elements work?
- ❑ **Evaluates:** What is this work’s VALUE?
 - ▶ To Society?
 - ▶ To the reader (you)?



WHAT IS LITERARY THEORY?

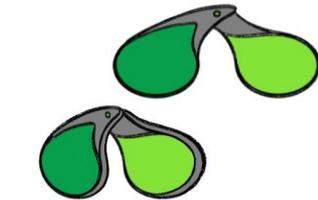
- ❑ The body of ideas and methods used in the reading and studying of texts.
- ❑ Various theories, lenses, or approaches to explain and/or interpret texts.
- ❑ An application of diverse knowledge and perspectives that yield multiple interpretations of literature.

Remember, a “text” is any form of media to which a literary theory may be applied.

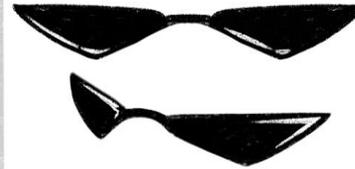


LITERARY THEORIES

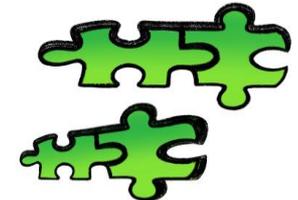
It's like choosing the pair, or pairs, of glasses we are using to read the narrative.



360 B.C.: Moral Criticism



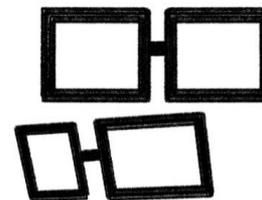
~4 BCE: Dramatic Construction



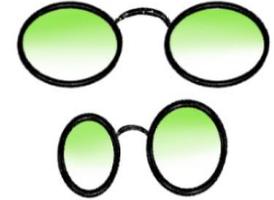
1920s: Structuralism/Semiotics



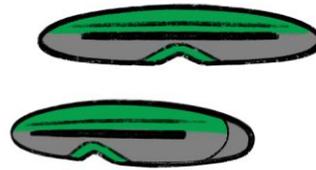
1920s-1930s: Psychoanalytic Criticism



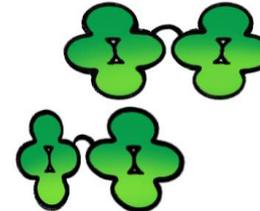
1930s: Formalism



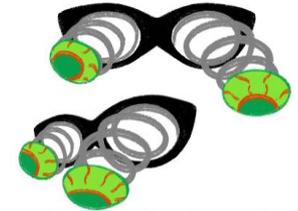
1930s-1940s: Archetypal Criticism



1940s-1950s: New Criticism/
Neo-Aristotelian Criticism



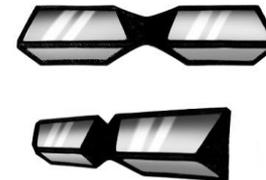
1950s: Marxist Criticism



1960s-1970s: Post-Structuralism/
Deconstruction



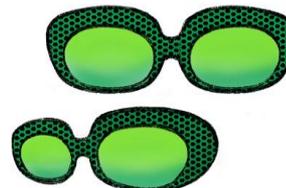
1970s: Feminist Criticism



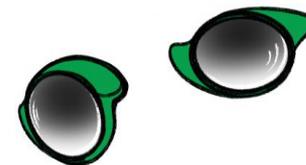
1970s: Reader-Response Criticism



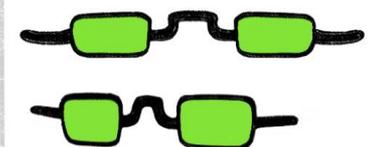
1980s: Race Theory



1980s: Gender/Queer Studies



1980s-1990s: New Historicism/
Cultural Studies



1990s: Post-Colonial Criticism

OUR Criticism begins with identifying and investigating the Narrative Elements

Character

Setting

Plot

Conflict

Theme



Character

Who the narrative follows. your best friends, worst enemies, and the strangers you might meet.

