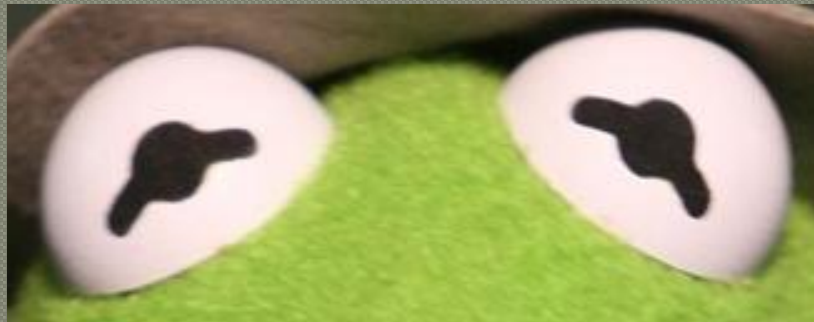


Literary Theory & Schools of Criticism

ways to examine literature &
questions to ask of literature



BIG RIBBIT IS WATCHING YOU

Purpose

- Think of literary theories as tools for your “tool box” when discussing or writing about literature.
 - Each school makes assumptions and examines different parts of the text.
 - Each requires a different way of thinking about text.



Muppet

Lenses

- ◉ Literary theories function like lenses, focusing on different aspects of the text.



Same text,
different “eyes.”

Timeline of Schools

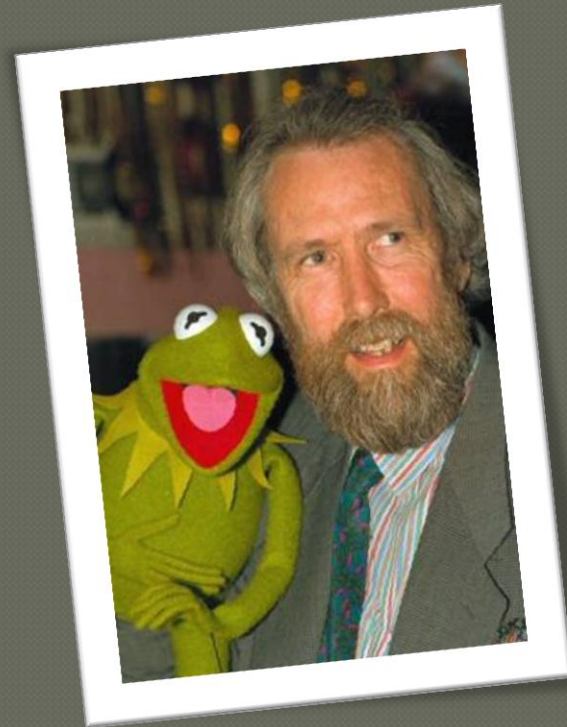
- Moral Criticism
 - ~360 BC-present
- Dramatic Construction
 - ~360 BC-present
- Formalism
 - 1930s-present
- Psychoanalytic Criticism
 - 1930s-present
- Marxist Criticism
 - 1930s-present
- Reader-Response Criticism
 - 1960s-present
- Feminist & Gender Criticism
 - 1960s-present



Additional

● Biographical

- Examining the author's life for insight into literature



Moral Criticism

● Plato

- *The Republic*
 - Art is a poor recreation of reality
 - Art must be in service to the state
- Asks these questions:
 - What's the lesson?
 - How does it fit with my beliefs?



