

Week #9: November 6, 2013 (Cancelled Class)
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Please read through these notes and treat them, in terms of studying for the final exam, as you would your class notes for the rest of the works we have discussed. I can promise that there will be passages from these books on the final exam, and you should be able to talk about them in terms of the larger themes that we have been tracing throughout the course. **Any passages/themes/concepts that appear on the exam will only be taken from what is covered in these notes.**

If you have any questions about this material, or if you want to talk it over in more detail, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am sorry, again, that I had to cancel class this evening.

N.B. Any quotations or key terms in red are excellent candidates for the exam.

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

Nov. 13:	Nov. 20:	Nov. 27	Dec. 6 (Friday)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quiz #5: <i>The Giver</i> (last quiz)• <i>The Giver</i>• Research Assignments returned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Creative" Response Due• <i>The Giver</i> and <i>Divergent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final Essay Due (submit through Blackboard)• <i>Divergent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final Exam• 7-10 PM• Location TBA

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas

- finished last class by looking at clip from film and discussing the friendship between Bruno and Shmuel
 - o that clip that we watched corresponds loosely with pages 171 and 174 of the book
 - o Bruno's "betrayal" of Shmuel in front of Lieutenant Kotler – **"I've never seen him before in my life. I don't know him"** (171)
 - o and Bruno's apology followed by Shmuel's forgiveness
- the film clip that we watched added an interesting element that isn't in the novel: the Nazi propaganda newsreel about life in the concentration camps
 - o <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlgV4RdL2vI>
 - o why add this?
 - o an interesting addition – only possible through film – because it helps the reader understand German apathy and ignorance towards the Holocaust
 - it also shows us how extreme Nazi propaganda was – this is a *real* video that was circulated by the Nazis during WWII to German citizens and other countries around the world to try to dispel some of the rumours (unfortunately true) about atrocities being committed in the camps
 - o it also helps defend Boyne and the filmmaker from the accusations about the unbelievable nature of Bruno's naiveté that we talked about last class
 - this is the information that German citizens were provided about the concentration camps
 - historical realism, in the propaganda film, is hidden behind a romanticized, idealized image of the concentration camps
- in both book and film, the two boys touch after Shmuel forgives Bruno
 - o Page 175 in the book
 - o the barrier between their worlds is transcended for the first time

- they figuratively erase the barrier that separates them
 - much like Marilla and Anne holding hands for the first time
 - and remarkable image of solidarity and coming together
- an incredibly charged image that reminds us of how children can much more easily transcend cultural, religious, national boundaries and divisions
 - ultimately, the fence is an arbitrary construction for the two boys
 - it means nothing to them, even though it ultimately means the difference between life and death
- It is his new friendship with Shmuel that ultimately makes his new surroundings feel like home to Bruno
 - remember we were tracking the “house” / “home” language last class
 - Page 177: **“Bruno felt almost glad when they returned to Out-With” from his grandmother’s funeral, “the house there had become his home now” (177)**
- this occurs just before Bruno finds out that he will, actually, be returning home to Berlin
 - Page 190: **“Mother...thinks this would be a good time for the three of you to return home and reopen the house...”**
 - so our concepts of “home” are greatly challenged here
 - remember before they left for Poland, Bruno’s mother had promised that they would return home “someday” (6)
 - that leads us to believe that the book will follow the typical and comfortable **home-away-home** structure
 - **HOME** (Berlin) – **AWAY** (Poland, “Out-With,” “adventure”) – **HOME** (back to Berlin)
- now, Bruno feels “at home” in “Out-With” because of his new friendship with Shmuel
 - so “home” then = friendship, love, family, etc.
 - “going home” doesn’t necessarily imply “going back”
 - and important concept to keep in mind for *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* where Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter feel more “at home” in Narnia than they do in the Professor’s House, or in their real home in London
- Bruno decides that he must undertake one more adventure – he must go “away” one final time – before he goes back home to Berlin
 - Title of Chapter 18: “Thinking Up the Final Adventure”
 - very prophetic and foreboding title
 - to educated, adult reader, overtones of “The Final Solution”
- when Bruno crosses to the other side of the fence he is figuratively leaving the world of innocence and entering into the world of experience
 - many ways to think about this transition: innocence/experience, childhood/maturity, naiveté/understanding, romance/reality, etc.
 - and, sadly, life/death as well
- notice how the language on **page 207** captures this transition from naivete to understanding, from romance (the propaganda film perspective of Auschwitz) to reality:
 - an important passage (insert mental image of me tapping my nose and saying “not that I’d ever tell you about what might be on the exam...” here)
 - **“Bruno opened his eyes in wonder at the things he saw. In his imagination he had thought that all the huts were full of happy families... He thought that all the boys and girls who lived here would be in different groups, playing tennis or football, skipping and drawing out squares for hopscotch on the ground. He had thought... he had wondered... As it turned out, all the things that he thought might be there – weren’t” (207)**
- and you know what happens in the following pages, so there’s no point re-reading them
 - the **home-away-home** pattern that we’ve seen so many times – that is central to children’s literature – is completely negated at the end of the book
 - famous saying: “you can’t go home again”