Protagonist

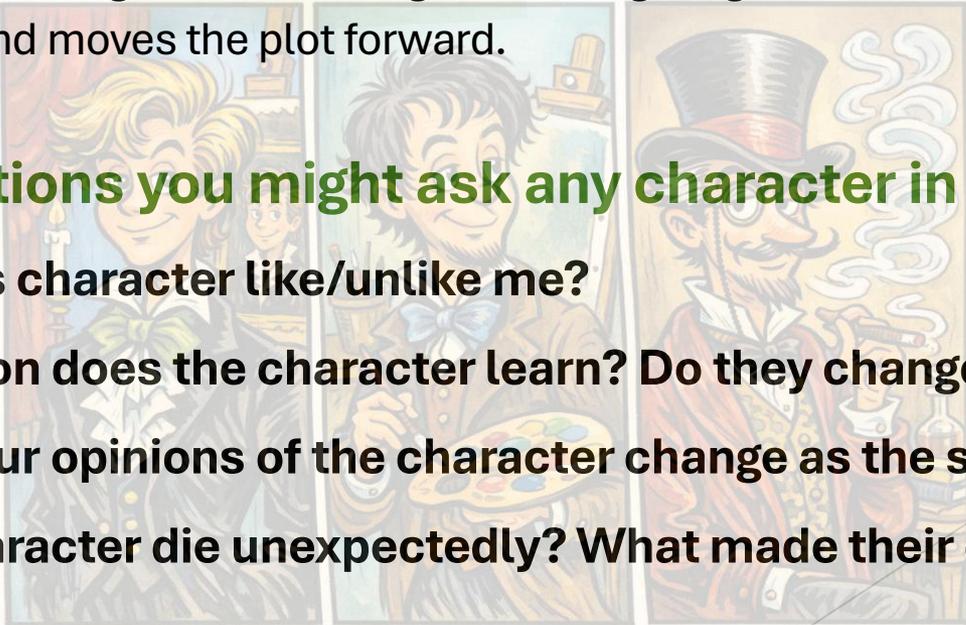
The character who changes the most during the events of a narrative.

Antagonist

The character who instigates a protagonist's change.

MacGuffin

The thing the Protagonist and Antagonist are fighting over. It motivates the characters and moves the plot forward.



Some questions you might ask any character in a story:

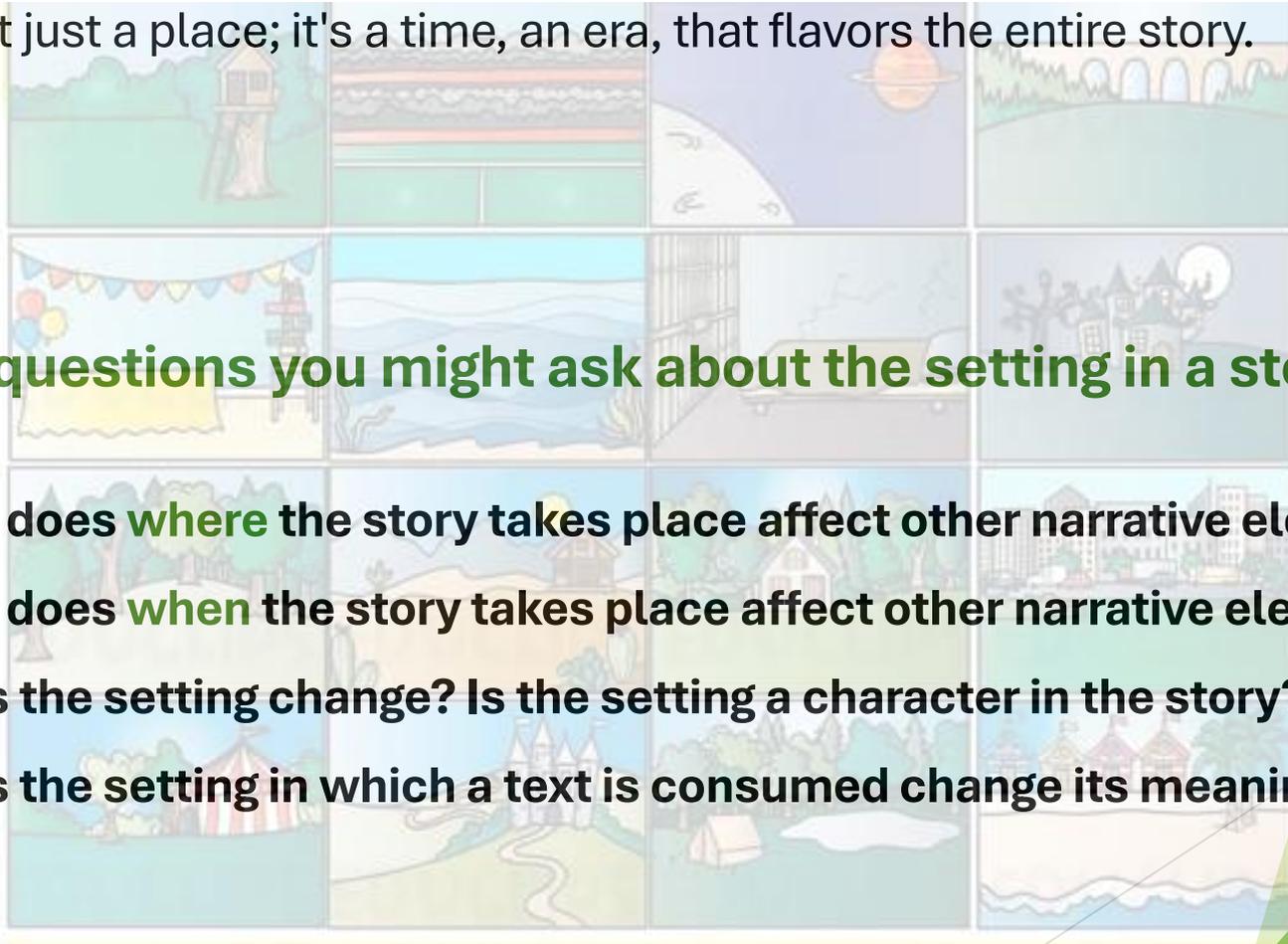
- How is this character like/unlike me?
- What lesson does the character learn? Do they change or evolve?
- How do your opinions of the character change as the story unfolds?
- Does a character die unexpectedly? What made their death unexpected?