Dramatic Construction

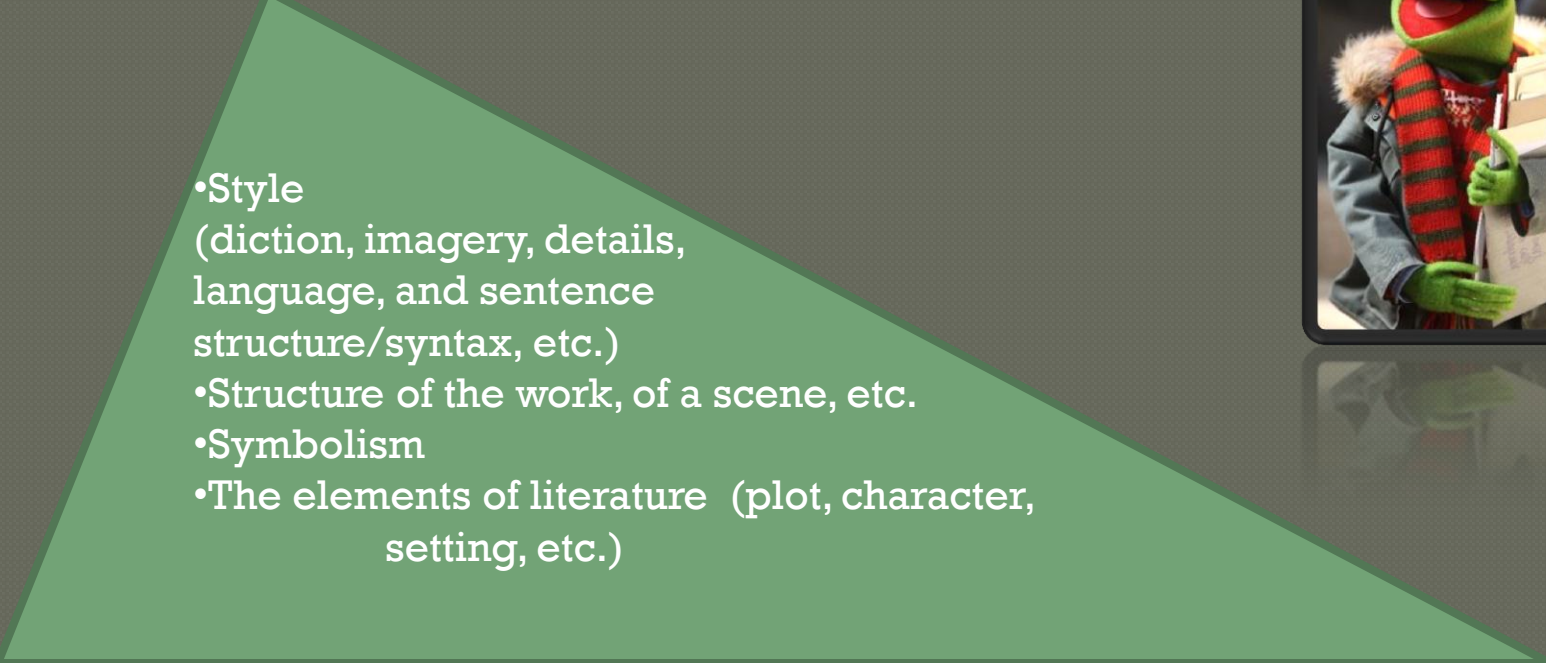
● Aristotle

- How does literature affect us?
 - It should intensify the Catharsis
- Certain characteristics of literature can increase or decrease enjoyment or effectiveness.



Formalism

● The text, the text, the text

- Unity
 - Theme
- 
- Style
(diction, imagery, details, language, and sentence structure/syntax, etc.)
 - Structure of the work, of a scene, etc.
 - Symbolism
 - The elements of literature (plot, character, setting, etc.)



Psychoanalytic Criticism

● Sigmund Freud (Freudian)

- Development of the self
 - Tell me about your childhood...
- Repression
- The Psyche
 - Id
 - Ego
 - Super-ego
- Oedipus (and Elektra) Complex



Psychoanalytic Criticism

● Carl Jung (Jungian)

- The Collective Unconscious
- Archetypes
- Psyche
 - Self
 - Ego
 - Shadow
 - Animus/anima
 - Persona (mask)
- Syzygy



Marxist Criticism

- Differences in classes
- The Question: whom does it benefit?
 - The elite? The middle class?
- Contradiction, tension, and revolution
 - You say you want a revolution. Well, you know...



Reader-Response Criticism

- ◉ Reader-response can couple with other lenses
- ◉ Text is meaningless without a reader
- ◉ Text+ reader (and “baggage”)= meaning



Feminist Criticism

- How does the work treat women?
- Patriarchy
- Misogyny
- Marginalization



Gender Studies

- ◉ Sex vs. Gender
- ◉ Feminine and Masculine traits
- ◉ Binary World?
- ◉ In-Betweens



Do Something With It

Use the list of theories to design questions about the works we have read.

Model your questions on those in the packet but make them specific to these works.

Afterwards, we will discuss some of your questions as a class.

You will turn in your questions.

- Moral and Dramatic
- Formalism
- Psychoanalytical
 - Freudian
 - Jungian
- Marxist
- Feminist & Gender

