ABSTRACT

Ellen Berry, Advisor

The *Wizard of Oz* story has been omnipresent in American popular culture since the first publication of L. Frank Baum’s children’s book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* at the dawn of the twentieth century. Ever since, filmmakers, authors, and theatre producers have continued to return to Oz over and over again. However, while literally hundreds of adaptations of the *Wizard of Oz* story abound, a handful of transformations are particularly significant in exploring discourses of American myth and culture: L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900); MGM’s classic film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939); Sidney Lumet’s film *The Wiz* (1978); Gregory Maguire’s novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1995); and Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s Broadway musical *Wicked* (2003).

This project critiques theories of fixed or prescriptive American myth, instead developing a theory of American myth as active, performative and even, at times, participatory, achieved through discussion of the fluidity of text and performance, built on Diana Taylor’s theory of the archive and the repertoire. By approaching text and performance as fluid rather than fixed, this dissertation facilitates an interdisciplinary consideration of these works, bringing children’s literature, film, popular fiction, theatre, and music together in a theoretically multifaceted approach to the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, its many transformations, and its lasting significance within American culture. In the process of addressing these myths, this dissertation explores themes consistent within these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, looking at the shifting significance and
representations of gender, race, home, and magic in these works. These themes have been central to establishing the national identity of the citizen throughout American history; as such, their popular representations tend to reflect the values espoused by the surrounding culture at the time of creation. Therefore, a close examination of the recurring themes in these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story provides significant insight into the negotiation of these issues, their representations, and their corresponding moments in American culture.
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INTRODUCTION

The Wizard of Oz is a quintessentially American story that authors, filmmakers, and theatrical producers have been retelling and reinventing since the first publication of L. Frank Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in 1900, which is widely recognized as the first uniquely American fairy tale. Telling of the thrill of adventure, the comfort of home, and the journey of self-discovery, the Wizard of Oz narrative remains just as relevant today as at the time of its first writing. However, the meaning of this story, on its surface a simple children’s fairy tale, remains elusive and has been subject to multiple conflicting interpretations over the years. As a result, the Wizard of Oz narrative is more than a transparent children’s tale, a classic film, or a familiar storyline. Reimaginations of the Wizard of Oz story have been articulated since the original book’s publication, occurring at intersections of old and new, returning to traditional notions of identity and American myth, combining these well-known tropes with revisions and new elements to keep the narrative compelling and contemporary. Five especially significant incarnations of the Wizard of Oz story are Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900), the MGM film The Wizard of Oz (1939), Sidney Lumet’s African-American film musical The Wiz (1978), Gregory Maguire’s popular novel Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West (1995), and Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s hit Broadway musical Wicked (2003). A close consideration of these works, in tandem with thematic explorations of gender, race, home, and magic, provides an understanding of the myriad negotiations of American identity within these revisions over the past one hundred years. In the process of addressing these myths, this dissertation explores several cultural themes within these
five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, looking at the shifting significance and representations of gender, race, home, and magic in these works. These issues have been of central significance in constructing the ideal American citizen and as a result, a close examination of the recurring themes in these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story provides significant insight into the negotiation of these issues, their representations, and their corresponding moments in American culture.

However, these transformations of the familiar *Wizard of Oz* tale do more than reflect the values of their surrounding societies. Instead, the negotiation of this canonical text provides fertile space for struggling with these issues, serving as an indicator of the conflicts preoccupying American culture at each unique sociohistorical moment, signaling tensions and anxieties in the surrounding society that cultural producers and consumers address through not only lived experience, but also through literature, film, music, and other engagement with popular culture. As such, *The Wiz* addresses tensions in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement and Broadway’s *Wicked* focuses on a tyrannical and manipulative ruler, playing to packed theatres in immediate concurrence with a period of political unrest in America. Not only do these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative reflect the significance of the themes of gender, race, home, and magic within American culture, but they also speak to the struggles surrounding their highly-contested meanings. As a result, the reinvention of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative is a useful tool for considering shifting notions of American identity and the negotiation of these central themes within the discourse of what it means to be American.

This dissertation is arranged in two main sections: theoretical and thematic. In the first section, Chapter One provides an overview of the discourse of the American
myth/symbol school and reinvents this outdated theory through engagement with conversations surrounding the fairy tale, the figure of the female hero, and the role of dynamic revision in productively addressing American myth. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the use of this updated theory of American myth and its specific applicability to the *Wizard of Oz* narrative tradition. Chapter Two establishes a theory of text and performance designed to put a variety of mediums, including children’s literature, film, popular fiction, and live performance into dialogue with one another. This framework draws upon Diana Taylor’s discussion of text and performance in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, adapting it to meet the unique nature of the recurring *Wizard of Oz* narrative.

The second section is divided into four thematic considerations central to multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story. Chapter Three addresses shifting representations of gender, including the disruption of traditional dichotomies of good and evil women, as well as the role of the physical embodiment of femininity. Chapter Four presents a consideration of historical and metaphorical discourses of race, including the intersection of these two approaches. Chapter Five focuses on images of home, the domestic space “there’s no place like,” in the famous words of Judy Garland; this chapter concludes with a consideration of maternal figures, who are the personification of the home, for better or worse, in these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale. Finally, Chapter Six explores dual discourses of magic as simultaneously threatening and empowering, as well as highlighting the negotiation of these contradictory representations from the *Wizard of Oz* to *Wicked*. 
The themes of gender, race, home, and magic are central to the construction of American identity, including who counts as a viable citizen and who is excluded. By engaging with a discourse of American myth, as established by Baum’s fairy tale, shifts within this narrative tradition are significant and indicative of the cultural tensions in each version’s individual sociohistorical moment. Finally, the *Wizard of Oz* narrative continues to draw authors, filmmakers, musicians, and audiences back to its familiar story, remaining a touchstone of American identity over more than a century, turning simultaneously toward the past and the future.
“Follow the Yellow Brick Road ...”

These words hold a privileged position within American popular consciousness, calling up images of adventure, self-discovery, and a journey, once more, into the fantastical land of Oz. However, as the familiar *Wizard of Oz* story is revisited and transformed, the characters traveling this path and where the road itself may lead have become more complicated and compelling. In addition, the repeated return to Baum’s familiar fable often serves as an indicator of tensions and anxieties within the contemporary culture of the revision, with writers, filmmakers, and theatrical producers referring back to the same story in a new way to create a unique meaning for cultural consumers of each one’s specific sociocultural moment. Finally, the reinventions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative and their preoccupation with representations of gender, race, home, and magic coincide to address omnipresent questions of American identity.

The *Wizard of Oz* narrative has permeated American popular culture since L. Frank Baum first transported young readers to this magical land with his 1900 children’s book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Baum’s fairy tale has grown into an immediately recognizable popular culture icon and in the century since its first publication, the *Wizard of Oz* tale has been adapted, revised, and reinvented countless times, repeatedly negotiating and recasting the key themes of gender, race, home, and magic within the story. Five significant versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale which participate in this discourse of American myth are Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, MGM’s classic film

Baum’s Wonderful Wizard of Oz tells the now-familiar story of young Dorothy, who along with her dog Toto is magically transported by a cyclone from her aunt and uncle’s Kansas farm to the fantastical land of Oz, where her house lands on an evil witch, killing the villainess. Once there, she learns that the only person who can send her home is the Wizard of Oz himself. A good witch gives Dorothy magical silver shoes and a kiss of protection upon her forehead and sends the girl to the Emerald City. As Dorothy heads down the Yellow Brick Road, she meets a Scarecrow, a Tin Woodman, and a Cowardly Lion, who want a brain, a heart, and courage, respectively. The Wizard agrees to grant their wishes, but only if they destroy the second wicked witch. After Dorothy accidentally kills the witch, the friends return to the Emerald City only to find that the Wizard is a powerless “humbug” who cannot keep his promises to them. However, through their adventures, the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion discover that they have had within themselves what they were looking for all along. The only exception is Dorothy, who does not have the power to magically transport herself home, but one of Oz’s good witches informs her that the magical silver shoes can take her there in an instant. Dorothy bids her friends a fond farewell and returns to Kansas, to be happily reunited with her aunt and uncle. In the scores of revisions and reinventions of Oz over the past one hundred years, many details of the story have been changed and challenged,
though a few core elements have remained, including the central cast of characters and the recurring themes of gender, race, home, and magic.

Since its inception, the *Wizard of Oz* story has gone through countless reinventions, including several more *Oz* books written by Baum himself, additional books contributed by other “Royal Historians of Oz,”¹ and numerous adaptations for stage and screen. The 1939 MGM film version of *The Wizard of Oz* is undoubtedly the most well-known cinematic adaptation of Baum’s American fairy tale, directed by the legendary Victor Fleming,² starring Judy Garland as Dorothy, and adapted for the screen by Noel Langley, Florence Ryerson, and Edgar Allen Woolf. Fleming’s classic film largely follows the same narrative structure of Baum’s fairy tale. A tornado transports Dorothy and Toto from Kansas to Oz where her house falls on and kills the Wicked Witch of the East, though in the MGM film, this transition is further emphasized by the visual switch from the drab sepia tones of Kansas to the vibrant Technicolor of Oz. In this version, Dorothy’s magical silver shoes are transformed into the iconic ruby slippers and the character of the good witch is developed into Glinda (Billie Burke), a resplendent and regal maternal figure who welcomes Dorothy to Oz. Along the Yellow Brick Road,

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¹ The title of “Royal Historian of Oz” is bestowed on authors who continued the *Oz* stories following Baum’s death. Baum is considered the first—and by some, the only real—Royal Historian of Oz. In addition to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, he continued the stories of Dorothy and her friends in *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (1904), *Ozma of Oz* (1907), *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz* (1908), *The Road to Oz* (1909), *The Emerald City of Oz* (1910), *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* (1913), *Tik-Tok of Oz* (1914), *The Scarecrow of Oz* (1915), *Rinkitink in Oz* (1916), *The Lost Princess of Oz* (1917), *The Tin Woodman of Oz* (1918), *The Magic of Oz* (1919), and *Glinda of Oz* (1920). In addition, Baum also published a collection of short stories set in Oz, *Little Wizard Stories of Oz* (1914). Over the past one hundred years, additional *Oz* stories have been written by Ruth Plumly Thompson, John R. Neill, Jack Snow, Rachel Cosgrove-Payes, and Eloise and Lauren McGraw; the works of Baum and these authors have come to be known as the “Famous Forty.” Early in the twentieth-century, the authors who were allowed to write about Oz were closely monitored and had to be officially approved by Baum’s publishers, Reilly & Lee; however, since Baum’s books have entered the public domain, countless retellings and revisionings of the *Oz* stories have been written by authors all over the world.

² Fleming was drawn away from *The Wizard of Oz* before completion, moving on to direct *Gone With the Wind* (1939); Richard Thorpe and George Cukor also worked briefly on *The Wizard of Oz* and King Vidor took over in Fleming’s absence, reputedly directing the sepia-toned frame narrative Kansas sequences.
Dorothy meets the same cast of characters: the Scarecrow (Ray Bolger), Tin Man (Jack Haley), and Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr). The Wizard (Frank Morgan) makes the same ultimatum and Dorothy destroys the now green-skinned Wicked Witch of the West (Margaret Hamilton), albeit accidentally, as in Baum’s book. Dorothy’s companions find they have always had the brain, heart, and courage they long for. The Wizard is a fake, but Glinda comes to the rescue and tells Dorothy of the magic of the ruby slippers, which transport her safely back to Kansas amid echoes of the girl’s proclamation that “there’s no place like home.” Concluding the visually-coded frame narrative, Dorothy reawakens in sepia-toned Kansas, where Aunt Em (Clara Blandick) reassures Dorothy that her adventures have been nothing but a dream. Silent film versions preceded the MGM *Oz* and many more cinematic adaptations have followed, but Garland has inarguably secured her place within American memory as the little girl from Kansas who traveled “over the rainbow,” and new generations of children follow her there with each ritualistic television screening of the classic film.