- if children’s literature is about the **home-away-home** pattern, literature for young adults, especially contemporary YA literature, starts to deal with the impossibility of going home again
 - think of *Harry Potter*, think of Tris in *Divergent* and Jonas in *The Giver*
 - because we’re dealing with an uncomfortable subject in this book – the Holocaust – it wouldn’t be appropriate for Bruno to be able to comfortably return home
 - Bruno’s death reminds us that the Jewish victims of the Holocaust were violently removed from their homes and, for the majority of them, denied – through death – the possibility of returning home again
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Speculative Fiction and Fantasy Literature

- “And now...” in the words of Monty Python, “it’s time for something completely different!”
- the order of the books in this latter part of the course may seem a little odd
 - I promise there is some logic behind it
 - *Anne of Green Gables* and *Charlotte’s Web* are books that bridge the worlds of romance (**fantasy**) and **reality**
 - *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, however, is blunt **historical realism**
 - though through Bruno, particularly on page 207, the comments on the dangers of romanticizing and obscuring historical reality
 - now, with Lewis we’re turning to pure, wonderful, escapist **fantasy**
- though fantasy and realism may seem like oppositional genres, they actually shares quite a few common thematic and structural elements despite their differences
 - for example, both genres often feature children who must navigate an unfamiliar world with an absence of reliable parental guidance
 - both wrestle with the nature of good behavior vs and responsibility to others

Speculative Fiction

- **fantasy, science fiction, and utopian/dystopian fiction** all fall under the rather broad umbrella term of **“speculative fiction”**
- a hard to term define
 - basically we’re talking about **fiction** that pushes the boundaries of the imagination
 - it **“speculates”** on the **“what if’s”** of history, of our world, of technology and science
 - **Science Fiction:** the "what ifs" which define the imaginary world are based on science and/or technology
 - often this setting is an imagined future (as in *The Giver* or *Divergent*)
 - **Fantasy:** the "what ifs" which define the imaginary world are based on the existence of **magic or supernatural elements.**
- In her book *Fantasy Fiction: An Introduction* (2005), Lucie Armitt offers a good functional definition of the fantastic when she notes that **“fantasy** sets up worlds that genuinely exist *beyond* the horizon, as opposed to those parts of our own world that are located beyond that line of sight but to which we might travel, given sufficient means” – by which she is referring to **science fiction** (8).

