

## Children's Literature – Pre notes

### Week 1

What is children's literature?

- Genre of literature
- Implies children as readers
- Folcalization through a child's perspective and use of child protagonists

Golden age of children's literature

- 1865- Alice in Wonderland
- 1901 – The Tale of Peter Rabbit

Fairy tales: conte de fées

- Transformation and reinventions of very basic story structure
  - Common motifs: magic spells, animal helpers, powerful talismans, wishes and threatening spaces
  - They are constantly revised
- Derived from
  - medieval sources : bards that go around
  - Ancient stories and myths
- Difference between Oral folk tales and fairy tales
  - Fairy tales are written down
  - Folk talks about legends and myths of gods and supernatural beings

Authors

Charles Perrault – 1697

- Reflect the mores, norms and habits of their aristocratic readers
- **Stories by Perrault has a moral attached at the end of the story**
- **It was mainly written for the aristocratic**

Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm – 1815

- Goal was to capture and record German culture
- wrote for children audience. To please children
- emphasized traditional roles of women

Fairy tales were catalogued by various critics including Vladimir Propp for the Propp model of fairy tales

## **Week 2**

Propp's 31 functions – just look and know them

Propp's 7 character types

- Villain
- Donor or Provider
- Helper (like fairy god-mother)
- Princess and her father
- Dispatcher (someone who sends for help)
- Hero
- False hero

### **Little Red Riding Hood**

- Fairy tale with no royalty
- No enchantment
- Story from the bards
- Test of maturity – grandmother lets her go into the forest
- Sexual innuendo.
- Blatant morality. With an abrupt end.
- Vulgarity, cannibalism and potty humor.
- Wolf, capital N and W for the wolf, referring to someone
- Girls are too naïve and trusting of everyone
  - Pg 13 when the girl takes off her clothes and gets in bed
- Perrault's morality: Vanity and Ignorance
  - Story of how proper girls should behave
- Difference between Perrault and Grimm
  - Perrault is violent, Grimm has a hero (woodsman saves the grandmother and LRRH)
  - Distinction between male goodness and evilness
  - Grimm provide two separate endings but Both authors blame LRRH on her actions

## “Disnification”

- Making into a film
- Negative because it strips the main story away to make it more kid-friendly.
- Jack zips
  - Walt Disney took the fairy tale and cast a spell for those viewing it capitalized on American innocence and utopianism

## Paper bag princess

- Robert Munsch and Martchenko
- Feminist revision
- **Fractured fairy tale**
  - Fairy tale modified in such a way to be for contemporary audience
- Imitates another style as a parody of traditional fairy tale convention
- Shows that the girl can have control of the situation, a princess needing to save a prince in her paper bag.
- Real prince and real princess is not based on what they wear but what they do.
- There is a breakage in marriage convention as image shows it as a happy ending rather than a sad ending which is usually conveyed in typical fairytales.

## Picture books

- Interdependence of pictures and books.

## Meta fiction

- Type of fiction that self-consciously addresses the devices of fiction
  - Fiction that is aware of itself as fiction
  - Stinky cheese man.

## Intertextuality

- Any relationship between two texts such that the meaning of one text is enriched by, or is even dependent upon, its relationship to the other text.

## Week 3

## Picture books

- Narrative or non-narrative book in which the words and images form an artistic whole

## Meta fiction

- Books that are aware of themselves
- Ex. Mo willems – elephant and the piggy series

## Intertextuality

- Relationship between two or more texts, where one borrows from another texts
- Refers to all kinds of texts; parodies, irony, direct quotations

## Picture books

- They are very important and introduce children to the world around them
- Relationship between picture and words
  - Symmetrical – pictures and words have the same message, pictures reinforce the words
    - Ex. Paper bag princes
  - Complementary- words and images are interdependent and words and pictures fill each other's narrative gaps
    - Where the wild things are
  - Contradictory – words and pictures say the opposite
- Artistic choices are important for the book

## Where the Wild Things Are

- Psychological reading
  - for kids?
    - Tells them to face their fears
    - Dealing with anger
  - It is radical because
    - Anxiety, anger, punishment and frustration
  - Most people say its more about imagination versus reality
- The wild thing = children's acting out and misbehaving
- **Separation/individuation**
  - Phase of the psychological development
- Narrative of rage and aggression exercised through an empowering dream-journey