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3 The first *Wizard of Oz* film was a 1910 one-reel silent film, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; written by Baum himself and Otis Turner, this film began the long cinematic tradition of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative on the big screen. This was followed by several more silent films, many of which told Oz stories from later in Baum’s series, such as *Dorothy and the Scarecrow* (1910), *The Land of Oz* (1910), and *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* (1914), all of which were also single-reel films and many of which have unfortunately been lost. Another version of the original *Wizard of Oz* story was filmed in 1925, a black-and-white film that was seven reels and ran between seventy and ninety minutes; however, the MGM classic *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), directed by Fleming and starring Garland, has become the standard and is often one of the first images people think of when they consider the *Wizard of Oz* story and, in fact, more are familiar with the film than with Baum’s original children’s book. Many Oz films have been made since, though they continue to labor under the shadow of Fleming’s iconic movie and none of these films have been especially notable or successful. Some of these films include *The Wonderful Land of Oz* (1969), which tells the second story in Baum’s *Oz* series; *Return to Oz* (1985), in which young Dorothy (Fairuza Balk) returns to Oz; and, most recently, the Sci-Fi Channel’s original mini-series *Tin Man* (2007), which retells the familiar story with a science fiction/fantasy twist. Fraser A. Sherman’s *The Wizard of Oz Catalog: L. Frank Baum’s Novel, Its Sequels and Their Adaptations for Stage, Television, Movies, Radio, Music Videos, Comic Books, Commercials and More* is indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of the extended discourse established by Oz adaptations.
The Wiz presented another culturally significant perspective in the big-screen adaptation of Baum’s tale in its focus on an African American experience of searching for home and identity in the context of contemporary New York City. Starring Diana Ross as an adult Dorothy and directed by Sidney Lumet, The Wiz once again echoes the narrative structure established by Baum’s children’s book, though in Lumet’s film, the setting is altered, reestablished within a modern urban landscape, with Dorothy starting her journey in Harlem and transported to an Oz that is a fantastical version of New York City. While the Scarecrow (Michael Jackson) and Lion (Ted Ross) largely resemble their predecessors, the Tin Man (Nipsey Russell) is reinvented, a Coney Island-style amusement park figure rather than a rustic woodcutter. The group follows the Yellow Brick Road, destroys the Wicked Witch Evillene (Mabel King), and discovers that the Wiz (Richard Pryor) is a fraud. Dorothy shows her friends that they have a brain, a heart, and courage, while she herself internalizes the idea of home, a significant departure from the localized notions of home established by the earlier versions of Baum and MGM. Her magic silver shoes send her back to Harlem, with a new perspective on the meaning of home and her place within it. The Wiz occupies an important moment of racial representation in the development of this American fairy tale, as well as a dynamic act of appropriation, in which African American viewers claimed ownership of a narrative in which the racial Other had long been a conspicuously absent presence.

In 1995, Dorothy was pushed to the periphery as a new leading lady took center stage. Elphaba, more commonly known as Oz’s Wicked Witch of the West, is the unlikely and intriguing heroine of Gregory Maguire’s best-selling novel Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West. Wicked stands out from the other reinventions
of the Oz universe in its positioning of the familiar story from the perspective of the
Wicked Witch, a character who had previously been read and generally dismissed as
wholly monstrous and evil. Maguire’s work resituates this dynamic heroine to reveal
Elphaba as a flawed, fascinating woman and adds a texture and sinister undertone to Oz
that had to this point remained peripheral at best. Maguire’s novel begins with Elphaba’s
childhood, progresses through her education at Shiz University and her love affair with
the Winkie prince Fiyero, then follows her and her presumed son Liir to Kiamo Ko in the
West of Oz. Supplanting the familiar story of Dorothy and her friends, these canonical
characters are marginalized, with the narrative focusing almost exclusively on Elphaba,
including her friendship with Glinda. In addition, Maguire introduces a whole new cast of
characters in the form of sentient talking Animals and recasts the Wizard as a tyrannical
dictator, rather than simply a harmless fraud. Elphaba is destroyed by Dorothy at the
novel’s conclusion, marking an intersection with the preceding versions of the *Wizard of
Oz* narrative. This refocusing, with the emphasis on Elphaba as heroine, also worked to
foreground the idea of identity and magic as performative. One of Maguire’s main aims
is to explore the supernatural power Elphaba is capable of, in direct contrast to the ways
in which magic is used on Dorothy’s behalf to ensure ease and safety in her travels across
Oz and back to Kansas. In Maguire’s novel, magic is a source of empowerment for
Elphaba, but simultaneously a cause of her ostracism, a dynamic power that scripts her
body and identity in contentious and problematic ways.

Finally, with the opening of Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s Broadway
musical *Wicked* in 2003, theatre-goers too fell under the spell of Elphaba, Galinda (who
later becomes Glinda), and the other inhabitants of Oz. Schwartz and Holzman drew on
the narrative of Maguire’s novel, focusing on the transformation of Elphaba from green-skinned outcast to the powerful and reviled Wicked Witch of the West, complicating notions of good and evil by highlighting the public campaign mounted against Elphaba by the Wizard. The story is necessarily simplified for the stage with the narrative focusing even more exclusively on the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda established in Maguire’s novel, as well as the love triangle that arises out of both women’s affections for Fiyero, an original narrative element added by Schwartz and Holzman’s musical. Echoing Maguire’s transformation, the familiar figures of Dorothy and her friends become periphery and are never seen onstage. The Wizard is a tyrant, though in this transformation, one of manipulation and charm. Finally, Elphaba’s destruction follows the narrative tradition of earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, though in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, this death is revealed as a hoax, with Elphaba and Fiyero secretly reunited in a romantic resolution typical of Broadway megamusicals.⁴ Marking a shift from text to performance, the Tony Award-winning *Wicked* continues to play to sold out houses on Broadway and around the world.

These five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story are of particular interest, first and foremost, because they provide concrete examples for examining the way in which Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* works as a distinctly American myth. At the time of Baum’s writing, the author was positioned at the forefront of the frontier, in the isolated Dakota territory. Given his investment with the heroism of the frontier and the triumph posited by nationalistic notions of Manifest Destiny, Baum’s work was integral, among

⁴ As Jessica Sternfeld defines the megamusical as a genre, “the plots of megamusicals are big in scope: they are epic, sweeping tales of romance, war, religion, redemption, life and death, or some combination of these and other lofty sentiments … These are big plots that sweep across years, even decades, and feature broadly drawn characters in dramatic, sometimes melodramatic situations” (2).
other writings of the period, in constructing a uniquely American identity. In The
Wonderful Wizard of Oz, this project of establishing the ideal American citizen was
embodied by Dorothy and her companions; their determination, intelligence, empathy,
and courage were presented as ideal American traits, while the greed and manipulation of
the Wicked Witch situated her outside the realm of viable citizenship. Through these
constructions, Baum’s work, as the first uniquely American fairy tale, clearly established
who was included, protected, and celebrated within the discourse of national citizenship
and who was excluded and therefore subject to threat of vilification, marginalization, and
destruction. As such, Baum’s story not only entertained children, but also established a
mythic discourse of American identity, codifying privileged positions of nationalism,
gender, race, home, and magic. Drawing on discourses of the archetypal hero and the
fairy tale genre, including Jack Zipes’ Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale, this
dissertation explores “myth” as a familiar cultural narrative which embodies the themes,
values, identities, and even anxieties of a community, as demonstrated by these five
versions of the Wizard of Oz story. In the case of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Baum’s
American myth contains elements such as Dorothy’s self-sufficiency and control of her
own destiny; intellect, empathy, and bravery as desirable personal traits; and the
importance of questioning absolute power and traditional structures of authority. Baum’s
tale has been revised and reinvented numerous times and still remains a significant
discourse in American popular culture more than one hundred years after its first
publication.

While many of the mythic themes of Baum’s original story have stayed
consistent, others have been questioned and revised, added or subtracted. Four themes
which have remained under constant negotiation in these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative are those of gender, race, home, and magic. The representations realized in these discourses have been central to establishing the national identity of the citizen throughout American history; as such, their popular images tend to reflect the values espoused by the surrounding culture at the time of creation. For example, while Baum’s Dorothy privileges her domestic position within the sphere of home and family, a later heroine, such as Maguire’s Elphaba, may instead choose to identify through her own power and place within the volatile culture which surrounds her. This significant shift in representation points towards a corresponding change in cultural values of acceptable femininity and gender roles. Therefore, a close examination of the recurring themes of gender, race, home, and magic in these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story provides significant insight into the negotiation of these issues, their representations, and their corresponding moments in American culture. Finally, these transformations of the familiar *Wizard of Oz* tale do more than reflect the values of their surrounding societies. Instead, the negotiation of this canonical text provides fertile space for struggling with these issues, serving as an indicator of the conflicts preoccupying those cultures at each unique socio-historical moment. As such, *The Wiz* addresses tensions surrounding race and identity in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement and Broadway’s *Wicked* focuses on a tyrannical and manipulative ruler, playing to packed theatres in immediate concurrence with a period of political unrest in America. So not only do these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative reflect the significance of the themes of gender, race, home, and magic within American culture, but they also speak to the struggles surrounding their highly-contested meanings.
This consideration of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative draws on a combination of theoretical discussions of American myth, the heroic figure, and the interaction of the fairy tale tradition with larger mythic discourses; in doing so, this study will create a framework for critically addressing the retelling of the *Wizard of Oz* story across a variety of mediums and cultural contexts in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Defining American myth as a set of narratives which codify privileged values and a sense of national identity lends this theoretical structure a flexibility necessary in exploring the genealogy and development over an extended period time of themes such as gender, race, home, and magic within tellings and retellings of this familiar tale. Considering a multiplicity of positions and responses to the mythic narrative, as well as emphasizing the revisionist process of mythmaking, enables this theory to transcend the limitations of the canonical and monolithic approach of the early myth/symbol school of American studies. Addressing representations of race and gender, as well as cultural structures of power and privilege around issues such as home and magic, this exploration of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative works to highlight a discourse of multiplicity and to emphasize previously marginalized positions of identification and critical response.

In short, the reinvented theory of American myth outlined here addresses “myth” as a recurring cultural narrative, revised and repeated in American popular culture over an extended period of time. Outdated discourses of American myth are updated through engagement with a combination of theories of the female hero, including the discrepancies between her journey and that of her more “traditional” male counterpart. In addition, it is necessary to address the contemporary revisionist process of rewriting fairy tales to produce the possibility for more empowered representations and identifications.
for their female readers. Finally, this new theory of American myth also incorporates discourses of literature, film, and performance, creating a framework for reading the genealogy of this mythic tradition that is flexible, adaptable, and intertextual, devoted to the consideration of a multiplicity of perspectives rather than heralding a single, universal truth.

However, before resituating American myth to address contemporary popular culture, it is necessary to briefly outline the history of this theoretical tradition and its applicability to the *Wizard of Oz* narrative.

**DISCOURSES OF AMERICAN MYTH**

American culture studies as a discipline has its foundation in the myth/symbol school of theory, pioneered in 1950 by Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, in which Smith analyzes a variety of cultural representations, including westward expansion and Manifest Destiny. Smith refers to such mythic narrative patterns as “collective representations rather than the work of a single mind” (xi), arguing that these recurring themes and treatments were expressive not simply of a single author’s imagination, but reflective of the character of a nation. Mythic discourse plays a significant role in the development of national identity because, as Smith argues, “the American ideology [is] made into a myth” (26), codifying privileged values into cultural narratives. Myth-based narratives and symbols of nationhood are therefore indispensable, necessary both for establishing collective identity and asserting a sense of exceptionalism with enough surety to enable and validate further cultural interaction and nation building. Within this theoretical framework, history and representation often became
indistinguishable from one another. As Giles Gunn points out, a central aim of the
myth/symbol scholars “was not simply to differentiate those events that are mental from
those that are not but to clarify the way imaginative constructions contribute to the
formation of social behavior and [the way] social experience colors the nature of the
communal as well as the individual life of the imagination” (159). Crossing the borders
between representation and physically-embodied meaning, the discourse of myth not only
related stories of American exceptionalism, but began developing a coexisting national
ideology and character within its citizens based on the specific values celebrated by such
mythic narratives. In short, by looking to individual citizens, communities, and social
structures, these scholars hoped to answer the question of what it meant to be
“American.”5 Once assimilated into the conversation of American myth and adopted by
its citizens, whether consciously or unconsciously, these values assume a pervasive and
often unquestioned position within the culture. The presence of these values is especially
evident in the formulas and assumptions embodied in folk and fairy tales, as well as
literature, film, music, and other works of popular culture.

5 Smith’s *Virgin Land* served as a generative work, around which the American culture studies
myth/symbol discourse developed, a theoretical framework which encompasses a tradition of scholars
including R.W.B. Lewis, John William Ward, Leo Marx, Charles Sanford, Alan Trachtenberg, Daniel
Hoffman, Charles Fiedelson, and Roy Harvey Pearce, among others (Gunn 158). Myth/symbol theorists
sought to develop “a more conceptually coherent notion of the relation among what might be called,
following Leo Marx, expressions of individual consciousness, forms of collective mentality, and the social
and institutional structures of lived existence” (Gunn 157). Theories of the myth/symbol school built upon
the archetypal argument explained by Richard Slotkin in which “certain narrative structures, symbolic
figures, and motifs recurred in nearly every culture studied whatever their place in historical time or state of
social organization … [a continuity which] suggested the existence of an underlying structure of ideas or
way of organizing belief common to all men” (26). However, with the agenda of creating and sustaining a
sense of national identity and American exceptionalism, merely identifying mythic discourses connecting
cultures around the world would not suffice; instead, myth/symbol theorists turned their attention to
establishing the presence of *specifically American* myths, such as Smith’s exploration of national identity
through the narratives and symbolic discourses surrounding westward expansion into what Smith called
“the vacant continent” (4). Later theorists would refer to the land west of civilization as simply “the
frontier.”
The frontier myth was one of the most significant ideas addressed by the myth/symbol school of thought and it was employed to develop cultural ideas of the masculine purpose of taming the wilderness and establishing a discourse of American exceptionalism. As Gary Y. Okihiro has argued,

Two of the most persistent and pervasive myths of America’s past are the idea of the West and the idea of the West as the nation’s frontier. America’s history, indeed its uniqueness and national identity, is rooted within that imaginary space, the unturned sod, the “virgin land” of the portable frontier that moved from the Atlantic seaboard to the Alleghenies, to the Mississippi, the Great Plains, the Rockies, and California’s golden shore, and to the Pacific and Asia. According to the myth, that “westering”—imagining and mapping, expanding and conquering, setting and building—tamed a howling wilderness, brought light to darkness, and molded a “new man.” No longer a European, he was an American, as original and distinctive as the environment that shaped him. (6)

American identity, as Okihiro demonstrates, was based on a sense of adventure and an ability to exert control over one’s immediate environment and circumstances. In addition, a discourse of the land as feminine was central to the myth of the frontier. As Annette Kolodny argues in The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters, this idea presents the “fantasy … [of] a daily reality of harmony between man and nature based on an experience of the land as essentially feminine—that is, not simply the land as mother, but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification—enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless and integral satisfaction” (4). Through a clearly masculinist and colonialist approach to the natural world, the goal of these pioneers was to claim the land for themselves, often establishing ownership through violence against its native occupants and depleting the resources of the surrounding environment. In addition, this assertion of power and control over the land is particularly gendered, given traditional
discourses establishing nature and land as female, a “mother earth” capable of nurturing and sustaining those who live upon her. As Kolodny points out, “[c]olonization brought with it an inevitable paradox: the success of settlement depended on the ability to master the land, transforming the virgin territories into something else—a farm, a village, a road, a canal, a railway, a mine, a factory, a city, and finally, an urban nation” (7). Settlers conceived of the land as feminine and protecting, but simultaneously revered this acceptance and abused it to their own ends. In addition, through this westward motion and the claiming of the frontier, the adventurer established his dominance over the racialized Other, in the form of the Native American, as well as the gendered Other, through which nature was coded as feminine, with masculinity and culture as the civilizing power and presence.