- Attributes of **Fantasy** include:
 - elements of the magical or supernatural
 - an imaginary world unlike the world we know
 - a distant setting, both in place and time
 - events and experiences that could not take place in the known world, with a reality that does not map onto the observable world as we know it, defying known laws of physics and science
- as opposed to the Attributes of **Realism** which include:
 - a world we already know, at least to some extent
 - a faithful rendering of historical events or periods
 - an emphasis on verisimilitude, which means that the events in the novel *could* happen
 - avoidance of the magical and supernatural in favor of things that are scientifically and physically possible or that actually (historically) occurred

Early Roots of Fantasy

- has its roots in the earliest oral literature:
 - such as Homer's *Odyssey*, which features gods, heroes, monsters, and a quest to return home
 - English literature: *Beowulf*, medieval King Arthur stories (Merlin)
- 19th century fantasy:
 - again Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is a landmark book in this genre
 - much of the fantasy of the Alice books is based on the experience of nonsense, in the form of nonsense poetry and the absurd behavior of its characters
 - J.M. Barrie – *Peter Pan* (1911)
 - a boy who never grows up and who flies with the Darling children to Neverland
 - L. Frank Baum – *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900)
 - Dorothy's adventures with Toto, the Scarecrow, the Lion, and the Tin Woodman brought the world of fantasy a very American heroine from Kansas
- Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Fantasy:
 - 20th century postwar fantasy for children and young adults was in many ways dominated by two figures:
 - **C.S. Lewis** and **J.R.R. Tolkien**
 - colleagues at Oxford University
 - also members of the informal literary discussion group known as the Inklings
 - Lewis's best-known fantasy novels for children are his Chronicles of Narnia series: seven fantasy novels published between 1950 and 1954
 - Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (1954-1955)
- fantasy for children and young adults grew significantly in popularity after Tolkien and Lewis
 - Susan Cooper, Natalie Babbitt, Ursula K. LeGuin, Terry Pratchett, Diana Wynne-Jones, Philip Pullman, J.K. Rowling, Rick Riordan, George R.R. Martin etc.
 - lots of initials! I'm not sure why...

Types of the Fantastic

- John Rowe Townsend divides the fantastic into three categories: "anthropomorphic fantasy," fantasies that create imaginary worlds or countries (**high fantasy**), and fantasies that inhabit the world as we know it but require some distance of the natural order of things

- **Anthropomorphic Fantasy**
 - animals or inanimate objects are endowed with human qualities
 - we've already seen this one in *Charlotte's Web*!
 - other notable examples:
 - Anna Sewell: *Black Beauty* (1877)
 - Brian Jacques: Redwall series (1986-2010)
 - Kenneth Oppel: *Silverwing* (1997)

 - **High Fantasy**
 - "secondary" worlds created that run parallel to our world
 - elevated quests and lofty struggles between good and evil
 - Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy
 - Lewis and Tolkien

 - Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series, Lewis's Narnia books, and Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, are examples of high fantasy because of their moral seriousness and the struggle between good and evil that they depict
 - in contrast, Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* does not qualify as high fantasy since it takes place in a dream and lacks a serious moral purpose

 - many secondary-world fantasies and books of high fantasy are produced in series form, which has the effect of making the magical setting itself the focus of the books

 - the third type of fantasy (fantasy that inhabits our world) is significantly less common
 - depict magic without creating a fully elaborated secondary world
 - David Almond's *Skellig* (1998) is a notable example
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The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

- high fantasy
 - magical secondary world

1) The Virtues of Fairy Tales and Fantasy

- is *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* a fairy tale?
 - No, but it does have fairy tale elements

- Lewis himself said he meant to write a fairy tale
 - Essay "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say What's To Be Said":
 - says he was enamoured of the form of the fairy-tale because of "its brevity, its severe restraints on description, its flexible traditionalism, its inflexible hostility to all analysis, digression, reflections, and "gas." Its very limitations of vocabulary became an attraction; as the hardness of the stone pleases the sculptor or the difficulty of the sonnet delights to sonneteer."