- Significant because max is the wolf (bad in fairy tale – ex. of **Metafiction**) indicates that there is something he needs to overcome. Place of imagination, where he imagines (the pages get bigger) – the growing of images correlates with the increase in power of Max’s imagination
- Temporal duration in words and pictures
  - Subjective time perception of a child
    - Moon symbolizes for max’s mood/realization
  - Objective time difference
    - “and it was still hot”
- **HOME-AWAY HOME theme is in effect**

## Week 4

### The Giving tree

- The nature of love
  - Author discusses the things the tree and the boy did together. And that the tree loved the boy
- Symmetrical relationship between text and images
  - Pictures reinforce the word
- the theme is about giving and sacrificing
- invites multiple types of reading and interpretation
- **Anthromorphism** – giving non-human objects (including animals) human characteristics. Ex. the tree
- Giving and altruism
  - The tree keeps giving the boy until it has nothing to give. The boy gives does not give anything back to the tree.
  - Exploitation – when one party takes advantage of the other party
- Marxist reading – boy becomes demanding and seeks the tree for financial and materialistic gain
- Environmental ethics – man is dependant on nature for survival
- Religious interpretation – parable love and sacrificial love
- Parent child interpretation – quote from ellen handler spitz

### The tale of peter rabbit

- Upcoming peril for Peter predicted through the combination of text and picture
- **Anthropomorphic** – Peter still shows characteristics of a rabbit.
  - the relationship between pictures and words
    - he is wearing a different color jacket
    - he is different from the other rabbits (he is wild)
- there is a pedagogical and didactic functions obtained from the this tale
  - Peter is a round-like character and he is quite believable
  - he is portrayed as a child rabbit.
  - Peter accomplishes his tasks and comes back
- **Home-away home pattern**
  - Most common plots of children's and young adult literature involves the departure from home, followed by adventure in the world and return of home.
    - **Home is good, a place where you wanna go back to**
  - General pace of these narratives quicken in the away section where the character find danger, adventure and disappointment and discomfort
  - Going away is dangerous and thus the story is didactic. The book would not have appealed to children if it were in mother's POV.

## Week 5

### Charlotte's Web

- first novel many adults read to their children, and the first novel that many children learn to read on their own
- the structure of CW
  - The book starts of realistic sense but then goes into the fictitious world.
  - the opening pages of Charlotte's Web do not seem to have much to do with the novel that follows them
    - **a very sharp contrast between realism of the opening two chapters and the fantasy that follows**

- the relation between lion and witch with charollete. the professor and the doctor

Townsend's three categories of Fantasy

- Fantasies that create imaginary worlds of countries
  - **High fantasy**
    - Ex. tolkein, C.S Lewis, George R.R. Martin
- Fantasies that inhabit the world we know but require some disturbance of the natural order of things
- Anthropromorphic fantasy
  - animals or inanimate objects are endowed with human qualities
    - lies in the fact that it asks the readers to imagine talking animals banding together against the human world

**Charllote's web features two distinct – though co-existing – worlds:**

- **The farm from the human perspective – (realism)**
- **The farm from the animal's perspective – (fantasy)**

Passages of realism are often used to inject difficult truths into the fantastical world of animal

- Truth about things like change, growing older, death, responsibility, love, etc.

Character types

- Flat character – not fully developed but important to the plot
  - Lurvy
- Round characters – fully developed, primary character
  - Dynamic characters – ex. Wilbur
  - Static character – ex. Charolotte

Both women, save Wilbur from iminient death

**Rope Swing passage pg 68 and pg 69**

- Most celebrated about the whole book as he used the commas he captured the moment so well
- Fern goes out the barn door and back in, is a symbolism for her to swing away from the barn and then back in (out to freedom)leaving the safe comfortable world of the barn and to the unknown world.
  - This relates to p 93 as charolotte creates the web.

## Sympathetic adult figure

- Dr Dorry – charlotte's web
- Pevell and Maria in BISP
- Templeton
  - Characterization, developed through actions, speech, appearance and comments
  - Children know to not be trusted
  - His grin is quite sinister
  - He takes joy in causing pain to other people
  - He behaves like a rat so thus he is a rat
    - His sarcastic, cynical, selfish, gluttonish behavior
  - He is also goofy, cause he chews down Charlotte's egg sack
  - White warns the readers to watch out for templeton that he can't be trusted
- Queenborough Bridge
  - Satire and used as a symbol of how ridiculous humans are (compared to animals)
    - Charlotte satires humans by saying that there is a weakness in humans
    - She says that the point of the bridge is a sign of a man's hubris
      - Says it as the uselessness of human life, and shows how ridiculous human lives are
- Charlotte's web can be taken in as a trap of how she places it on the humans
  - **The fact humans of animals. "balloonist" metaphor for spider moving, where the fantastic world and the realistic world come together**