However, the frontier was constantly in motion: what was one man’s conquest would soon become the new western edge of civilization. Where the adventurer had not long ago struggled for supremacy over the land, frontier towns sprang up around him, bringing families, businesses, and other accoutrements of developed society. As a result, the frontier was always on the move further westward, seeking the untamed wilderness that epitomized isolationism, exceptionalism, and independence. When civilization had stretched from one coast to the other, the frontier became nothing but a memory upon which erstwhile adventurers nostalgically reflected. As Michael Patrick Hearn points out, “Manifest Destiny had resoundingly manifested itself, and the American West was officially closed as the nation spread from one shore to the other. Now that the American Empire expanded to Hawaii and Puerto Rico and the Philippines as a consequence of the Spanish-American War of 1898, people wanted to read about foreign lands” (I).
Therefore, the notion of the frontier was necessarily redefined to encompass distant and exotic places.

The frontier found a new imaginary position in distinctly American fairy tales, such as Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, which allowed their readers to embark on grand adventures without ever leaving the warmth of home. In addition, the ideology of the frontier remained identifiable in the agrarian struggles of America’s heartland, and Kansas in particular seemed an especially salient site for the continued presence of the frontier myth. As historian Carl L. Becker argued in 1910, “[t]he Kansas spirit … is the American spirit double distilled. It is a new grafted product of American individualism, American idealism, American intolerance. Kansas is America in microcosm” (qtd. in Okihiro 14). With the frontier geographically nonexistent, the values of self-sufficiency and adventure became situated in the character of the Midwestern people, where these ideological discourses “were revealed in the people’s racial makeup, in their beliefs, in their practices. Bedrock American values thrived there, in middle America, in agrarian America, where Americanism, ‘pure and undefiled,’ found a new lease on life” (Okihiro 14). Therefore, though the frontier itself had gone, the beliefs and values that had shaped early Western expansion remained alive and well in the minds and lives of Midwestern citizens and the literary tales Americans had begun to tell and be told about themselves.

These myth/symbol theories have largely fallen out of use in contemporary scholarship, criticized and dismissed as being exceedingly monolithic, problematically privileging canonical American literature, and producing a unified, absolute meaning impossible to substantiate. The myth/symbol school of thought favors a very small segment of American experience, generally representing the values and perspectives of
patriarchal white men with economic and geographic mobility, in positions of authority which allow them to define and develop cultural narratives which reflect their own positions and desires. This discourse rejects the rights and experiences of non-whites and non-Americans as well, and by propagating this exclusionary discourse, the ruling classes codify their power, validate their authority, and further secure the cultural hierarchy and their place at its apex. In addition, the knowledge and practices of women, children, and lower-class citizens are marginalized; the perspectives of racially diverse and disabled Americans are almost entirely excluded. Legitimizing the position and privilege of those men who create and benefit from the discourse of American myth, the narratives addressed by the myth/symbol school of thought offer a drastically circumscribed view of national values and identity, a monolithic and canonical representation that excludes the self-identification of the majority of its citizens.

While the tools of the myth/symbol school have been largely discarded by American culture studies, this mythic discourse continues to have a significant presence within the culture itself, including in fairy tales and popular culture, as well as in contemporary discussions surrounding American identity. The notion of American myth remains significant in cultural discourse; however, due to their considerable theoretical shortcomings and exclusions, these myth/symbol theories must necessarily be reinvented to effectively address contemporary American myth, the development of cultural narratives, and their revision and reinvention. Specifically, the myth/symbol school provides useful tools for exploring the redevelopment of particular American narratives, such as the *Wizard of Oz* story. The theoretical framework of the myth/symbol school supplies a productive code of analysis for the consideration of these revised and
reinvented tales, given the understanding that myth is not a concrete, monolithic structure.

Theories of American myth are indispensable in understanding the *Wizard of Oz* narrative trajectory for two reasons. To begin, as the first uniquely American fairy tale, Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* occupies a privileged position of American myth, embodying the character of the nation at the beginning of the twentieth century and ideologically defining the nature of the ideal American citizen as possessing the qualities of adventurousness, empathy, intellect, courage, and the desire for self-improvement. Structures of American myth also outline the traits of character and nation that are undesirable, validating their destruction and marginalization. In the case of Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the undesirable is positioned in the character of the Wicked Witch of the West, a woman with too much power, both magical and concrete; in addition, the Wicked Witch is a slave to her desires, following her single-minded obsession with Dorothy’s magic shoes. As an aberrant citizen, the Wicked Witch can and should be disposed of: her death is not a tragedy, but instead the reestablishment of the proper social order, with good winning out over evil. In addition, Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* validated the American political system of a singular, presidential leader. However, while Baum supported this structure, he simultaneously questioned the validity of political figures, revealed most clearly in the revelation of the Wizard as a “humbug” (Baum 261) and a fraud.

Second, structures of American myth become reinforced and increasingly recognizable through their repetition, told and retold until they become an unquestioned part of the cultural discourse. Since the publication of Baum’s children’s tale in 1900, the
The *Wizard of Oz* story has been revised and adapted hundreds of times, in books for children and adults, onstage and onscreen, in theatre, television, and film. The *Wizard of Oz* tale and the characters who populate it are internationally recognizable and the narrative has a tendency to resurface at moments of sociocultural change and tension in American culture. Fleming’s classic MGM film occupies the historical space between the Great Depression and the Second World War, while Lumet’s *The Wiz* embodies many of the struggles of the Civil Rights and feminist movements. Maguire’s novel partakes in an intellectual discourse demanding the questioning and rescripting of canonical narratives, and Schwartz and Holzman’s Broadway production of *Wicked* is situated in the midst of struggles over power and image, on both the national and individual scale. However, each cultural moment finds itself returning to the familiar story of a little girl from Kansas and her fantastical adventures in the land of Oz, drawn by the omnipresent tensions of insider and outsider, inclusion versus marginalization, and the shifting realities and representations of gender, race, home, and magic implicated in the construction of mythic American identity. Discourses of American myth facilitate understanding of the *Wizard of Oz* tale as a cultural narrative, repeated and revisited over the span of more than one hundred years. In addition, the significant changes in this traditional story reflect

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6 Sherman captures the true range of revisions and retellings of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, cataloging books, theatrical performances, comic books, audio adaptations, films, computer games, educational software, websites, and a variety of television reincarnations, including series, episodes, specials, and commercials. *Oz* has had a television presence since 1950, with the show *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*, which was based on Baum’s *The Land of Oz*. This was followed by additional adaptations and personality-based specials such as *The Shirley Temple Show: The Land of Oz* (1960), *The Judy Garland Show* (1964), *The Jackson Five: The Wizard of Soul* (1971), and most recently, the television movie *The Muppets’ Wizard of Oz* (2005). Innumerable television shows have also played on themes established by the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, from the children’s programs like *The Rugrats* (“No Place Like Home,” 1999), to the animated series *Futurama* (“Anthology of Interest 2,” 2002) and the retro-comedy *That ’70s Show* (“Tornado Prom,” 2002). As the recurrence of these themes and the achieved audience recognition demonstrate, the *Wizard of Oz* narrative continues to have cultural resonance more than a century after Baum’s first writing.
negotiations of individual, cultural, and national identities, especially through representations of gender, race, home, and magic.

As becomes clear in the continual reinvention of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, mythmaking is a revisionist process in and of itself, constantly undergoing negotiation and adaptation in order to effectively address the contemporary cultural context. As Zipes points out, the aim of these revisions is “to create something new that incorporates the critical and creative thinking of the producer and corresponds to the changed demands and tastes of audiences” with a goal of challenging or changing “the reader’s views of traditional patterns, images, and codes” (*Fairy Tale as Myth* 9). The mythic framework of one generation is not adopted wholesale by its successors; instead, the fairy tales and cultural narratives that create the discourse of American myth are under constant negotiation, continually being challenged, remade, and reinvented. Therefore, in order to update the theoretical framework of the myth-symbol school, a critical understanding of American myth must situate itself within the larger context of mythic discourse, including an understanding of mythmaking as a dynamic revisionist process.

Central to mythic and cultural narratives is the figure of the hero. The heroic character is a constant fixture in fairy tales, books, films, plays, and cultural narratives around the world, and this figure offers a unique combination of flaws and familiarity. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell explores representations of the heroic character across time and cultural boundaries, outlining the formulaic trajectory of the hero’s journey. Campbell’s definition of the hero contains an element of necessary self-sacrifice; as Campbell argues, “[t]he hero is the man of self-achieved submission. But submission to what? That precisely is the riddle that today we have to ask ourselves and
that it is everywhere the primary virtue and historic deed of the hero to have solved” (16). The sense of “self-achieved submission” to which Campbell refers indicates the hero’s ability to subsume his individuality for the greater cultural good. It is not enough for the hero to fight for himself; instead, the hero must fight for the social and cultural structure he works to uphold. Campbell’s theory of the heroic journey reflects the centrality of the hero’s incorporation within the larger society.7 As Campbell explains,

The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return … A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellowman. (Hero 30, emphasis original)

The Dorothy characters envisioned by Baum and MGM follow Campbell’s description of the hero’s journey to the letter: she is separated from her family by a raging tornado, initiated through independence and self-sufficiency over the course of her adventures in Oz, and in the end, is returned to Kansas, where she is welcomed with open arms by her Aunt Em. However, as later revisions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative show, Campbell’s notion of the hero is repeatedly questioned and challenged, an integral step in the revisionist process of American myth.

In the traditional hero’s journey, as outlined by Campbell, while the hero has had to survive this fantastical and dangerous adventure on his strength and ingenuity alone, his return is complicated by the wisdom he owes to those around him. The indebtedness of the hero to his surrounding culture is indispensable; otherwise, the hero becomes an outsider and the escape offered by his mythic adventures becomes a rejection of the

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7 This process is echoed by Victor Turner’s postmodern theory of social drama, which includes a similar progression of breech, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration (180), with redressive action and reintegration emphasizing the individual’s return to community and social obligation.
culture and values which have presumably nurtured him throughout his life. Bringing an invaluable treasure back to his fellow citizens is the hero’s passport back into acceptable society, a tangible demonstration that his journey has not been one of self-indulgence, but rather a task undertaken for the greater good of his community. However, this reincorporation is often difficult for the hero. As Campbell points out, “[t]he first problem of the returning hero is to accept as real, after an experience of the soul-satisfying vision of fulfillment, the passing joys and sorrows, banalities and noisy obscenities of life” (Hero 218). This dissonance hints that individual concerns may have to be painfully and even violently subordinated to the required self-sacrifice.

Campbell’s theory of the hero and his journey remain problematic in addressing contemporary discourses of American myth and must be revised to effectively address contemporary culture, including various permutations of the Wizard of Oz story. First of all, Campbell’s hero is always male. As Campbell argues, the role of women in the hero’s journey is simultaneously one of signification and restriction. As Campbell writes, woman “represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know … The hero who can take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires, is potentially the king, the incarnate god, of her created world” (Hero 116). This construction of gender and agency is inadequate for addressing the strong and independent female hero. Therefore, theoretical space must be created alongside the existing discourse of the male heroic character, in which the figure of the empowered female hero can be effectively addressed. In many theories, such as that developed by Campbell, female heroes are altogether absent, offered no position for agency or individuality. In other cases, such women are vilified. As Carol Pearson and
Katherine Pope points out in *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*, in many literary traditions, the independent female has been “defined by the traditional patriarchy as theologically evil, biologically unnatural, psychologically unhealthy, and socially in bad taste. Literature, therefore, tends to portray the woman who demonstrates initiative, strength, wisdom, and independent action—the ingredients of the heroic life—not as a hero but as a villain” (6). However, marking a significant shift, representations of female heroes have become increasingly prevalent in the films and television programs of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, with female action stars portraying superheroes, assassins, and mothers who fight back against injustice and abuse.