- According to Lewis, habit and familiarity have dulled our ordinary experience of everyday life, and in a real, imaginative way, the reading of fantasy makes our world more fully magical
 - another connection between realism and fantasy
 - both attempt to defamiliarize the world for us

- so he tells the story of Narnia to add luster and richness to the world of ordinary experience
 - this implies that something wonderful is inherent in the ordinary experience of everyday reality

- in *Lion*, the marvelous, in the form of natural human children, invades the daily reality in Narnia
 - equally, the marvelous, in the form of the fauns, witches and prophecies of Narnia exists just on the other side of an ordinary wardrobe in the primary world
 - wardrobe = much like fence in *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* or the fence in *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*
 - physical structure that separates the world of innocence from the world of experience
 - separates reality (air raid bombings) from fantasy (Narnia)
 - childhood (children in London) from adulthood (adults in Narnia by end of book)
 - home from away

2) Other Fairy Tale Elements Include:

- Aside from the obvious journey and struggle against a seemingly insurmountable force
 - bifurcation of woman into evil witch
 - Mrs. Beaver = typical “good” mother/godmother figure
 - unlike the witch who offers “magic” fake food as temptation, Mrs. Beaver generously provides nourishing food to the children
 - interesting that the word “home” is **always** used to describe the Beaver’s lodge (see page 80)
 - as opposed to the word “house” which is **always** used to describe the Witch’s castle (see page 95)
 - Lucy – like Cinderella or Beauty, she’s the youngest, the kindest, and the most generous of heart

3) Fiction and Reality

- one of the recurrent themes of the novel is the relation of fiction to reality
- For Narnians, humans are fictive
 - **READ Page 15: “Lucy thought she had never been in a nicer place...” → “Is Man a Myth?”**
 - among the books on Mr. Tumnus’ shelf are *Men, Monks, and Gamekeepers: A Study in Popular Legend* and *Is Man a Myth?*
 - an interesting twist on conventional fantasy where the fantastic world invades the human world
 - here, the human world invading the fantastic!
 - Mr. Tumnus: “when he saw Lucy he gave such a start of surprise that he dropped all his parcels. ‘Goodness gracious me!’ exclaimed the Faun” (9)
- Edmund and the others think Lucy’s Narnia is a fiction at first
 - an interesting comparison to Fern in *Charlotte’s Web* when she tells her parents that she can hear the animals in the barn speaking to each other
- **READ Page 27: “For the next few days she was very miserable...” → “...made her very unhappy.”**
 - interesting play on reality and fiction here
 - will discuss, soon, how Professor is a mediating figure
 - never doubts Lucy’s truthfulness
 - much like Dr. Dorian in *Charlotte’s Web*
- the question of what is real is manifested in our being prevented from settling into any one level of reality – there’s always something further beyond or behind what we see
 - several examples:
 - the wardrobe

- the hospitable Mr. Tumnus who turns out to be a deceiver
 - the Witch deceives Edmund
 - the beasts at the witch's castle actually seem alive but are actually stone
 - Winter in Narnia feels real, but it's a false one, artificially imposed and sustained
- once Edmund has been rescued from the knife of the Witch, another area of reality is introduced with the idea of a "Law" we couldn't have imagined, that will allow the Witch to claim Edmund's life
 - Similarly, by another "Law," Aslan rises again and overthrows the witch
 - then, after becoming Kings and Queens, the children are suddenly returned to their former selves in their old world (the primary world)
 - so as we move through the story, we move "farther in" to deeper levels of reality

4) Theme of Awakening to Another Reality or Another Way of Living

- the increase in plot complexity and moral complexity as the novel unfolds is an expression of the novel's theme of awakening to new meanings, new understandings
 - the land is awoken from winter to spring
 - stasis gives way to motion, fluidity, fertility
- the statues are awakened – returned to life by the breath of Aslan
 - **READ Page 184-185 – "I expect you've seen someone pit a lighted match to a bit of newspaper..." → "...hurrahs, songs and laughter"**
 - why does Lewis use this analogy?
 - the analogy with the newspaper roots magic in the everyday
 - it makes "magic" easier for children and adults to understand and relate to
 - we will not only follow, but accept and believe the unknown if part of it is described in terms of the known
- a sign of a good fantasy writer is the ability to create an internally-coherent world that has its own laws and rules, its own plausible geography, etc.
 - but also to use analogies to the everyday world to help us believe in that unknown secondary world
- what seems dead in this novel comes to life
 - if we read this text through a Christian lens – which I hope you realize you should *always* be doing as Lewis was an incredible theologian and all of his works are rooted in Christianity – Aslan giving the breath of life to the statues is him acting like God
 - and, of course, the central awakening image in the novel is Aslan's resurrection
 - only through this are all of the other awakenings possible
- the awakenings are registered in the natural surroundings
 - the first visits to Narnia are evening scenes
 - change to morning ones as time moves on and Winter moves into Christmas
 - only one more night before the novel ends – the night of Aslan's death