## Change of season

- Summer moving into fall – indicates moving into old age (Charlotte's about to die)

## The fair is crucial

- Represent high moment for Wilbur -> adventure
- We also see a change in Fern as she is interested in boys
- Ferris wheel represent change of time (also Charlotte's web)

- Highest moment of Wilbur time, the moment of Wilbur's time, the moment where Wilbur is attracting the crowd. This is the time where there is an individuation between Fern and Wilbur
- When the Ferris wheel is taken apart indicates, foreshadows the end of Charlotte
- Charlotte is the writer and is in the same line as the author EB. White

### **Home away Home pattern**

- Wilbur escapes the fences but he decides to come back because of food and so he does

### **Week 7**

The Boy in Striped Pyjamas

Book may have been told in German

Book about the Holocaust, but it is not used in the book

- Instead puns are used, thus book fails to inform the audience about Holocaust unless the reader is familiar with semantics

Book blurs the line between children lit and adulthood

### **Home-away home**

- Perry Nodelman
  - The Pleasure of Children Literature (2003)

Historical fiction

- Should have been linked to the history of didacticism and continuing sense that works for children and young adults
- Not a fairy tale – but a book about death and concentration camps Holocaust
- It is a historical novel
- The period is its setting and defining integral feature of the work
  - Holocaust is crucial to the plot
- History serves as the backdrop
- Includes historical figures as characters – Hitler
- Portrays history with care – historical realism
- Traumatic theory

- Survivors stress that it is impossible for anyone to get the holocaust right, since the author are just showing representation
  - Holocaust fiction
  - Language has limitation and words cannot express the aristocracies that occurred during the holocaust

#### Children and trauma

- Making friendship if anything can overcome cultural boundaries
  - imagined as both extremely vulnerable – and therefore susceptible to trauma – and especially resilient and adaptable – thus making them ideal candidates to bear cultural traumas and to work through them on behalf of everyone

#### **delayed decoding**

- **the device of delayed decoding simultaneously enacts the objective and subjective aspects of moment of crisis**

#### defamilization

- artistic technique of presenting to reders common things in an unfamiliar way, in order to enhance perception of the familiar
  - **we take something we know but now we need to look through the plot through Bruno eyes even if it means defamilizing ourself**

## **Week 8**

#### The invention of hugo caberet

- Martin scorisy thinks of himself as a film conservationist.
- He took the story of meiller and made it into film.
  - Melleir used the idea of Safety Last, a 1923 film into his book
- Scorcisy put the safety last in the movie but selsnick just put a picture

#### The **fidelity** of the story determine if it is faithful to the story or not.

- Scorsicy recreated the pictures from the book and created a faithful adaptation of the book

#### **Close, Loose, intermediate adaptation**

- **Close** – when most of the narrative elements in the literary text are kept in the film
  - **Ex. hugo**
- Loose adaptation – most of the story elements of the literary text are dropped
  - **Ex. The giver**
- Intermediate – in the middle

### **The image of hugo climbing out the clocktower – discuss**

- **Based on the 1923 film by Harold Lloyd**
- **The film *safety last***
- **It relates to his father**
- **Scorsese relates this image to his film of *Hugo* where he portrays this scene very nicely**

**Ekphrasis** – a rhetorical device in which one medium of art tries to relate to another medium by defining and describing its essence and form.

- Taking a film and making into a book

**Scorsese is very respectful of Selznick's drafting and often uses them to frame the scenes in the film**

### Metaphors and Motifs

- Automaton is significant in this story as it's the metaphor for the film as we relive the past
  - **Its is a ghostly reminder of his past**
  - **Links hugo to his father, as it becomes a surrogate to his lost father**
  - **Links to Isabelle**
  - **Relates to Meillier as he made it and donated to the museum**
- Scorsese deals with hugo's link to his father very well. The flashback in the movie with the use of sound and light
- The clockwork
  - Meillier is one of those magicians to use clockwork as magic.
  - Clockmaking was a way to connect to hugo's father
  - It is a metaphor for people to move around the world.

- Pg374
  - **Talks about meillier as a broken machine**
  - **If you loose your purpose, you are then broken**
  - **Thinking of the world as a clock, as a machine. A existential crisis. The movement with a period of time is a metaphor of the clock and machine**

At the party scene in the film, scorcese brings about two character Salvador and james joyce.