While these representations offer a wider variety of sites for identification, the figure of the female hero remains complicated and under constant negotiation. As Rikke Schubart argues of this figure in film and television,

> The female hero is an ambiguous creature and whenever she appears, ambivalent reactions follow. On the one hand, a woman performing actions which society has so long associated with men has the instant taste of a revolt against traditional gender roles. On the other hand, a closer look at the actress playing the female hero reveals a figure deliberately composed as ambiguous. (6)

The heroine is almost always represented as “an anomaly” (Schubart 6), the exception rather than the rule, even within the onscreen world; as Schubart points out, the female hero is “not a ‘realistic’ character, neither viewed from the audience’s perspective nor from within the film … As she breaks society’s gender expectations she also confirms them” (6). This confirmation is often situated in the body of the female hero, who is almost always beautiful, thin, and physically fit; while her actions challenge the patriarchal narrative structure, she remains the embodiment of femininity. The heroine must negotiate her own body to an extent that is not required of her male counterpart,
with the female hero often having to choose between dramatically masculinizing or feminizing her body, a physical condition that can be read as mirroring her psychological state. According to Dominique Mainon and James Ursini,

> Despite their powers, sexual and otherwise, female action characters tend to be internally fractured in some way. Either they must become masculine, maybe even symbolically or physically disguise themselves as a man in order to gain status and have the same opportunities as their male counterparts, or they go in the opposite direction and become a sex goddess—a sultry, purring kitten with a whip …. Managing the balance of femininity versus masculinity, and passion versus repression, becomes the primary challenge of many a female character. (xvii)

Regardless of the power, agency, and individuality afforded to these figures, the representation of the female hero inherently carries within it this myriad of contradictions. In many ways, the figure of the female hero is a constant negotiation between definitions of ideal femininity and the independent woman.

The heroines in the different incarnations of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative addressed here occupy a wide spectrum of possibilities for the female hero. While Dorothy is an active protagonist in the *Wizard of Oz* stories of Baum and MGM, she remains firmly situated within the patriarchal structure, happily sacrificing her independence and sense of adventure to return to Kansas and take up her role as dutiful niece once again. Reflecting changes in the lives of women, *The Wiz*’s Dorothy is also chided for not living up to her feminine expectations, though by the 1970s these expectations included independence and career success, as well as marriage and family. Finally, the characterizations of Elphaba developed by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman present a heroine who is outside of mainstream representations of desirable femininity, both physically and performatively. Arguably, the process of reinvention seen in the *Wizard of Oz* narrative is also one of female maturation, with *The Wizard of Oz* positioning Dorothy
in a moment of arrested development, while versions of *Wicked* provide readers and viewers with a mature and flawed woman in Elphaba. In addition, the journey of the adolescent female hero differs notably from that of the adult female hero, with issues of responsibility and self-awareness central in these distinctions. The draw of the traditional return to community is also substantially more powerful for young heroines than their mature counterparts, scripting their adolescent bodies and their actions as female heroes who must struggle with the process of social reincorporation.

Finally, as a result of the unique and complicated role of the female hero, mythic discourses must be adapted to deemphasize or discard the return stage of Campbell’s heroic journey. While Campbell’s return stresses the duty of the hero to reenter his community to administer to its citizens, often by bestowing the fruits of his adventure and learning upon them, the obedient reincorporation of the heroine into the society she has left can often be read as a return to the domestic sphere, a reassertion of sociocultural power over the gendered body of the female hero. Therefore, in order to address the agency and empowerment of such heroines, the stage of return must necessarily be complicated in these readings. The male hero has set out on an adventure and, in the process, has fulfilled social expectations of masculinity; returning, he is usually afforded his “rightful place” of authority within the community. Instead, the female hero is the exception to the rules of accepted femininity; she has left the hearth she was expected to tend and perhaps even abandoned those whom she should have been nurturing. Therefore, when the heroine returns, it is often as a renegade, an uncontrollable and aberrant woman; as such, she is welcomed back to the community with suspicion and hostility, rather than the open arms and accolades that await her male counterpart. In
addition, as Deborah O’Keefe has pointed out, there are some heroes and heroines who “go off into the world and do not come back. Thus initiated, they find new lives, maybe help to create or protect a community” (54, emphasis original). As the female hero is less likely to be reincorporated into her original community with goodwill and celebration than her male counterpart, the return is a much less desirable prospect for the female hero.

With increased stigmatization surrounding the female hero, there is a decreased motivation for her to return; instead, as O’Keefe notes, she may viably choose to remain in the world where she has claimed her heroic status. As Pearson and Pope point out, similar to the adventures of the male hero, “the journey offers the female hero the opportunity to develop qualities such as courage, skill, and independence, which would atrophy in a protected environment” (8). For many female heroes, a return to their original communities would be tantamount with the sacrifice of independent selfhood, a state of deprivation they presumably rejected when they set out on their adventures. While the male hero’s return serves as an act of social validation, the opposite is true of the female hero: reincorporation with the community will instead highlight her aberrance. Faced with the prospect of ostracism, the loss of individual agency and selfhood, and critique of her non-traditional performances of femininity, it is no wonder many heroines would choose to refuse return altogether. By questioning the centrality of Campbell’s return stage and taking into account the problematization of the female hero’s return, tales of the hero and the mythic journey are able to deviate from established formulas, open up innumerable possibilities for the development of narratives and characterizations of heroic figures, and explore the contradictions inherent in the hero’s journey. While in
Baum and MGM’s versions Dorothy follows Campbell’s trajectory of the hero, including stages of separation, initiation, and return, later heroines of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative negotiate the return home in different ways and, at times, reject it altogether. For example, while in Baum’s children’s story and the classic MGM film, Dorothy is thrilled to return home, the idea of home has a much more internalized and individualized meaning for *The Wiz*’s Dorothy and her return serves as a stepping-stone for setting out on her own. In Maguire’s *Wicked*, home is a place of struggle and transience for Elphaba and she goes back to her family estate only twice over the course of her adult life; both visits are brief and fraught with family arguments, prompting Elphaba’s choice to make her own home in the West of Oz. Finally, in the stage production of *Wicked*, Elphaba must “run away” from home to avoid being destroyed; by faking her own death, in a manner of speaking, Elphaba is free to restart her life, and perhaps even begin a family with her lover Fiyero, away from the home of her youth. Whether leaving home by choice or necessity, the return stage of the hero’s journey is complicated for these heroines and at times even impossible.

In order to effectively reinvent the myth/symbol approach for contemporary popular culture, this theoretical framework must also be positioned within the larger context of fairy tale discourses. Campbell recognizes the connection between myth and fairy tale, though he finds such stories a rudimentary, though serviceable, form of myth;

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8 This would by definition be an atypical family structure; Elphaba is green and has magical powers, while Fiyero has been turned into a Scarecrow. This development is foreshadowed in two musical numbers, when Fiyero muses that “[l]ife is fraught less / When you’re thoughtless” in “Dancing Through Life” (Cote 147) and wonders “[m]aybe I’m brainless / Maybe I’m wise” in “As Long as You’re Mine” (Cote 170), playing with the narrative tradition of the Scarecrow’s lack of a brain throughout many versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale. However, the narrative of the musical does not invalidate Elphaba and Fiyero’s love for one another and leaves their escape and future open-ended. One wonders what such a family would be like and whether it would have greater success than other, more normative family structures represented within the context of the production’s narrative.
as Campbell argues, “[a] fairy tale is the child’s myth. There are proper myths for proper times of life. As you grow older, you need a sturdier mythology” (The Power of Myth 138). Other theorists disagree, pointing out the lasting effect of fairy tales on individuals and the representation of cultural value systems. Alison Lurie, for example, contends that these stories “are one of the oldest known forms of literature, and also one of the most popular and enduring. Even today they are a central part of our imaginative world. We remember and refer to them all our lives; their themes and characters reappear in dreams, in songs, in films, in advertisements, and in casual speech” (125), permeating American culture. In addition, the interactive engagement between myth and fairy tale is significant in reinventing theories of American myth to address contemporary popular cultural narratives. Zipes also considers this connection, explaining that

> These myths are not new, nor are they just myths, for they are also fairy tales. These myths and fairy tales are historically and culturally coded, and their ideological impact is great. Somehow they have become codified, authoritative, and canonical …. Perhaps that is “natural.” I mean we need standards, order, models. As Freud pointed out in Civilization and Its Discontents, culture cannot exist without repression and sublimation, and it is within the civilizing process that we establish the rules by which we live. We seek to make these rules stick and become eternal. We classify and categorize to establish types and values. We weed out, modify, and purify, seeking the classical statement or form. (Fairy Tale as Myth 4-5)

The repetition of fairy tales and mythic narratives is intertwined with the processes of culture and civilization, reassuring their audiences of the rhyme and reason of the chaotic world around them. The telling and retelling of fairy tales represent the desirable traits of nationhood and personhood most valued at the time of their retelling, simultaneously repressing and addressing cultural anxieties that create tension and discomfort in their contemporary societies. Unfortunately, while most fairy tales valorize the hero and his
quest, similar to the marginalized figure of the female hero, fairy tales generally offer young women dramatically circumscribed positions of identification and agency.

Scholars have long debated the significance and repercussions of the pervasiveness of fairy tales in contemporary culture, with much of the focus centering on correlations between gendered characterizations and culturally-learned behaviors. In *Fairy Tales and The Female Imagination*, Jennifer Waelti-Walters highlights the potentially negative effect of fairy tale representations on young girls, arguing that “[t]he reading of fairy tales is one of the first steps in the maintenance of a misogynous, sex-role stereotyped patriarchy, for what is the end product of these stories but a lifeless humanoid, malleable, decorative, and interchangeable—that is a ‘feminine woman’ who is inherited, bartered or collected in a monstrous game of Monopoly” (1-2). From this perspective, fairy tales are an anti-feminist cultural tool, designed to circumscribe and maintain rigid boundaries for proper feminine behavior, codifying femininity in ways that put women at a dramatic disadvantage. Similar to Campbell’s theory of the role of women in mythical narratives, female characters in fairy tales are often depicted as vessels of knowledge that must be penetrated, their secrets demystified and their knowledge claimed by the power of the male hero, a structure which offers women the position of “helpmates” at best and objects to be conquered at worst.

However, Zipes argues that fairy tales also offer the potential for liberation. As he points out, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century fairy tales developed a tradition of “fantastic [literature which] was used to compensate for the growing rationalization of culture, work, and family life in Western society, and to defend the imagination of children” (“Liberating Potential” 258). Examining retold tales such as *The Prince and the
Swineherd and Little Red Riding Hood, Zipes argues that through their dangerous adventures, the female protagonists of these stories become stronger and more empowered. As Zipes points out,

In both of these tales the small, oppressed protagonists learn to use their powers to free themselves of parasitical creatures. Life is depicted as an ongoing struggle and process so that the “happy” ending is not an illusion, that is, not depicted as an end in itself but the actual beginning of a development. (“Liberating Potential” 262)

While these characters succeed at finding their own strength and independence, it is at the cost of continued struggle and suffering, a position of turmoil that fails to invite the identification of young female readers. It is also notable that Zipes is discussing retold tales, which had already been reclaimed by Liverpool’s Merseyside Women’s Liberation Movement in 1972 (“Liberating Potential” 261), rather than traditional European fairy tales in their original form; therefore, it is arguable that for fairy tales to hold the liberating potential Zipes argues, they must be always already under critical negotiation. In addition, the self-sufficient heroine is unfortunately still the exception to the rule in contemporary fairy tales, as well as in the traditional stories which serve as their foundation. However, the trajectory of the Wizard of Oz narrative marks a trend of increasingly strong and independent female heroes. While the young Dorothy of Baum

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9 As Zipes summarizes the narrative of The Prince and the Swineherd, a greedy prince comes across a magic pot which “played beautiful tunes and revealed what was cooking in every kitchen in the kingdom” (“Liberating Potential” 261). The prince covets the pot, finds the swineherd who made the original pot, and demands that she make a more beautiful pot for him; if she does not succeed, she will be executed. The swineherd succeeds and the prince calls his citizens before him to show off his new magical pot, which begins to sing of the prince’s greed and selfishness. The singing pot encourages the people of the kingdom “to laugh and agree, and their laughter and song grow to a rumbling roar that cause the castle to collapse and the prince to disappear” (ibid). Little Red Riding Hood is a more well-known fairy tale, telling the story of a young girl who sets out to take a basketful of treats to her sick grandmother; the hungry wolf beats little Red to her grandma’s house, eats grandma, and dresses in the old woman’s clothes to fool the young girl. The wolf is killed, usually by a passing woodcutter, though occasionally by Little Red herself, and grandma is rescued. As Zipes argues, these fairy tales, especially the version of Little Red Riding Hood in which Red dispatches the wolf and saves her grandmother, have a liberating potential of encouraging readers that they can overcome those more powerful than themselves and achieve some measure of self-sufficiency and independence.
and MGM is dependent on the strength and support of her male companions and the 
Wizard, she is also guided by matriarchal good witches, who in fact hold all of the true 
magical power in Oz. *The Wiz’s* Dorothy becomes a stronger and more self-assured 
heroine within the space of the onscreen narrative, arriving in Oz in hysterical tears but 
returning home with a new dedication to independence and a life of her own. Finally, the 
versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman provide audiences with female 
heroes who are not only more independent and powerful, but who are also more aware of 
the performative nature of their public images and gendered identities.