Setting

Contains two components. **Where** and **when** the magic happens. It's not just a place; it's a time, an era, that flavors the entire story.

Some questions you might ask about the setting in a story:

- How does **where** the story takes place affect other narrative elements?
- How does **when** the story takes place affect other narrative elements?
- Does the setting change? Is the setting a character in the story?
- Does the setting in which a text is consumed change its meaning?



Plot

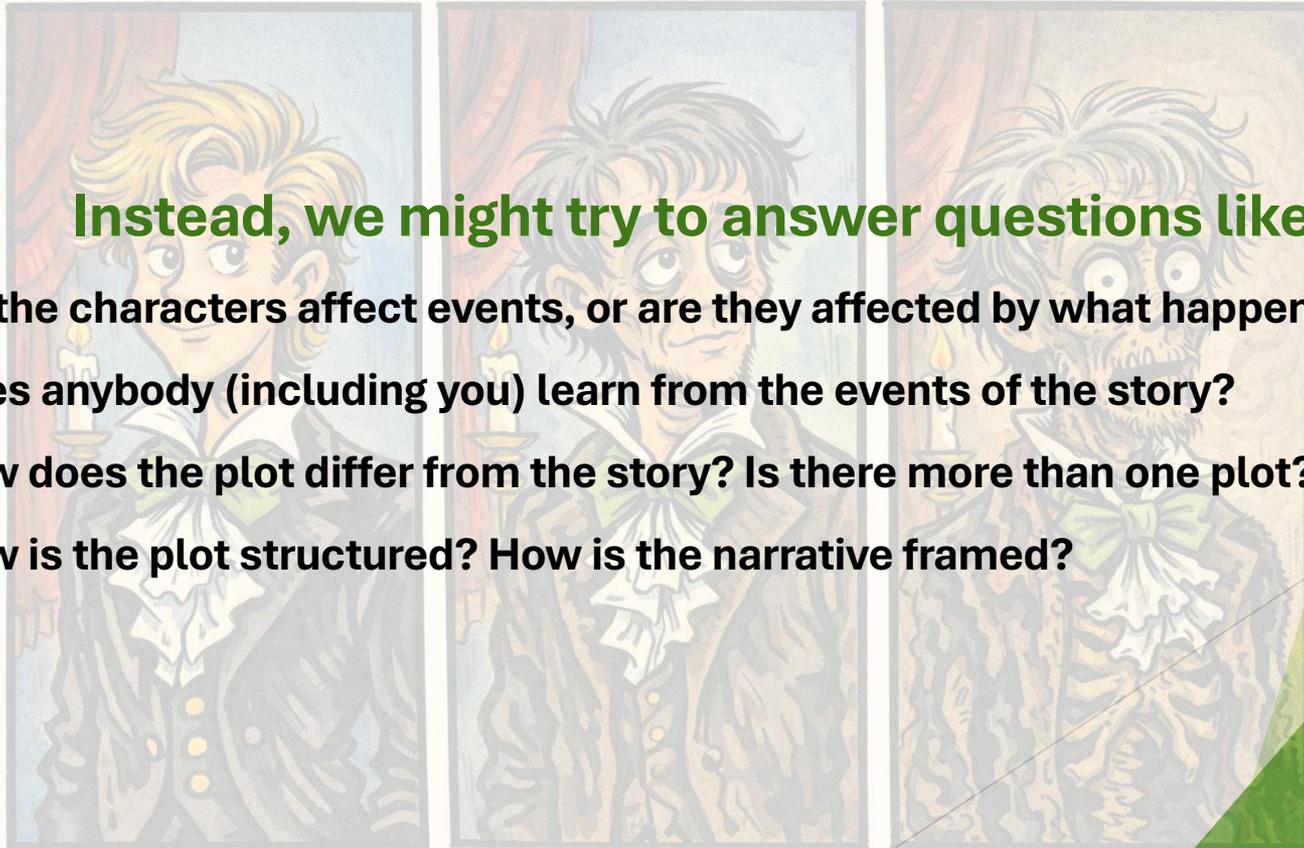
The sequence of events that unfold in a story.