## **Week 10**

### **Speculative fiction**

- Fantasy, science fiction and utopian/dystopian fiction falls under this umbrella term
- Ask what ifs' of the world and its system
- Fantasy
  - Fantasy has its early roots in oral literature
    - Modern day 20<sup>th</sup> century fantasy by C.S Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien
  - Types of Fantasy
    - **Anthropormorphic Fantasy**
      - Animals or inanimate objects endowed with human qualities
        - **Ex.** charlotte's web
    - **High fantasy**
      - Secondary worlds created that run parallel to our world
        - Lewis and Tolkien
        - George R.R Martin

### **Lion, Witch and Wardrobe**

- High fantasy
- the virtues of fairy tales and fantasy
  - LWW is not a fairy tale elements
  - Lewis said he meant to write a fairy tale

- he says habit and familiarity have dulled our ordinary experience of everyday life and in imaginative way, the reading of fantasy makes our world more fully magical
- **the Lion, a marvelous form invades the daily realities of Narnia and it is just on the other side of the wardrobe**
  - the wardrobe is similar to the fence in the boy in striped pyjamas and the tale of Peter Rabbit
    - it is the physical structure and that separates the world of innocence to a world of experience
    - separates reality and from fantasy
    - childhood to adulthood
    - home from away
- **The theme of Fiction to reality**
  - Page 15: "Lucy thought she had never been in a nicer place. It was a little, dry, clean cave of reddish stone with a carpet on the floor and two little chairs ("one for me and one for a friend," said Mr. Tumnus) and a table and a dresser and a mantelpiece over the fire and above that a picture of an old Faun with a gray beard. In one corner there was a door which Lucy thought must lead to Mr. Tumnus's bedroom, and on one wall was a shelf full of books. Lucy looked at these while he was setting out the tea things. They had titles like *The Life and Letters of Silenus or Nymphs and Their Ways or Men, Monks, and Gamekeepers; a Study in Popular Legend or Is Man a Myth?*"
    - Interesting twist on the conventional fantasy world invades the human world
  - Page 27: "For the next few days she was very miserable. She could have made it up with the others quite easily at any moment if she could have brought herself to say that the whole thing was only a story made up for fun. But Lucy was a very truthful girl and she knew that she was really in the right; and she could not bring herself to say this. The others who thought she was telling a lie, and a silly lie too, made her very unhappy."
    - Interesting play on reality and fiction here

- Never doubt Lucy's truthfulness, much like Dr. Dorian in Charlotte's Web
- The theme of awakening to another reality or another way of living
  - Pg 184-185- "I expect you've seen someone pit a lighted match to a bit of newspaper ...."
  - Analogy with the newspaper roots magic in the everyday
    - It makes magic easier for children and adults to understand and relate to
- The theme of ethics is also very much emphasized in this text
- Aslan, is the figure at the novel's core
  - He is the element of anthropomorphic fantasy
  - He is obviously the Christ figure
- The white witch: Lillith
  - We need to be alert that the implications of Lewis's using of Lilith as an antagonist as suppose to Aslan/Christ
- **The Professor in LWW is a Sympathetic adult**
  - shows the embodiment of wisdom and imagination, and of loyalty to the truthful child
  - **Mediating figure** between the world of reality and fantasy
    - doesn't doubt Lucy that she has travelled to Narnia and back
      - we get a sense that he might have gone to Narnia also
      - tries to convince Susan and Peter that Lucy isn't mad
      - treats all parties respectfully
  - **Very similar to Mr. Dorian in Charlotte's web as the professor uses logic to deal with this situation**
  - **The professor patiently reasons with the children, and mediates between reality and imagination**
- **HOME-AWAY-HOME**
  - Opening paragraph in LWW establishes the home-away-home theme
    - **Like Bruno is forced to leave home, the children are also forced to leave home.**

- Lewis distinguishes this between “home” and “house”
- **Pg 80.** Lucy thought that beavers have a “snug little home”
  - Home is regarded as a good thing in Narnia
- opposite for the Witch
  - its referred to as house
- **Pg198-201** - the word home is not explicitly mentioned but Car paravel has become a “home” to the children
  - and it is home they will return to all the time
  - Interesting how Narnia becomes essentially their new home
- This is not the case for the Giver and the Divergent

## **Week 11**

### **Speculative fiction : fantasy, science fiction and utopian/dystopian fiction**

- Science fiction: the imaginary world based on science and technology
- Fantasy: imaginary world based on the existence of magic or supernatural elements