In reinventing theories of the fairy tale and American myth to address 
contemporary representations and the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, the revisionist process of 
mythmaking must be privileged. Using traditional fairy tales as a starting point, numerous 
authors have updated these stories for modern audiences or added a feminist structure of 
representation, simultaneously highlighting the biases of the earlier tales and creating 
new stories centered on empowered, self-aware, and independent heroines. From James 
Finn Garner’s *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* and *Once Upon a More Enlightened 
Time* to Angela Carter’s feminist retellings of familiar tales in *The Bloody Chamber and 
Other Stories*, contemporary authors are breathing new life into these fairy tales, freeing 
them from the previously-imposed limitations of powerless princesses and intractable 
gender roles.\(^{10}\) This revisionist practice is central in exploring multiple versions of the

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\(^{10}\) This trend has been going on since at least the 1970s, when “four women of the Merseyside Women’s 
Liberation Movement in Liverpool, England, began publishing fairy tales to counter the values that had 
been carried by the traditional tales—acquisitive aggression in men and the dutiful nurturing of this 
aggression by women” (Zipes 261). In addition to the works of Garner and Carter, notable fairy tale 
retellings include Jon Scieszka’s *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by A. Wolf* (1989), Barbara G. Walker’s 
*Feminist Fairy Tales* (1996), Robin McKinley’s rewritings of familiar fairy tales, Bruce Lansky’s 
*Newfangled Fairy Tales* (1998), and A.J. Jacobs’ *Fractured Fairy Tales* (1999), which were featured on the 
classic animated *Rocky and Bullwinkle* television program.
Wizard of Oz narrative, including the ways in which this story has been reformulated to create new spaces for a multiplicity of positions of femininity, Otherness, and identity.

THE WIZARD OF OZ NARRATIVE AND AMERICAN MYTH

This new definition of American myth is ideal for exploring the trajectory of the Wizard of Oz narrative over the past one hundred years. Baum’s Wonderful Wizard of Oz is widely acknowledged as the first American fairy tale, with annotator Michael Patrick Hearn arguing that Baum rejected the narrative traditions of customary European fairy tales, insisting that the author instead self-avowedly “did not look back as did his predecessors …. He looked forward and sought new forms” (xiv). However, developing a uniquely American fairy tale proved as much of a struggle as establishing a distinctive national identity and Baum found it impossible to sever himself entirely from the European fairy tale tradition, including “witches and wizards, magic shoes and enchanted caps, [which] came from Europe to inhabit the same universe as his scarecrows, patchwork girls, and magic dishpans” (ibid). Therefore, it is necessary to explore the ways in which these characterizations and narrative conventions were negotiated to address American anxieties and create a distinctly national mythic discourse. For while The Wonderful Wizard of Oz draws on European fairy tale traditions, it epitomizes the character and values of early twentieth-century America, especially in the representations of young Dorothy, who “is American through and through. And she embodies not only America but the West as well …. [with] the indomitable spirit of the early suffragists” (Hearn 13). Exploring the values of independence, intellect, empathy, courage, and self-improvement celebrated by Baum’s fairy tale reveals the nature of American identity and
the obsession with the frontier in 1900, at the time of his writing and publication.

Positioning Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* within the framework of American myth highlights the significance of the stories early Americans were being told about themselves, tales from which they drew a sense of communal identity and exceptionalism.

In the reinvented discourse posed by this dissertation, American myth is addressed as a recurring cultural narrative, a tale that is told and retold, reinvented to meet the needs of its contemporary culture. Since Baum’s generative work more than a century ago, the *Wizard of Oz* narrative has assumed a pervasive position within American popular culture, becoming an immediately-recognizable story that has been revised, updated, and parodied innumerable times. The repetition and continued popularity of this narrative indicates a lasting cultural significance, a specifically American mythic discourse that continues to draw authors, filmmakers, and performers back to Baum’s source to reinvent Oz for another audience, to draw on this framework to tell the familiar story in a new and exciting way. MGM’s classic 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, Sidney Lumet’s all-African American musical *The Wiz*, Gregory Maguire’s *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, and Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s Broadway musical *Wicked* are significant reinventions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, exploring issues such as the performative range of gender embodiments, race and discrimination, the contentious space of the home, and conflicting notions of magic as either evil or empowering. Spanning the one hundred years since the first publication of Baum’s fairy tale, these revisions reflect shifting beliefs surrounding good and evil, as well as notions of identity and power; in addition, each of these works is reflective of its
own cultural context, as well as the social tensions and anxieties occupying the American imagination in their individual moments.

In addition to this process of repetition, the significant revisions enacted by each of these adaptations are also of central importance in exploring the continuing development of this American myth, highlighting the revisionist nature of mythmaking. Baum’s fairy tale established the constant values of self-reliance, intelligence, caring, and bravery and introduced a cast of figures who are now familiar to readers and viewers the world over. While these elements of narrative and characterization have remained constant throughout almost all versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, much has changed. Oz itself has been altered, transposed onto a fantastic version of New York City in *The Wiz* and reinvented as an oppressive nation-state in both versions of *Wicked*. Some characters have changed in both form and function; for example, the Wicked Witch of the West has become Elphaba, a heroine in her own right. Themes such as power and home have undergone constant negotiation, while individual identity has become increasingly significant in subsequent revisions. However, without an understanding of the cultural context and significance of these shifts, they become merely a catalogue of details with little meaning. The reinvented theory of American myth outlined above serves as the foundation for considering these multiple revisions, lending coherence to the ongoing process of transformation of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. The revisions made to Baum’s generative work do not simply indicate changing details in the same old story, but instead point to significant shifts in the cultural values informing each version. Myth only works as long as it remains relevant to its cultural consumers; when that relevance begins to fade, the mythic discourse must be actively negotiated and reinvented to address the
needs of the contemporary culture, reasserting identification. The *Wizard of Oz* narrative remains preoccupied with what it means to be a cultural subject in general and what it means to be American in particular; however, with increasing emphasis on individuality and the systematic questioning of pre-established values and ideals, the answers to these questions are being constantly negotiated, a process that is reflected in the changing representations within these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story. The revisionist process of mythmaking central to this contemporary reinvention of American myth is significant in exploring those elements which remain constant, as well as the dynamic revisions of this cultural narrative.

The disruption of a monolithic perspective and universal meaning also makes this updated theory of American myth ideal for exploring these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale, many of which negotiate narrative position and the authority of the canonical voice established by Baum. Self-reflexively locating positions of power and the authority inherent in privileged perspective, it becomes possible to indicate shifts in voice and narration, creating space for the exploration of changes in representation and ownership over an extended period of time. Baum’s generative tale and MGM’s classic film privilege the position of the American child, in the person of Dorothy, and of singular authority through the official nature of the Wizard, who is shown to be fallible but forgivable; structures of power and their figureheads are questioned, but ultimately upheld. Lumet’s *The Wiz* highlights silenced voices and in the artistic boom of the post-Civil Rights era, African Americans claimed this national myth as uniquely their own, with revisions that reflected experiences and perspectives formerly marginalized. The versions of *Wicked* developed by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman interrogate the
authorial position traditionally afforded Dorothy and dismantle the good/evil dichotomy of gender representations that had structured the *Wizard of Oz* narrative for almost one hundred years. By engaging with the multiplicity of perspectives established throughout the development of this mythic narrative and explicitly addressing these positions as consciously established, the monolithic and privileged position of narrative authority can be disrupted, contributing to an increasingly flexible and inclusive discourse of American myth.

Finally, this contemporary theory of American myth is specifically designed to facilitate intertextual readings and can be easily adapted to address text, performance, and the spaces in between. The combination of theories surrounding myth, literature, film, and performance studies lend this new framework of American myth a flexibility that make it ideally suited for exploring a wide variety of texts, allowing for critical tracing of the genealogy of the cultural narrative of the *Wizard of Oz*. Myth is a necessarily revisionist process and representations of this discourse have taken many forms over the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as the chosen examples demonstrate, and the form of each has reflected its function within its individual sociocultural moment and developed a unique manner of address for its intended audience. In the early 1900s, fairy tales were considered the sole domain of children; therefore, to tell his story of Oz, Baum wrote *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a children’s book. With developments in cinematic technology, MGM had the opportunity to contrast drab sepia-toned images of Kansas with the Technicolor that would come to characterize the land of Oz in the minds of millions of viewers, making Fleming’s *The Wizard of Oz* a distinctly visual retelling. Drawing on the success of a hit Broadway musical of the same name, Lumet adapted *The
Wiz as a feature film to increase accessibility and move the story from the privileged site of the stage to movie theatres and later, to television screens in millions of homes across the country. Maguire’s Wicked negotiated the literary tradition of Baum’s original, with Maguire using his novel to reinvent the central character of the Wicked Witch of the West; in shifting back to the literary form, Maguire had the time and space to focus almost exclusively on the process of characterization rather than subsuming his main character to the required forward momentum of narrative. In addition, by returning his heroine to the page, Maguire was able to deemphasize the visual elements that had long typified the Wicked Witch, namely her green skin, which first appeared in the 1939 MGM film. Shifting from visual to literary, Maguire showed his viewers the woman behind the witch, creating a well-rounded character with agency and independence rather than the stereotype with which most readers and viewers were familiar. Finally, Schwartz and Holzman’s adaptation of Wicked for the Broadway stage highlighted the performativity of gender and identity even more dramatically, combining narrative reinvention with physically-embodied representation in the form of its actors. Broadway’s Wicked also signaled yet another return to the musical tradition earlier seen in MGM’s The Wizard of Oz and Lumet’s The Wiz, building upon this engagement to address contemporary readings of good and evil, power, and acceptable femininity that were largely unquestioned in earlier versions. Encompassing a wide range of textual and performative forms, the American myth of the Wizard of Oz narrative unites them all, while their revisions and reinventions signal key shifts in their surrounding culture, turning points in the genealogy of this tale, and the dynamically revisionist process of mythmaking.
CHAPTER TWO:
BETWEEN TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

Stories of Oz have been told and retold over the past one hundred years, beginning with Baum’s children’s book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. MGM and director Victor Fleming presented the tale in big screen, visually arresting Technicolor and *The Wiz* resituated the story in New York City and introduced a cast of all African-American characters. Maguire introduced readers to green-skinned Elphaba, while Schwartz and Holzman added the glitz and glamour of Broadway, giving theatre-goers a real, live wicked witch on the stage before them. Despite the numerous shifts in adaptation, representation, and form, these works all return to the same source and, in a number of ways, tell the same tale. It is this repetition which positions the *Wizard of Oz* story within the context of American myth. However, mythmaking is a necessarily revisionist process, demanding ongoing reevaluation and adaptation in order for such cultural narratives to maintain their contemporary relevance. The process of reimagining and remaking mythic narratives is simultaneously textual and performative, with these often dichotomously defined terms referring to unchanging written or visual texts, as opposed to the ephemeral nature of live performance, which can never be definitively captured. While these revisions of mythic narratives often result in textual artifacts such as books or films, the drive to reinvent traditional stories is prompted by a social demand for these familiar tales to reflect the surrounding culture and to provide a dynamic point of identification for their readers and viewers. Compelled by the critical responses and negotiations of its cultural subjects, mythmaking as a revisionist process is both textual and performative. Therefore, it should
come as no surprise that the forms of these revisions often negotiate the boundaries between written word and embodied performance. Each new version assumes the form most efficient in exploring its specific revisions, that best suited for addressing the cultural anxieties that have brought producers and consumers back to the same old story, to embrace the familiar and delight in the unexpected.

THEORIZING TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

Due to the diverse forms of works to be discussed, various theories of text and performance must be drawn into dialogue with one another in order to effectively articulate the discourse between Baum’s original and the narrative’s various revisions and reinventions. As W.J.T. Mitchell points out in *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, written and visual texts have historically been framed as dichotomous, excluding one another in their very acts of expression. As Mitchell writes,

> Words and images seem inevitably to become implicated in a “war of signs” … in which the stakes are things like nature, truth, reality, and the human spirit. Each art, each type of sign or medium, lays claim to certain things that it is best equipped to mediate, and each grounds its claim in a certain characterization of its “self,” its own proper essence. Equally important, each art characterizes itself in opposition to its “significant other.” (47)

This discourse has continually viewed text and image as in direct opposition to one another. However, as Mitchell goes on to argue, “there is no essential difference” (49, emphasis original) between the different forms of expression, and certainly none that should exclude one kind of text from engagement with the other. However, different textual forms are capable of producing multiple articulations of the same meaning or telling the same story in different ways. This potential necessitates an effective
appreciation of the unique strengths for expression embodied in diverse productions, whether of word, image, or active performance (Mitchell 49). Word, image, text, and embodied performance can all contribute to discussion of myth and meaning, each form presenting its own unique perspective. In addressing the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, it is necessary to simultaneously occupy both of the positions Mitchell outlines; the critical reader must therefore engage with similarities between these forms, while at the same time cultivating an appreciation of the specialized strengths and perspectives offered by each.