The plot is often organized into a series of rising and falling actions that build tension and lead to a climax.

The most common discussion around plot is literally just explaining what happened. Retelling a story, like we did for fifth grade book reports, is not literary criticism.

Instead, we might try to answer questions like:

- Do the characters affect events, or are they affected by what happens to them?
- Does anybody (including you) learn from the events of the story?
- How does the plot differ from the story? Is there more than one plot?
- How is the plot structured? How is the narrative framed?



Conflict is the struggle between opposing forces in a narrative.

While we know the Protagonist is regularly in conflict with the Antagonist of a narrative, we must recognize that more than one conflict can exist in a narrative.

The versus/vs.

❑ **Character vs. Self**

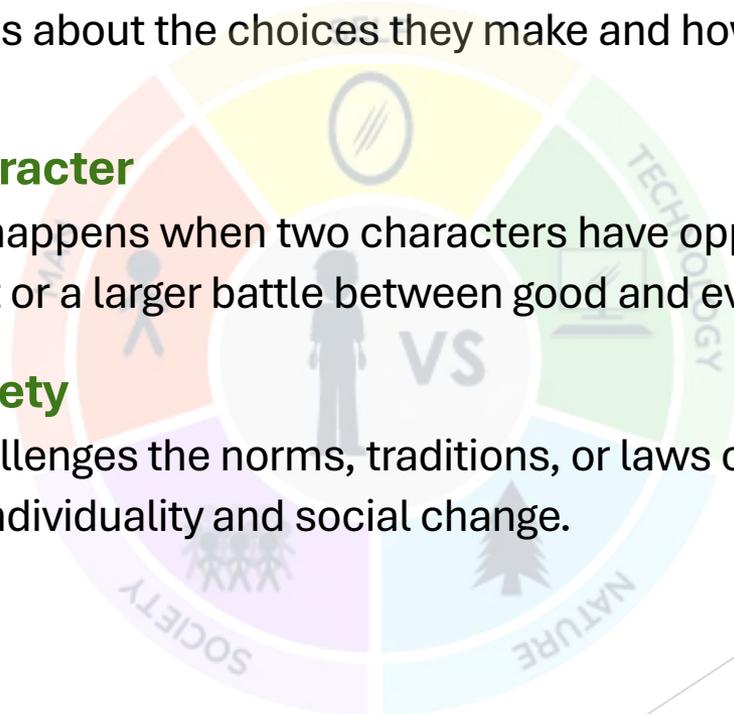
When a character faces an internal struggle, often dealing with emotions, desires, or personal beliefs. It's about the choices they make and how they deal with their inner conflicts.

❑ **Character vs. Character**

This type of conflict happens when two characters have opposing goals or values. It can be a simple disagreement or a larger battle between good and evil.

❑ **Character vs. Society**

Here, a character challenges the norms, traditions, or laws of society. These stories often explore themes like individuality and social change.