### **Utopian and dystopian fiction**

- **Utopia**
  - **Creation of a ideal society – which is impossible**
  - Pun from two greek words
    - Eutopias – “good place”
    - Outopos = “no place”
  - EX. The scene of the captiol in hunger games is from derived look of the Washington memorial
- **Dystopia**
  - Focus on poverty, war, squalor, suffering, and oppression
  - World characterized on dehumanization and others

### **The Giver**

- Lowry’s world gone wrong

- Society that seemed perfect is flawed due to lack of emotional expression and freedom
- Pg 20, 48, 97
- Main characters of dystopian world goes against dystopian world
- **The Ceremony of Dystopian fiction**
  - Ceremony that marks the passage from childhood to adulthood
    - the ceremony of twelve – the giver
      - movement into adulthood – associated with assigning a job
      - gaining identity, paradoxically means moving into a prescribed career
      - defined by age groups, where each is with a particular stage of development
      - ceremony celebrates differences, ironically leading to conformity as everyone is assigned as a career
        - Jonas’s difference is acknowledged
    - Harry Potter – the sorting hat
      - The houses
    - The hunger games – Reaping
      - Katniss’s defiance to reaping ceremony
        - Sacrifice of sister and choosing to take her sister’s place
    - Divergent – choosing ceremony
      - Described all in Chapter 5
  - Balaka Basu’s text on “what faction are you in”

## **Week 12**

### **The giver**

- Euphemism
  - An indirect word for something that is for nice or hard
- **Delayed decoding**
  - As in the BISP.

- The reader's journey through the life of Jonas and also realizes the meaning of the release at the same time as Jonas. "Release" is a celebratory thing, but it also a punishment.
  - Pg 147 – when Jonas figures out the meaning of the release
  - Pg 171 – Jonas is about to leave to elsewhere
  - Pg 175 – Jonas's release to elsewhere
- **Memory**
  - A key theme in this book. Lowry was inspired by her father.
    - If you don't have memory, you can't have pain.
    - This shows in the Giver where all the memories and the collective experience is given to the Giver, Jonas was chosen because he can see beyond. And so can Gabe
- **Pg 77. "weighted with them, Giver gives the memory of snow to Jonas"**
  - The sled is the first memory he received, sled becomes the symbol of something for pleasure and pain
  - The cause of release of painful memories caused the release of good memories too
  - Pg 172. We see that Jonas's selflessness for Gabe. His sacrifice for the community where it's better to have the memory of pain and happiness versus having no memory at all
  - **The theme of self sacrifice is evident**

## **Divergent**

- we immediately know how the book is going to be just based on the first two chapters
  - Beatrice cutting her hair
  - **Home-Away-Home**
  - She is lingering her image over the mirror, mother lets her
  - It's a foreshadowing
- **Beatrice faces the dilemma of selfishness and selflessness**
  - **"think of the family" Caleb says for selflessness**
  - **"but also think for yourself" Caleb says for selfishness**

- the choice between dauntless (selfishness) vs abnegation (selflessness)
- the book asks, is it okay to be selfish when deciding for your life, the author says yes it is necessary
- **The CHANGE, CHOICE and IDENTITY is important in this text**
  - The word divergent is on a separate line pg 23. Indicating that she will always be a divergent
  - Although she gets to choose, she still has to still choose a faction and conform to the ideals of the faction
    - just like the giver
  - she changes over time to learn of what it looks to be dauntless, and this takes time
    - pg 50 – she completed the first step of the initiation by jumping onto the train
    - pg58 this is where a huge identity change occurs
      - she realizes that jumping off the building is a scare-tactic and she takes off her gray clothing, she **divests herself from her abnegation clothing**
      - then she changes her name to Tris
    - thus she proves to other members in dauntless that she is not a stiff
- **Naming scenes** is important in multiple texts.
  - Where the wild things are – the mother called max the “THE WILD THING”
  - Beatrice changes her name to Tris
  - Acting of naming and being named is important
- The theme of **female heroism**
  - Paper-back princess
    - You can be different and you can be a girl
  - Divergent
    - Interesting gender dynamics in divergent
      - Tris gets hercaught in certain situation but four comes and saves the her (qualities of a prince)
- **Home away Home**
  - “once you leave the nest, you cannot come back”

- for charlotte's web, home is change
- striped pyjamas , there is no home
- divergent – faction before blood
  - you cannot go back home
  - pg 73, tris acknowledges the fact that she is not home and she is homesick
    - she also acknowledges that she cannot go back because she doesn't belong there
  - when she sees her mother, it symbolizes home
    - she still calls her Beatrice
    - he mother is a character type for a **sympathetic adult**
      - she is helping Tris transition into adulthood

Text

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