Diana Taylor’s *The Archive and Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* provides an effective framework for exploring the continuities and disconnects between text and performance or, as Taylor terms her categories, the archive and the repertoire.11 Taylor reimagines text and performance in her framework of the archive and the repertoire, situating this distinction within the larger context of its surrounding culture. As Taylor argues, “the rift … does not lie between the written and spoken word, but between the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)” (19, emphasis original). In this way, the connection between cultural memory and the body assumes central significance: while the archive is knowledge largely disembodied from immediate experience, the repertoire is centered entirely on physical, bodily performance of cultural memory and

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11 There is a significant critical discourse surrounding the notion of the archive, including Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1996), Georgio Agamben’s *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (1999), and Walter Benjamin’s *Archive* (2007), to name a few. Many of these works refer to the archive within the context of creating and maintaining cultural memory; Taylor’s *The Archive and the Repertoire* touches on these issues of memory as well, though I will be using Taylor’s theory for this project with a key focus on her discussions of the textual concreteness of the archive and the performativity of the repertoire.
representation, creating two dynamic categories of cultural text. Utilizing Taylor’s theory of the archive and the repertoire as a metaphor for these revisions and reinventions, it becomes possible to explore the ways in which representations of the mythic *Wizard of Oz* narrative shifts and assumes new possibilities in the many textual forms through which it has been revised and reimagined. However, whether classified as archive or repertoire, each text has the potential to blur these categories, with texts taking on or being utilized in performative functions or conversely, the incomplete archiving of live performance negotiating between the fixed text and the actively-embodied repertoire. Therefore, readings of Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz*, Lumet’s *The Wiz*, and Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman’s versions of *Wicked* must engage with the useful framework of Taylor’s archive and repertoire. However, these works also simultaneously move beyond the clear-cut borders of these categories, in order to take into account that which is being spoken, written, and performed outside of these boundaries and at times even within the border itself, in the in-between spaces where text and performance meet.

“OVER THE RAINBOW”: BAUM’S *THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ* AND FLEMING’S *THE WIZARD OF OZ*

The *Wizard of Oz* narrative entered into the American discourse with the publication of Baum’s popular children’s book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900, with Baum’s story supplemented by the classic drawings of W.W. Denslow, through which many of the now-familiar characters were first visually represented. However, it is arguably through

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12 Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* has been popular since its first publication, though critical acceptance of the fairy tale has taken considerably longer. As Michael Patrick Hearn notes, *The Wonderful
MGM’s 1939 film, directed by Fleming, that most people recall and articulate the story. This has the effect of prompting those engaging with the narrative to envision a young Judy Garland when they hear the name “Dorothy” and hum such catchy tunes as “Off to See the Wizard” and “Ding Dong, The Witch Is Dead” when *The Wizard of Oz* is mentioned. While the versions of both Baum and Fleming are a significant part of the archive surrounding the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, these works are also situated at the center of a number of performative moments, including those of adaptation, identification, or fan culture.

Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is rooted firmly within the discourse of Taylor’s archive, which, as she argues, indicates “all those items supposedly resistant to change” (19). This text is unchanging; it has remained the same for over one hundred years with minimal alteration. Numerous editions of Baum’s work exist, but the actual words of the story in each of these editions are identical. However, at the same time, Baum’s work is situated within the generative space and moment of creation from which all reinventions and reimaginings of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative stem, putting the text in dialogue with the performative space of Taylor’s repertoire, the “embodied practice/knowledge” (ibid) of a culture. This performative aspect of Baum’s work is most clearly evidenced by the fact that many who engage with the *Wizard of Oz* narrative have never read Baum’s text. As

*Wizard of Oz* “reflected and has altered the American character. The book had sold five million copies by the time it went into the public domain in 1956 …. When the Children’s Literature Association took a poll of its members in 1976 to determine the most important American children’s books of the last two hundred years, *The Wizard Of Oz* easily made the top ten” (xiii). However, in spite of its significance, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was banned from many public libraries and was considered sub-par children’s literature; in fact, “for decades, librarians and critics refused to recognize Baum’s *Oz* books as important juvenile literature” (Hearn xv). Baum’s *Oz* books have become more critically acceptable, in part due to defenses of the works by writers and theorists such as Ray Bradbury, Angela Carter, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Shirley Jackson, Salman Rushdie, and Eudora Welty (ibid). While *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* may still be in the process of gaining critical legitimation, its popularity among the children for whom it was written has never waned and it continues to be one of the twenty-first century’s best-selling children’s books (ibid).
Taylor argues, “[w]hat changes over time is the value, relevance, or meaning of the archive, how the items it contains get interpreted, even embodied” (ibid). The fluidity Taylor notes here demonstrates that the archive and the repertoire are not separate, but instead permeable categories that can be productively put into dialogue with one another effectively and productively, as in the case of exploring the transmission of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, realized through a variety of textual forms. Therefore, while Baum’s children’s book serves as an “unchanging text [which] assures a stable signifier” (ibid), it remains in direct dialogue with the performative through its position as the initial work which has facilitated multiple revisions and reinventions.

In addition, the reading of any text—and perhaps especially in regard to a text as imaginative or fantastical as Baum’s—is an active negotiation performed by the reader, and must be critically addressed as such. As adaptation theorist Robert Stam argues, “[t]he words of a novel have a virtual, symbolic meaning; we, as readers, fill in their paradigmatic indeterminances. A novelist’s portrayal of a character induces us to imagine the person’s features in our own imagination … the reader moves from the printed word to visualizing the objects portrayed” (14). The text, therefore, is anything but fixed; each reader brings his or her imaginative capabilities into play in decoding the words and images presented by the text. With this understanding, reading becomes an act of often unconsidered performance on the part of the reader, who is actively engaging, imagining and creating the meaning of the words in print before their eyes, an internal and performative gaze supplementing and acting in conjunction with the ocular function of physically “reading” the text. It is perhaps this freedom of performance in reading that creates tension between image and word inherent in the transmission in film versions of
literary works, as well as cinematic adaptation theory. As Imhelda Whelehan points out, within the adaptation debate, the theoretical perspective has traditionally been one which “privilege[s] the originary literary text above its adaptations, thus favouring the slow individualized process of reading/interpretation above the ‘immediate’ short-term and often shared pleasures of visual spectatorship” (17). However, for the purpose of tracing the *Wizard of Oz* narrative through the various forms and reinventions addressed here, it is necessary to challenge the conventionally privileged position of the generative text. In the course of the development and negotiation of this uniquely American narrative, Baum’s work serves as a starting point and each revision of the *Wizard of Oz* story is always already in dialogue with Baum’s generative text. However, Baum’s work should not be hierarchically positioned or privileged beyond the location of the first telling; instead, Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is one variation situated within the context of its own historical and sociocultural circumstances. The variations of text and performance which follow Baum’s work must therefore be engaged on the merit of their individual forms and cultural contexts, rather than as “copies” of a theoretically ideal “original.”

The *Wizard of Oz* narrative moved closer to the space of the repertoire with MGM’s film adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz*. While the performative engagement surrounding the film is most notably identified through the attendant fan culture which developed around it, the question of the film’s authorship also engages the struggle of the repertoire in ownership and credit. As Salman Rushdie asks in his British Film Institute analysis of the film,

Who, then, is the *auteur* of *The Wizard of Oz*? No single writer can claim that honour, not even the author of the original book. Mervyn Le Roy and Arthur Freed, the producers, both have their champions. At least four directors worked on the picture, most notably Victor Fleming, who left
before shooting ended, however, so that he could make *Gone With the Wind*, ironically enough the movie that dominated the Oscars while *The Wizard of Oz* won just three: Best Song (‘Over the Rainbow’), Best Musical Score and a Special Award for Judy Garland. The truth is that this great movie, in which the quarrels, sackings and near-bungles of all concerned produced what seems like pure, effortless and somehow inevitable felicity, is as near as dammit to that will-o’-the-wisp of modern critical theory: the authorless text. (16)

In addition to the four directors who worked on *The Wizard of Oz*, including Richard Thorpe, George Cukor, and King Vidor, there were also numerous writers on the project as well, both credited and uncredited. While the screenplay is officially attributed to Noel Langley, Florence Ryerson, and Edgar Allan Wolf, uncredited writers include Herman J. Mankiewicz, Samuel Hoffenstein, Jack Mintz, and John Lee Mahin, among others (Rushdie 68), and even now, seventy years after the film’s initial release, who contributed what remains largely unclear and contested in both scholarly and fan-based discourses, returning viewers and theorists once more to the repertoire of the film’s creation.

The film itself remains within the realm of the textual archive, due to the fact that the finished version of the movie, including that readily available on DVD or in televised showing, remains identical with every screening. Judy Garland will always be Dorothy and the Wicked Witch of the West will always be played by Margaret Hamilton, in all her green-faced splendor; the same cast of traveling companions will accompany Dorothy on her journey; they will have the exact same adventures, and our heroine will always return to Kansas and tell audiences, again and again, that “there’s no place like home.” However, the archetypal nature of the narrative and the film’s visual Technicolor magnificence have worked over the past several decades to invite viewers into immediate identification with the familiar story and cast of characters. As Rushdie comments of this self-identification, “[i]n the case of a beloved film, *we are the stars’ doubles*. Our
imaginations put us in the Lion’s skin, place the sparkling slippers on our feet and send us cackling through the air on a broomstick … We are the stand-ins now” (46, emphasis original). The process of identification Rushdie engages with derives from media theories of the “active audience” and can be traced back to Umberto Eco’s *The Role of the Reader*, where Eco makes the argument that audiences “produce texts by reading them” (3). According to Eco, each text posits a “model reader,” one who will read the work in exactly the contextual and ideological framework as that intended by the author; however, the active audience is capable of reading texts from a variety of individual and theoretical standpoints, often producing meanings that are divergent from or even counter to those intended by the author (7). As theorized through the idea of the active audience, viewers are therefore able to articulate their own meanings from the text itself and position themselves at a number of diverse sites in reading and responding to the film, including self-identification. This audience engagement results in the film’s necessary location at the center of a wide range of the active and embodied knowledges and performances achieved by its viewers, connecting the archive of the film itself with the repertoire accomplished by its audience.

Additionally, theorizing the active audience opens up further space surrounding the text for the development of fan culture and interpretation, as well as additional invested meanings achieved through performance, such as the ritual viewing practices which have surrounded annual television broadcasts of *The Wizard of Oz* since the mid-twentieth century.¹³ The televised showing of *The Wizard of Oz* can be traced back to

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CBS’s first broadcast of the film in 1956, though it did not become an annual tradition until 1959 (McClelland 144-5), and ritually performed viewing patterns developed around the film’s broadcast soon after. In The TV Ritual: Worship at the Video Altar, Gregor T. Goethals establishes three key requirements for mediatized ritual performance, such as that surrounding film and television viewing: active participation of those involved, “extraordinary” space, at a remove from everyday life, and a structured time frame, with an easily-identifiable beginning, middle, and end (8-9). Goethals also argues for the potentially transformative effect such rituals can have on individuals, claiming that “[t]he general pattern of ritual action, which involves withdrawal from the ordinary world into the extraordinary space, time, and action of ritual, transforms the person” (10). These patterns of active audience performance surrounding ritual viewing prove especially productive in discussing The Wizard of Oz. Initially shown only once a year, 14

but did not begin showing the film annually until 1959. CBS briefly lost the broadcast rights to the film to NBC from 1968-1975, though in 1976, CBS “reacquired the picture as an annual special under a five-year contract,” paying $4,000,000 for the five showings (McClelland 144-8). The yearly showing of the classic film had significant ramifications. First of all, as Harmetz points out, the story and characters became “so recognizable that they could serve as shorthand in the marketplace,” with likenesses of and references to Dorothy and her friends appearing everywhere from car commercials to record album advertisements (291). As Harmetz also argues, in large part due to the visibility effected by the television broadcasts of the film and the audience they reached, “The Wizard of Oz was equally serviceable as metaphorical shorthand,” being called into service in entertainment from John Boorman’s science-fiction film Zardoz to Elton John’s album Goodbye Yellow Brick Road; the narrative was even used in political contexts, when “[d]uring Watergate, a dozen or more newspapers and magazines used a cowardly lion and a counterfeit wizard as metaphors” (Harmetz 291). The second key impact of the yearly broadcast of The Wizard of Oz was the continued, and indeed increased, enthusiasm viewers had for the film, with the television showings introducing new viewers to the story each year. This medium not only provided the vehicle which would effectively pass the film down through generations to come, but also created a venue for continued familiarity with the film, its plot and its characters, greatly contributing to its status as a classic film and central American myth. As Scarfone and Stillman argue, “Oz bridges generation gaps with the immediacy of instant recognition … If Oz was an exciting novelty in 1939, it is television which has firmly entrenched its status. By way of television’s intimate nature, Oz has been invited into our homes, our living rooms, our lives” (203-4). The yearly broadcast of the film assumed a reputation as a televised event that families often watched together, with many children growing up having watched the film each year for as long as they can remember, and it is this familiarity and the accessible nature of television which have ushered the Wizard of Oz narrative into the mainstream of American culture and identity, as one of the only referents almost all people have in common, a uniquely American myth and narrative.