5) Ethical Values / Vision

- what separates children's literature from YA literature, more than anything else, is an emphasis on ethics
 - on the ethical choices that we make that shape who we are, how others see us, and our lives
- Lewis's key ethical issues center on trust and involve truthfulness, loyalty, responsibility, and keeping promises
- The plot continually turns on questions of trust:
 - other children don't believe Lucy at first
 - Mr. Tumnus confesses his plans to betray Lucy's trust in him
 - when Edmund and Lucy meet in Narnia, he tells her she shouldn't trust everything Mr. Tumnus told her about the White Witch

- Edmund lies about having been in Narnia and betrays Lucy
 - this culminates in Edmund's betrayal of his friends and siblings to the White Witch
 - Edmund puts his trust in the White Witch's empty promises and gives into his greed and gluttony
- the question of doing what is decent and humane appears in an even starker light when it comes to clear DUTY
 - all of the children have special tasks which are also tests
 - tests / quests are common in fantasy fiction (think of Frodo and the ring)
 - the test is usually designed to find out what the person is made of, and then teach that person how to be something that s/he is not (heroic, for example)
- in the novel, the point about trying your best is clear
 - an important lesson for children
 - Given that Aslan has so much power, one would assume that he could just roar in the battle and transform all of Narnia
 - instead, he works slowly and calls on all of the talents and strengths of the other characters
 - can only be savior and rescuer if everyone else fights for what is right

6) Aslan

- the figure at the novel's centre
 - though, a rather mysterious one
 - his comings and goings are infrequent, unpredictable, and inexplicable
- a remarkably dynamic character
 - as opposed to the static witch who is single-minded
- an element of **anthropomorphic fantasy** in the novel
 - human in that he can be shamed when he's shaven, bound and muzzled
- obviously, he is clearly a **Christ figure**
 - he arrives at the same time as Father Christmas
 - he is a son of a Great Emperor
 - sacrifices himself freely as an innocent substitute for the guilty
 - he is jeered at and killed by wicked people (compare language of Aslan's death to the language describing Christ's in any of the Gospels)
 - and, finally, he is resurrected (cracking of Stone Table parallels opening of Christ's tomb)
 - more here if you are really interested in this reading, though it is rather straightforward: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aslan#Christian_interpretation
- the closest parallel between Aslan and Christ comes when Aslan offers his life to save Edmund, which is similar to Christ's death on the cross

7) The White Witch: Lilith

- the antagonist
 - the Witch's name – Lilith – means means “of the night”
 - as opposed to Lucy – *lux* = “Light”
- like Aslan, one of the novel's chief Christian symbols
- in Jewish mythology, Lilith's existence is explained by two versions of creation in *Genesis*
 - the first occurs when “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them” (1:27)
 - the second occurs when God creates Eve from Adam's rib (2:18)
 - the former account led to the tradition that God created Lilith, like Adam from the Earth and then later created Eve from Adam's rib
 - in this, they were equals and Lilith, as Adam's first wife, demanded equality
 - Lilith – not passive, but independent, and abandoned Adam

- according to the Talmud (the code of Jewish civil and religious law), Lilith is a demon who haunts the wilderness in stormy weather
 - o she is said to be especially dangerous to children and pregnant women
- Eve took Lilith's place as the mother of humankind and some critics suggest that Lilith came back through the serpent to punish Adam and Eve
- **we need to be alert to the implications of Lewis' using Lilith as an antagonist to Aslan/Christ**
- you might have noted that the valued female characters in the book (Lucy, Susan, Mrs. Beaver) are comparatively docile – like Eve
- when Edmund first sees the White Witch, he describes her beauty and power (**READ 32-34: "The reindeer were..." → "...proud and cold and stern."**)
 - o later, the beavers give us her history, noting that she comes from Lilith on one side and from giants on the other (pages 87-88)
 - o what's important, as the Beavers point out, is that **"...there isn't a drop of real human blood in the Witch"** (88)
 - she is, then, the enemy of all humanity
- she is also a character who is associated with false and deceitful art
 - o "creates" stone statues
 - o when we first meet her (32-34) she is a parody of Father Christmas
 - o her food doesn't nourish; it poisons and kills