The versus/vs.

❑ **Character vs. Nature**

This conflict occurs when characters face natural forces, such as storms or animals.

❑ **Character vs. Technology**

In this scenario, technology becomes a threat, either by malfunctioning or being used for harmful purposes

❑ **Character vs. Supernatural**

Characters confront supernatural forces like ghosts or demons. These stories explore themes of fear, belief, and the unknown

❑ **Character vs. Unknown**

This conflict involves a character facing something mysterious or unexplainable. It's about their journey to understand and overcome the unknown.

A question you might ask about conflict:

Who or what is this versus?

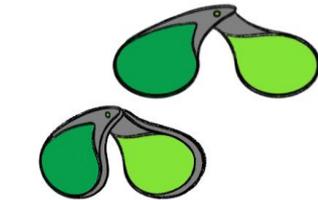
Themes are the big ideas lurking beneath the surface.
*Whether it's the quest for identity, the resistance of temptation,
themes are the soul of the story.*

Themes and/or **Conflicts** are usually the **thesis**
to a literary argument.

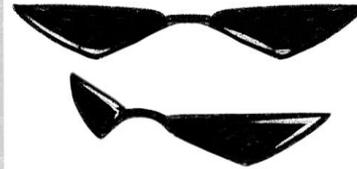
*If a person's interpretation of a narrative can be supported by
evidence from the text, we, at the very least, must admit to the
validity of that interpretation even though we may disagree with it.*

LITERARY THEORIES

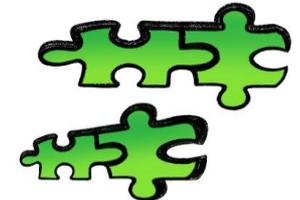
It's like choosing the pair, or pairs, of glasses we are using to read the narrative.



360 B.C.: Moral Criticism



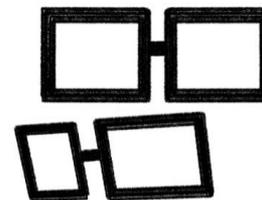
~4 BCE: Dramatic Construction



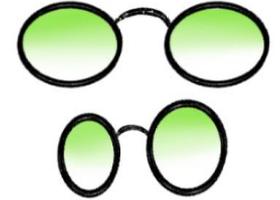
1920s: Structuralism/Semiotics



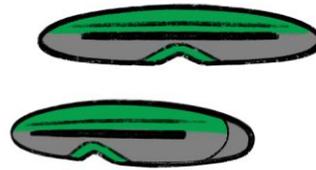
1920s-1930s: Psychoanalytic Criticism



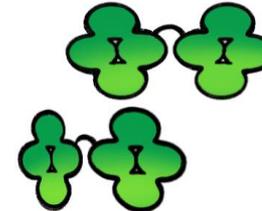
1930s: Formalism



1930s-1940s: Archetypal Criticism



1940s-1950s: New Criticism/
Neo-Aristotelian Criticism



1950s: Marxist Criticism



1960s-1970s: Post-Structuralism/
Deconstruction



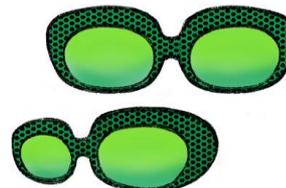
1970s: Feminist Criticism



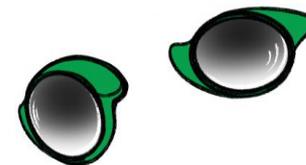
1970s: Reader-Response Criticism



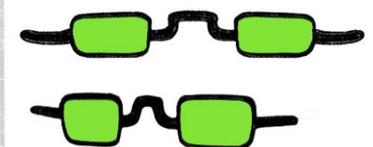
1980s: Race Theory



1980s: Gender/Queer Studies



1980s-1990s: New Historicism/
Cultural Studies



1990s: Post-Colonial Criticism

AN INTRODUCTION TO READER RESPONSE LITERARY Criticism



1970s: Reader-Response Criticism

Questions a Reader Response criticism might ask of a text:

- How does the text make me feel? Why?
- What does the text mean to me? Why?
- How do the Narrative elements mirror elements of my own life?
- What do I think the “moral” of the story is? Why?
- How does the author’s life mirror my own life experiences?