14 With the broadcast rights for The Wizard of Oz acquired by Turner Classic Movies (TCM) in 2000, the annual showing moved to the Fourth of July holiday, with TCM airing the film “commercial-free for the
the film is a televised event which encourages viewers to watch with friends or loved ones due to its status as a family film and previously performed rituals of communal viewing surrounding the film itself. In addition, the annual showing and viewing of the film may also prompt viewers to reflect on childhood viewing experiences or call upon memories of earlier experiences of the film, all of which require an active participation and personal reading of the film itself with each broadcast, which takes the viewers momentarily out of the time and space of their everyday lives. These ritual viewing performances also become active sites for the formation of community and cultural recognition, and it is these practices which have been largely responsible for giving the *Wizard of Oz* mythic narrative the position of a cultural institution. As Jay Scarfone and William Stillman argue in *The Wizardry of Oz: The Artistry and Magic of the 1939 MGM Classic*,

> There are few events in our popular culture that Americans have experienced collectively as a people over generations. *The Wizard of Oz* bears such distinction … Who among us doesn’t know who Dorothy and Toto are? Oz is a common element in which we can all share the humor of its familiarity, whether it be a parody on *Saturday Night Live* or the punchline in a comic strip. (203-4)

The active audience is therefore directly responsible for the creation of meaning, recognition, and cultural status surrounding *The Wizard of Oz*. As a result, active viewer engagement with the film through ritual viewing practices and cultural recognition situate MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz* at the center of a variety of enacted and embodied knowledges, positioning the film and its significance at key intersections of text and performance.

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first time in television history” on July 3, 2000 (Hogan 26). Turner Network Television owns TCM as well as the TNT and TBS cable channels, which now show the classic MGM film several times throughout the year.
In addition, such ritual viewing patterns and invested meanings are achieved at communal and subcultural levels as well. For example, a significant subcultural discourse has developed in the gay community surrounding *The Wizard of Oz* in general and Judy Garland in particular. As Richard Dyer argues in *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, Garland’s 1950 firing by MGM and subsequent suicide attempt dynamically resituated Garland and her star persona. As Dyer points out, “[t]his event, because it constituted for the public an sudden break with Garland’s uncomplicated and ordinary MGM image, made possible a reading of Garland as having a special relationship to suffering, ordinariness, normality, and it is this relationship that structures much of the gay reading of Garland” (“Judy Garland” 138). Uncertain and insecure, Garland fluctuated between her public image and her private reality, negotiating her intense energy and success with her vulnerability and self-doubt. Dyer further argues that “[t]here is nothing arbitrary about the gay reading of Garland; it is a product of the way homosexuality is socially constructed, without and within the gay subculture itself” (“Judy Garland” 191). As such, Garland’s unique combination of strength and fragility hold particular meaning for the gay community and, in this respect, Garland’s Dorothy and her performance of “Over the Rainbow” in MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz* hold specific significance within this community, inviting a personally-invested reading and identification.

While the texts of Baum and MGM remain firmly located within the category of Taylor’s archive, the actively performed practices, both cultural and individual, which have developed around these texts situate them significantly in engagement with the

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15 Here Dyer argues that three specific discourses within Garland’s star image made her particularly resonant with the gay community: Garland’s negotiation of ordinariness, including “disparity between the image and the imputed real person” (“Judy Garland” 152), androgyny, and camp.
performative nature of the repertoire. This self-identification and active positioning by individual viewers and subcultural communities, as well as the position of this narrative within specific cultural discourses situate the *Wizard of Oz* narrative as simultaneously textual and performative. Realized in repeated acts of adaptation, revision, and recognition, as well as through active audience practices of self-identification and ritual viewing, the versions of Baum and MGM act as sites upon which these dynamic, embodied knowledges are performed. Therefore, Baum’s book and MGM’s classic film blur the categories of the archive and the repertoire, providing concrete texts around which various performative identifications and practices develop into a range of culturally and personally-embodied knowledges.

“EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD”: LUMET’S *THE WIZ*

Lumet’s 1978 film, *The Wiz*, occupies a uniquely liminal position between text and performance. Reframing Baum’s traditional *Wizard of Oz* story in Harlem and featuring an all-African American cast, Lumet tried to recreate the critical and popular success of the 1975 Broadway musical of the same name, directed by Geoffrey Holder. As James Robert Parish and Michael R. Pitts explain, “[i]n the 1970s, with black culture receiving its belated due in the American entertainment arts, several stage shows came forth with all-black casts performing stories which once had been the domain of white entertainers. One of the most successful translations to the black idiom was *The Wiz*” (767). The show was a hit with theatre-goers and critics alike, and in 1975, *The Wiz* won numerous Tony Awards for Best Direction, Best Choreography, Best Costume Design, Best Original Score, and Best Musical (Rigsbee). Individual performers also garnered critical acclaim
with Ted Ross honored as the Best Featured Actor in a Musical for his performance as the Cowardly Lion and Dee Dee Bridgewater winning the award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical in her role as Dorothy (ibid).

The onstage version of The Wiz was doubly performative: it was a live theatre performance, as well as a performative act of American mythmaking, a dynamic process of revision and negotiation. This performativity was significant in terms of race as well, with the African American community claiming ownership of a traditionally white cultural narrative, remaking it to more effectively reflect their own experiences, and inviting its citizens into a heretofore denied identification with a mythic American tale. In addition to relocating the Oz narrative from Kansas to New York City, The Wiz both revamped and offered a self-reflexive position on the traditional Wizard of Oz story. As Thomas S. Hischak points out in Through the Screen Door: What Happened to the Broadway Musical When It Went to Hollywood, The Wiz “was a vivacious musical with William F. Brown’s libretto filled with sassy, self-mocking dialogue and Charlie Small’s Motown-sounding pop score overflowing with energy and joy,” creating a musical that was “inventive but consistent” (140). Finally, in addition to serving as a contemporary representation of race, The Wiz also entered into dialogue with criticisms of Baum’s original work as racist, based on Baum’s pattern of strict racial categorization within Oz and his well-known prejudice against Native Americans.16 By claiming the Wizard of Oz

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16 Baum is infamous for his prejudicial views against Native Americans, evidenced in what have come to be known as “The Sitting Bull Editorials,” written by Baum when he lived in South Dakota and published in his newspaper, The Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer. In the 1890 and 1891 editorials, Baum argues in favor of the extermination of the Native Americans, deplorably arguing that “the best safety of the frontier settlements will best be secured by the total annihilation of the few remaining Indians” (D’Amato 242). Though these beliefs seem in direct contrast to the whimsy and delight he created in his Oz stories, Baum’s bigotry is indirectly reflected in the racial separation of the citizens who populate Oz, as well as in Dorothy’s supremacy over them as a young, white child from the wholesome American Midwest. The
narrative for non-white performers and viewers, *The Wiz* expanded the range of representations and identifications available to this narrative and its negotiation, as well as drawing attention to racial discrimination and marginalization in earlier versions.

Lumet attempted to capitalize on the success of the Broadway musical with his film adaptation, though the material did not translate effectively from stage to screen. Critically panned at the time of its release, one of the most consistent complaints regarding *The Wiz* revolved around the casting of Diana Ross, who “seemed at least twenty years too old to play Dorothy” (Medved 232). This significant miscasting pushed the *Wizard of Oz* narrative beyond the realm of the fantastic and into the unbelievable; viewers found it impossible to identify with this older Dorothy, who was simultaneously naïve and world-weary. As Hischak comments of viewer responses to Ross’s characterization of Dorothy, “audience members might have felt sorry for Dorothy, but most were more sympathetic to their own plight having to endure her” (142). In the shift from the embodied repertoire of the Broadway performance to the concrete and unchanging text of Lumet’s film, the performativity of the Broadway musical was negated. The representations in the film were deemed static and stagnant, which was reflected in box office returns, where *The Wiz* “became one of the decade’s biggest failures, producing a net loss of $10.4 million against its $24 million investment” (Cook 219). Finally, as Donald Bogle notes, “[w]hat really killed the movie was simply the fact that no longer were black hands in control. Instead the movie’s most important creators—the director Sidney Lumet and the writer Joel Schumacher—were white artists, totally out of tune with the material (its built-in folkloric quality) and the style of it performers”

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effect of Baum’s prejudice on *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the theme of race in the versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative being considered here will be discussed at length in Chapter Four.
The Wiz (230). Therefore, while the Broadway version of The Wiz was an African American version of Baum’s fairy tale, created by African American artists both on and off stage, Lumet’s film version had an all-African American cast in front of the camera, but was filtered through the perspective of the white creators behind the camera.

Unfortunately and unfairly, this failure became identified with the Broadway version of The Wiz and the release of Lumet’s film coincided with a drastic decline in the popularity of the stage production. Hischak claims that this negative response to the Lumet’s film has had lasting and disastrous effects on the cultural memory and discourse surrounding the original production, claiming that “[n]ot only was The Wiz a critical and box office bust, but it has damaged the reputation of the stage play. Had this movie worked even a little, the musical would be produced more often today” (142). Hischak’s argument is supported by the Broadway show’s production history. The show opened on January 5, 1975 and ran for 1,672 performances, evidence of the show’s critical and popular success. However, when the musical returned to the stage in 1984 after the failure of Lumet’s film, the revival only ran for a disappointing thirteen performances (Rigsbee). As a result, Lumet’s The Wiz occupies the undesirable position of being known as the text that killed a performance.

Notably, the differences between the stage and screen versions of The Wiz are largely embodied, performative changes, rather than major narrative revisions. Lumet’s The Wiz told the same basic story as its Broadway predecessor, followed the familiar narrative structure, used many of the same musical numbers, and even brought in two of the stage actors to reprise their roles for the film, with Ted Ross as the Lion and Mabel King as the wicked witch Evillene. The main alterations of Lumet’s film were in the
embodied performances of key roles, with the majority of criticism focusing on Diana Ross as Dorothy. In other words, while the story remained essentially the same between these two versions of *The Wiz*, the physical embodiment, characterization, and performance of the story was dramatically changed, resulting in a critical backlash. In the adaptation from the live performance to the film text, performativity became doubly-problematic for Lumet’s *The Wiz*. To draw once again on Taylor’s terminology, the repertoire is made up of the “embodied practice/knowledge” (19) established through physical performance. In the case of *The Wiz*, the “embodied knowledge” experienced by its viewers does not forfeit its position of embodiment simply because the performers have left the stage. The experience of cultural memory blurs the lines between the archive and the repertoire, combining the lasting presence of text with the embodied and enacted nature of performance, though this memory is admittedly a more ephemeral form of archiving than concrete texts, such as films or playbills. Many theatre-goers witnessed the performance of the 1975 musical and took pleasure and empowerment from the claiming of mythic identity through the repositioning of a traditional narrative from an African American perspective; however, those same viewers have now been denied that performative site of identification. With few comparable productions on the Broadway stage since the downward spiral of *The Wiz*, viewers have little choice but to turn to the text of Lumet’s film to seek the echoes of the original performance.

As a result of the decline in the popularity of the stage musical, Lumet’s film has been forced to stand in as a simulacrum in cultural memory for the original stage production, now lost. Jean Baudrillard famously theorizes simulacra, arguing that

To dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn’t have. One implies a presence, the other an
absence. But it is more complicated than that because simulating is not pretending … pretending, or dissimulating, leaves the principle of reality intact: the difference is always clear, it is simply masked, whereas simulation threatens the difference between the “true” and the “false,” the “real” and the “imaginary.” (454)

In the case of *The Wiz*, Lumet’s film is indeed a very poor simulacrum for the original Broadway production; however, it is the only textual alternative remaining to those who wish to hold onto the performative promise of the stage show. The 1975 premiere of *The Wiz* occupies a particularly significant cultural moment, when African Americans began remaking their own images and claiming their own representations in the wake of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. With multiple stage shows featuring all-African American casts and a Hollywood movement Donald Bogle has termed the “black movie boom” (*Toms* 231), African American directors and performers were bringing these identities to the stage and screen on their own terms. However, Lumet’s *The Wiz* marred this period of empowering representations with the reappropriation of a white perspective in Lumet and Schumacher, as well as its miscasting of Dorothy and “a pretty embarrassing lot” of supporting characters (Hischak 141). Tragically, the critical failure of Lumet’s film not only contributed to the declining popularity of its Broadway source, but also “sent shock waves through the industry that helped to destroy interest in black-oriented projects at all the major studios” (Medved 232). Just when a new range of possibilities for representation and identification with African American characters was opening up, Lumet’s film presented a significant setback.

Lumet’s film is a disastrously inadequate simulacrum for the original stage production, but it is all viewers and fans have been offered, and therefore must be forced to suffice. While circa-1975 playbills, advertising images, sound recordings, and scripts
survive, these are often elusive collectors’ items. The cast recording is the exception, as an archive of the show that is accessible to many consumers; it remains marginally performative, recording the simulation of live performance but capable of no embodied experience. The significance of the cultural moment, the promise of a broader range of representational possibilities, and the historical success of the musical are of central importance, a powerful site of African American representation and popular culture. Denied the continuing performance of this identity as articulated on the Broadway stage, viewers must turn to Lumet’s *The Wiz* for a shadow of that earlier success, regardless of the film’s incapability of delivering on that promise. Trapped within an unending cycle of desire and disappointment, *The Wiz* occupies a liminal position between text and performance, offering its fixed cinematic archive to viewers striving to recapture the repertoire.