8) The Professor – the novel's **Sympathetic Adult**

- seldom appears, but when he does, it is significant
- **READ PAGES 50-55: "the result was the next morning..." → "...and that was the end of the conversation."**
 - o Nose-Tapping Moment: (know this passage well – not word-for-word – but well enough that you could identify a small part of it on the exam or talk about how it relates to the overall idea of the sympathetic adult that we have been discussing)
- the embodiment of wisdom and imagination, and of loyalty to the truthful child (Lucy)
- **a mediating figure** between the world of reality and fantasy
 - o he has no doubt that Lucy is speaking the truth when she says that she has travelled to Narnia through the wardrobe
 - in fact, we get the sense that he has been there himself
 - tries to convince Susan and Peter that Lucy isn't "mad"
 - but treats them respectfully as he does so
 - sympathetic towards Lucy, but also towards Peter and Susan's inability to understand
- much like Dr. Dorian in *Charlotte's Web* (one of our many other sympathetic adults on this class) (insert nose tap here...), the Professor uses logic to deal with the issue
 - o as an empiricist (a pragmatist if you will), he relies on experience, observable phenomena
 - he asks the children, **"does your experience lead you to regard your brother or your sister as the more reliable? I mean, which is the more truthful?"** (51)
 - his own empirical observations prove to him that Lucy isn't insane
- BUT, Peter is also empirical, and he argues that **"if things are real, they're there all the time"** (52)
- the crux of the professor's counter-argument to this (on **Page 54**) is the issue of time: something that is conventionally measured by a clock or calendar, but is really subjectively experienced (think about it... "what is time?")
 - o other worlds probably have separate times, the professor reasons on **page 54**
 - o **and in making this statement he wonderfully mediates between empiricism (reality) and imagination**

9) Home-Away-Home

- Page 1 – 2: Opening paragraph
 - like a proper opening, prepares us for what is to come in the novel
 - also establishes **home-away-home** theme
 - like Bruno, forced to leave “home” in London because of air-raids
 - notice that Lewis uses the word “house” to describe their new surroundings
 - will eventually use the word “home” to describe the Professor’s House / Primary World
 - Page 21: Lucy: “Let me go home...”
- Page 3: “let’s go and explore tomorrow”
 - language of “away” = “exploring” and “adventure”
 - same on Page 4: **“everyone agreed to this and that was how the adventures began...”**
- Page 80: “Lucy thought the Beavers had a snug little home...”
 - Mrs. Beaver feeds them
 - “a home away from home” perhaps...
 - regardless, “home” starting to be associated with the good things in Narnia
- but not with the Witch
 - Page 95 (title of chapter): Witch’s castle always referred to as “house” – here and throughout the book
 - as we have seen over and over again in this course, homes are always associated with love, nurturing and food!
 - so it comes as no surprise that the White Witch lives in a pointy, uninviting castle containing nothing but empty rooms and stone statues
- Page 198-201
 - word “home” not explicitly mentioned
 - but we nevertheless get the sense that Car Paravel has become “home” to the children
 - and it is a home that they will return to many times: “Yes, of course you’ll get back to Narnia again someday...” (206)
 - and they do, over and over again in the series of books that follows this one
 - so an interesting twist on the pattern as Narnia essentially becomes their new “home”
 - regardless of whether “home” is the Professor’s house or Narnia, the book (unlike *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*) sticks to the more comforting version of the home-away-home pattern, suggesting that you can, in fact, return home again
 - NOT the pattern that we will see in the final two novels of the course