GREEN EGGS & Ham --

Reader Response

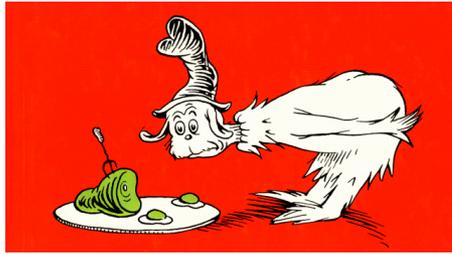
*Because of its simplicity, **Green Eggs & Ham by Dr. Seuss** is readily utile as an introductory text for any school of literary criticism.*

- Authorial intent is known.
- Any “meaning” behind the text is implied/applied by the reader’s response.
- The reader determines the text’s “meaning.”



Reader-response criticism is a school of literary theory that focuses on the reader (or audience) and their experience with a work. Other theories primarily focus their attention on the author, the content, or form of a text.

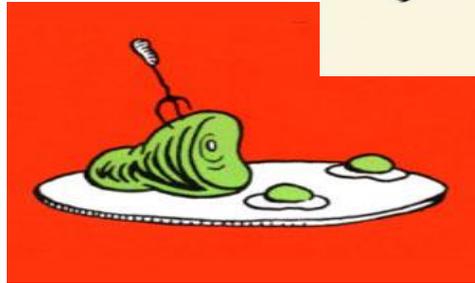
READER RESPONSE Literary Criticism: Character



The unnamed character may be seen as a symbol for someone reluctant to try new things.



Sam-I-am is clearly a symbol for someone trying to convince people to try new things.



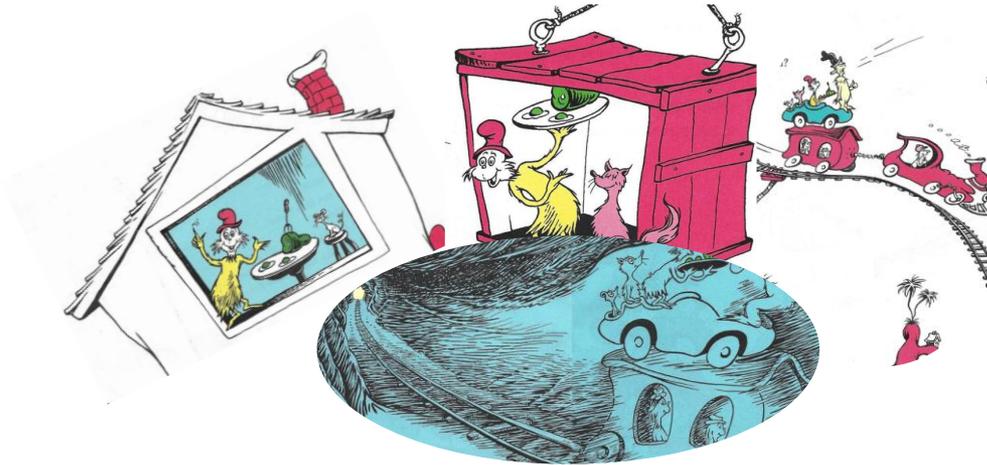
The green eggs and ham could be interpreted as representing a new experience.

You must produce a clear connection between your CLAIMS and the TEXT.

READER RESPONSE Literary Criticism:

Setting

Where and **when** the story happens are not literal.



Plot

The sequence of events that unfold in a story are a metaphors.



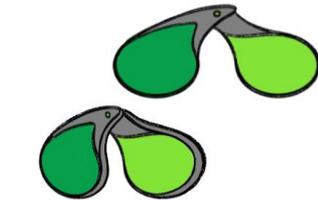
Some things to remember.

- 1) The Narrative Elements are most easily used to defend your interpretation.
- 2) The basis of your literary interpretation could come from any element of the text.
- 3) Different literary theories often work well in developing a literary argument.
- 4) Your literary argument must at least be supported by the text.

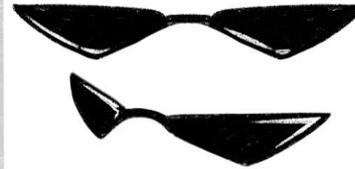
Some Connections between
Green Eggs & Ham by Dr. Seuss
and
The Picture of Dorian Gray
by Oscar Wilde

LITERARY THEORIES

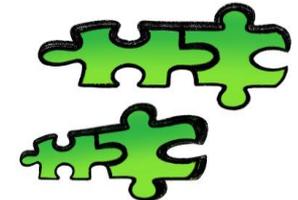
It's like choosing the pair, or pairs, of glasses we are using to read the narrative.



