Introduction to Literary Studies

The Hunger Games (2008-2015):
What Novels Can Do That Films Can’t (and Vice Versa)

Prof. Dr. Michael Butter
The Basic Module Literary Studies
• lecture “Introduction to Literary Studies”

• seminar “Introduction to Literary Studies”

• tutorial accompanying the seminar

• no specific exam for the lecture

• take-home exam in the seminar (term paper and questions on the lecture)
Orientierungsprüfung/ Orientation Exam
• module “Basic Module: Literary Studies”

• class “Language and Use”

• should be completed after two semesters

• must be completed after four semester
Structure and Purpose of the Lecture
• accompanies the seminar

• shows how the concepts introduced there can be put to good use

• introduces you to different periods and genres in the history of literatures in English

• provides you with a selection of texts for the oral exam in the “Advanced Module: Literary Studies” or “Advanced Module: Cultural Studies” (BEdEnglisch, BA Anglistik/Amerikanistik)
Questions?
“the translatability of a given narrative from one medium to another” (Chatman 122)
Story vs. Discourse
STORY: what is told

DISCOURSE: how is it told

STORY TIME: the time that passes in the fictional world

DISCOURSE TIME: the time it takes to relate the story
Let’s compare the beginnings of novel and film. What is different and why?

Do not only pay attention to the story but also to the discourse, to how it is related?

What do book and film do differently?

Discuss this with your neighbor for five minutes.
When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim’s warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course she did. This is the day of the reaping.

I prop myself up on one elbow. There’s enough light in the bedroom to see them. My little sister, Prim, curled up on her side, cocooned in my mother’s body, their cheeks pressed together. In sleep, my mother looks younger, still worn but not so beaten-down. Prim’s face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named. My mother was very beautiful once, too. Or so they tell me.
Sitting at Prim’s knees, guarding her, is the world’s ugliest cat. Mashed-in nose, half of her one ear missing, eyes the colour of rotting squash. Prim named him Buttercup, insisting that his muddy yellow coat matched the bright flower. He hates me. Or at least distrusts me. Even though it was years ago, I think he still remembers how I tried to drown him in a bucket when Prim brought him home. Scrawny kitten, belly swollen with worms, crawling with fleas. The last thing I needed was another mouth to feed. But Prim begged so hard, cried even, I had to let him stay. It turned out OK. My mother got rid of the vermin and he’s a born mouser. Even catches the occasional rat. Sometimes, when I clean a kill, I feed Buttercup the entrails. He has stopped hissing at me.
Entrails. No hissing. This is the closest we will ever come to love.

I swing my legs off the bed and slide into my hunting boots. Supple leather that has moulded to my feet. I pull on trousers, a shirt, tuck my long dark braid up into a cap, and grab my forage bag. On the table, under a wooden bowl to protect it from hungry rats and cats alike, sits a perfect little goat’s cheese wrapped in basil leaves. Prim’s gift to me on reaping day. I put the cheese carefully in my pocket as I slip outside.
Perspective
When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim’s warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course she did. This is the day of the reaping.

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First-Person Narrative Situation

- narrator is part of the fictional world (Katniss tells the story)

- narrator’s knowledge is limited, same restraints as in real life

- subjective perspective: how s/he evaluates actions and other characters depends on his or her values, history, etc. (compare figural characterization in drama)
Lady in the Lake (1947)
Film Narration

- omniscient
- mostly follows Katniss but hardly ever do we see anything really from her perspective
- moves between places and characters
Representation of Feelings and Thoughts
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Time Shifts
Sitting at Prim’s knees, guarding her, is the world’s ugliest cat. Mashed-in nose, half of her one ear missing, eyes the colour of rotting squash. Prim named him Buttercup, insisting that his muddy yellow coat matched the bright flower. He hates me. Or at least distrusts me. Even though it was years ago, I think he still remembers how I tried to drown him in a bucket when Prim brought him home. Scrawny kitten, belly swollen with worms, crawling with fleas. The last thing I needed was another mouth to feed. But Prim begged so hard, cried even, I had to let him stay. It turned out OK. My mother got rid of the vermin and he’s a born mouser. Even catches the occasional rat. Sometimes, when I clean a kill, I feed Buttercup the entrails. He has stopped hissing at me.
When I was younger, I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about District 12, about the people who rule our country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol. Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts. Do my work quietly in school. Make only polite small talk in the public market. Discuss little more than trades in the Hob, which is the black market where I make most of my money. Even at home, where I am less, pleasant, I avoid discussing tricky topics. Like the reaping, or food shortages, or the Hunger Games. Prim might begin to repeat my words, and then where would we bee.
• chronological order: A B C
• PROLEPSIS (flashforward): A C B
• ANALEPSIS (flashback): B A C
Conveying Information
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These Tributes shall be delivered to the custody of The Capitol.

And then transferred to a public arena where they will Fight to the Death, until a lone victor remains.
It could be the ordinary leave-us-alone-and-we’ll-leave-you-alone type. But these are the Hunger Games, and ordinary isn’t the norm. More likely they will be one of the Capitol’s muttations, tracker jackers. Like the jabberjays, these killer wasps were spawned in a lab and strategically placed, like landmines, around the districts during the war. Larger than regular wasps, they have a distinctive solid gold body and a sting that raises a lump the size of a plum on contact. Most people can’t tolerate more than a few stings. Some die at once. If you live, the hallucinations brought on by the venom have actually driven people to madness. And there’s another thing: these wasps will hunt down anyone who disturbs their nest and attempt to kill him or her. That’s where the tracker part of the name comes from.
Level of Detail
“But in film representation, the number of details is indeterminate” (Chatman 125)
What associations do the clothes evoke?

Discuss this in groups of four for 5 minutes.