360 B.C.: Moral Criticism



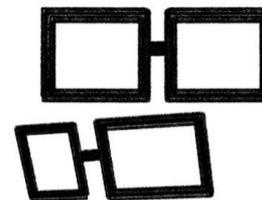
~4 BCE: Dramatic Construction



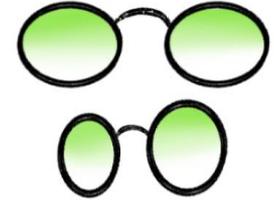
1920s: Structuralism/Semiotics



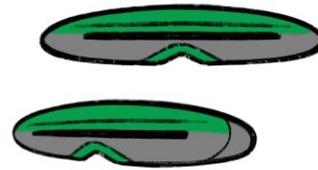
1920s-1930s: Psychoanalytic Criticism



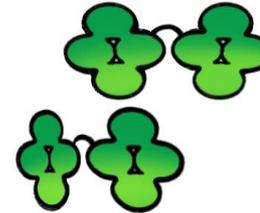
1930s: Formalism



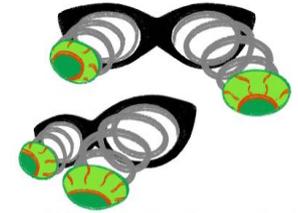
1930s-1940s: Archetypal Criticism



1940s-1950s: New Criticism/
Neo-Aristotelian Criticism



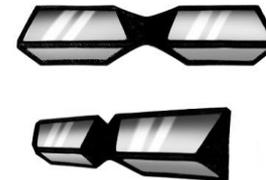
1950s: Marxist Criticism



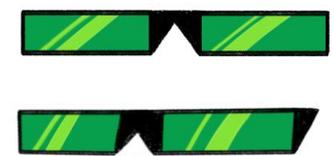
1960s-1970s: Post-Structuralism/
Deconstruction



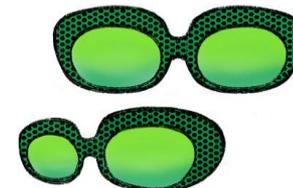
1970s: Feminist Criticism



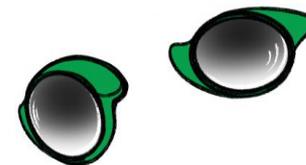
1970s: Reader-Response Criticism



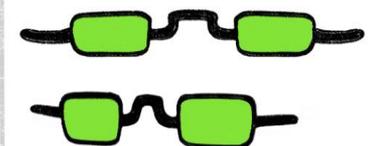
1980s: Race Theory



1980s: Gender/Queer Studies



1980s-1990s: New Historicism/
Cultural Studies



1990s: Post-Colonial Criticism

The Archetypes

The Tempted



The Temptation



The Temptors



The Archetypes

Settings



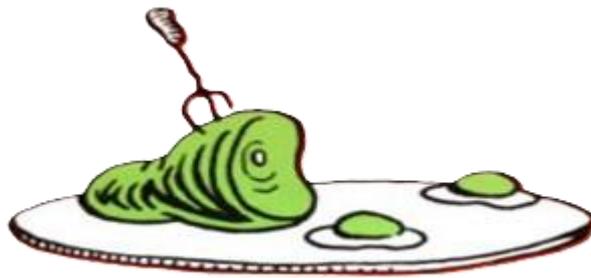
Plots



Food for Thought: Green eggs and a *Gray* prequel?



After eating the green eggs and ham,
the unnamed character moves on
to a new chapter in his life...



We know he is easily tempted
and has a wild past.



**He was Dorian Gray
the whole time!**

I DON'T
THINK SO.

DEFINITELY
NOT.

MM.... NAHH...

THAT'S A LITTLE
BETTER.

EWW.

YEAH! PERFECT!

calvin and hobbes

by WATKINSON ©1993 G-1
dist. by UNIVERSAL UCCS SYNDICATE

Stop it.
I am not a
symbol.

Your introduction
to lit crit does not
work in the real
world!

Mom is not
a metaphor.

But, you do
know I am,
right?



Profs. Rader Literary Tour



20
26



helmsleep.com
emmxrugh@gmail.com

J Patrick
Rader

profrader.com
professorrader07@gmail.com