“DEFYING GRAVITY”: MAGUIRE’S *WICKED: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE WICKED WITCH OF THE WEST* AND BROADWAY’S *WICKED*

In his best-selling novel, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, Gregory Maguire significantly resituates the *Wizard of Oz* narrative for a new audience by shifting the privileged perspective from that of Dorothy and her companions to Elphaba, more commonly known as the Wicked Witch of the West. This new positioning serves to critically illuminate spaces and moments of action marginalized or silenced in the earlier narratives of Baum and MGM, including significant racial tensions in the Land of Oz, as well as the socially-constructed nature of its key figures, including Elphaba.

17 Interestingly, the cast recording of Broadway’s *The Wiz* is also available as a karaoke CD, inviting viewers to actively construct their own performances and re-embody the performativity of the show’s live musical numbers.
Glinda, and the Wizard himself. Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s Broadway musical *Wicked* further embodies the knowledge and narrative of Maguire’s work, shifting Elphaba’s tale from the archive of Maguire’s text to the literal stage performance space referred to by Taylor’s repertoire.

Like Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Maguire’s *Wicked* belongs almost entirely to the archive as a concrete and unchanging text. But Maguire’s work is also a reinvention of the earlier narrative, an example of what George Lipsitz refers to as “counter-memory.” As Lipsitz defines this term,

> Counter-memory is a way of remembering and forgetting that starts with the local, the immediate, and the personal. Unlike historical narratives that begin with the totality of human existence and then locate specific actions and events within that totality, counter-memory starts with the particular and the specific and then builds outward toward a total story. Counter-memory looks to the past for the hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives. But unlike myths that seek to detach events and actions from the fabric of any larger history, counter-memory forces revision of existing histories by supplying new perspectives about the past. Counter-memory focuses on localized experiences with oppression, using them to reframe and refocus dominant narratives purporting to represent universal experience. (213)

Maguire’s *Wicked*, then, is actively participating in the discourse of cultural memory, performing a rewriting or reinvention of the earlier *Wizard of Oz* tale in order to bring to the center that which had previously been marginalized. Maguire achieves this by shifting the perspective from the position of a formerly privileged character (Dorothy) to that of one who had long been silenced and disenfranchised (Elphaba/The Wicked Witch). In addition, *Wicked* is part of the literary discourse Mary S. Gossy refers to as “the untold story,” filling a gap left by earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. *Wicked* addresses “that part of a text that makes its absence felt, and upon whose felt absence the form and process of the text depend” (5). In this case, Maguire scripts the familiar story
of Dorothy and her friends as an absent narrative, which serves to simultaneously highlight Elphaba’s story as the heretofore unrecognized “untold story” of earlier versions. In addition, *Wicked* fulfills another narrative and performative function. As Gossy argues, “another critical aspect of the untold [story is] … because it is perceived as a lack, it becomes an object of the reader’s desire, an emptiness to be filled” (6). Through this engagement with the “untold story,” Maguire’s text creates a space in which his novel positions itself to both reveal and fulfill this desire through the previously-silenced expression of Elphaba’s story. Maguire’s *Wicked*, therefore, is an archival text which is performing a significant resituating of a traditional narrative, actively engaging with Taylor’s repertoire as well and calling into further question the assumption of the written text as static and passive. The positioning of Maguire’s *Wicked* as archive or repertoire becomes further complicated when the novel begins to be explicitly connected with the Broadway performance adapted from its narrative, a consideration which will be addressed in regard to Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* as both archive and repertoire.

The *Wizard of Oz* narrative becomes almost wholly performative in Schwartz and Holzman’s Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Wicked*, which takes the tale to the contemporary stage. The performance of the musical is nearly impossible to confine within the boundaries of Taylor’s archive, with the exception of still images and the unchanging script of the show itself. As a live performance, *Wicked* is necessarily invested in moments of action, precluding the archiving of the action itself. As Peggy Phelan argues in “The Ontology of Performance: Representation Without Reproduction,”

> Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance …. Performance’s being, like the ontology of
subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance. (146, emphasis original)

Phelan’s theory of performance is in direct agreement with the absence of any visual recording of the musical’s performance, as well as the standard playbill warning that “[t]he photographing or sound recording of any performance or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside this theatre, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law. Violators may be punished by ejection and may render the offender liable for money damages” (Wicked Playbill). The act of performance and the strict regulation of when, under what circumstances, and by whom such performances can be even fragmentarily archived is a site of struggle for ownership, including the privileged position of deciding which sounds and images are permitted to act as simulacra for the act of performance.

However, Schwartz and Holzman’s Wicked also serves as the most dynamic site of the overlapping of archive and repertoire in these versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative. Bringing together the functions of text and performance, several officially-sanctioned acts of partial archiving surround the performance of Broadway’s Wicked, including the release of the original cast recording, official promotional images, and David Cote’s Wicked: The Grimmerie (A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Hit Broadway Musical). A similarity shared by these three regulated forms of archiving is that all notably feature the original Broadway cast, ensuring that each concrete text refers explicitly back to the benchmark that has been established for all subsequent performances; therefore, each of these archives feature Idina Menzel as the “original” Elphaba, Kristin Chenoweth as the “first” Glinda, and Joel Grey as the “authentic” Wizard of Oz. This fixing of personalities within their roles in the archives of sound
recording and images runs counter to the realities of performance, with different actors reprising these roles on Broadway and in performances on American and international stages. These issues of authenticity are variations on the archived body consistently present within the texts of sound recording, advertisement, and publication. A close consideration of the archives of cast recording, promotional materials, and Cote’s *Grimmerie* reveal the possibilities of archiving performances such as *Wicked*, as well as explicitly emphasizing the dissonance between the text and the performance, the record of the archive and the experience of the repertoire.

First, the cast recording of *Wicked* features three key types of archiving: sound, text, and image. The recording features the musical’s original Broadway cast performing nineteen of the show’s most well-known musical numbers, lyrics for each of the included songs, and a number of full-color photographs from the Broadway production. In addition, the cover of the cast recording bears the official promotional image of the musical, connecting it in the minds of consumers with other promotional images, certifying the recording as an archiving of the “authentic” or “original” voices and performance of *Wicked*. The cast recording provides a productive example of the role of media culture and performance outlined by Philip Auslander, who argues that “mediatization is now explicitly and implicitly embedded within the live experience” (31), including the use of diverse mediums, the context of live performance, and the

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18 In 2008, a fifth anniversary edition of the cast recording was released, which provided a global perspective on the musical through its inclusion of songs as performed by the German and Japanese casts: “Solang Ich Dich Hab” (“As Long as You’re Mine”) and “Gutes Tun” (“No Good Deed”) from the German cast recording, and “Jinsei Wo Odori-Akase” (“Dancing Through Life”) and “Popyurra” (“Popular”) from the Japanese production. In addition, the 5th anniversary cast recording also includes pop music versions of some of the show’s main numbers—“For Good” performed by LeAnne Rimes and Delta Goodrem, “I’m Not That Girl” sung by Kelly Ellis, and a “dance mix” version of “Defying Gravity” by the “original” Elphaba, Idina Menzel—and an additional song, “Making Good,” which was cut from the original production before its Broadway debut, performed by Stephanie Block, who played Elphaba in the show’s pre-Broadway run, and composer Stephen Schwartz.
positioning of such performances as media themselves. However, as effective as the
mediatization of the music of *Wicked* is in providing fans with a partial auditory archive
of the performance, there are also multiple shortfalls which cannot be overcome through
archiving alone. The archive, after all, can never effectively relate the performance itself,
and while the music of *Wicked* is successfully captured by the original cast recording, the
narrative surrounding the musical selections and the visual, physical performance of the
story remain unattainable through the archive of the cast recording alone.

An especially telling example of this is the song “Wonderful,” performed on the
cast recording by Joel Grey as the Wizard and Idina Menzel as Elphaba. Prior this
number, the Wizard has tricked Elphaba into using her magic to create flying monkeys to
carry out the Wizard’s tyrannical schemes and Elphaba, disenchanted with the Wizard’s
power, has returned to set the monkeys free. In “Wonderful,” the Wizard is trying to
convince Elphaba of his own good intentions and co-opt Elphaba’s power and influence
for his own uses. As the Wizard tells Elphaba, highlighting the social construction of his
identity as a public figure, “[t]hey call me ‘wonderful’ / So I am wonderful / In fact—it’s
so much who I am / It’s part of my name / And with my help, you can be the same”
(emphasis original). When Elphaba responds to this invitation, with “It does sound
wonderful …”, the listener can easily grasp the meaning of the conversation and
Elphaba’s temptation. However, what remains invisible in the process of this archiving is
the narrative of deception and abuse surrounding this exchange: Elphaba’s heart-
wrenching desire to be considered “wonderful” and her ultimate rejection of the Wizard’s
offer, which directly results in the public and social construction of her as dangerous and
“wicked.” While the sound of the performance, including the performers’ voices and
orchestral accompaniment are faithfully captured on this recording, the enacted, embodied knowledge of the surrounding narratives and the physicality of the performers themselves are absent. The sound recording is unable to capture the context and essence of the live performance. The cast recording, therefore, remains a partial and incomplete archive of the performance itself.

Likewise, promotional images surrounding *Wicked* offer a relatively insubstantial archive of the actual performance. The official promotional image of the musical features an image of two witches: Elphaba in dominant colors of green and black, contrasted with the lighter white and flesh-toned color scheme which characterizes Glinda. This key promotional image is displayed on billboards, outside of theatres performing the show, on playbills and souvenir booklets, the front of the official cast recording, and the cover of Maguire’s novel as a book/musical tie-in edition, connecting Maguire’s text explicitly with Schwartz’s musical and its attendant performances. This central promotional image introduces two of the main characters, Elphaba and Glinda. Their association, including Glinda’s position of whispering into Elphaba’s ear, indicates the revelation of another, heretofore secret side of the story: the closeness and conspiratorial nature of these two women. In fact, as theatre theorist Stacy Wolf points out, “[o]nly Glinda’s eyes are visible; she covers her nose and mouth with her hands, while Elphaba’s mouth and nose are visible but her hat hides her eyes—as if both women are necessary to make a whole face” (“‘Defying Gravity’” 5). These characters have certainly not been imagined in such a posture of friendship in earlier versions, such as those of Baum or MGM, where the women were depicted as polar opposites of one another and natural enemies. However, even more dramatically than the cast recording, this promotional image in and of itself
fails to indicate the narrative significance or action of the live performance. Photographic promotional images are similarly featured in souvenir books from the musical itself and authorized performance photographs have been inserted into musical tie-in editions of Maguire’s novel. Both of these texts include glossy, full-color images of stage set-ups, main characters, and key moments of action, such as Glinda’s stylized entrance, Elphaba and Glinda’s trip to the Emerald City, and Elphaba’s flight. Again, these images provide a self-reflexively incomplete archive, supplemented not with indicators of larger narrative, but with quotes either from reviews of the musical (souvenir book) or Maguire’s text (novel insert). With these textual choices, it is clear that the visual archiving of these promotional images is not intended to offer a record of the performance as a whole, but rather to outline the connection of the stunning visual images featured with the larger context of stage performance, novel, or both.

Finally, the most complete attempt to archive the performance of Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* is the book *Wicked: The Grimmerie (A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Hit Broadway Musical)*, with text and interviews by David Cote. *The Grimmerie* has been designed to have a distressed appearance, in accordance with its counterpart as Elphaba’s old and powerful spell book of the same name introduced in the versions of both Maguire and Schwartz. This definitive text offers a comprehensive overview of all things related to the performance itself, including a history of the show’s development, interviews with key figures including Schwartz, Holzman, and Maguire, and an overview of the adaptation process. Cote’s *Grimmerie* also provides an archive of the show itself, with photographs, sketches, and descriptions of set design, costuming, and make-up. However, the most complete act of archiving achieved by *The Grimmerie* is its inclusion
of “the songs and story of Wicked” (Cote 139), which provides the reader with the narrative context absent from the earlier archival attempts of the cast recording and promotional images. As Cote explains,

The book, which Winnie Holzman wrote, includes all the nonmusical scenes; they are, in effect, dramatic or comic scenes that typically provide exposition or push the plot along. The score contains all the songs, which can serve a variety of functions: deepening character, expanding an emotionally significant moment, setting, a mood or even pushing the plot along. Together, the book and score are called the libretto. (34)

The Grimmerie includes the full libretto, an archive of the musical and its performance which is available from no other source, making this text one more example of an act of archiving over which the purveyors of the performance exert full control. Nearly all of the elements of the performance are archived in the text of The Grimmerie—all but the embodiment of the performance itself, which will always remain beyond the reach of the text. Turning to the mediated representations offered by the images and text of The Grimmerie, it becomes possible to address the book as a remnant of the performance, though admittedly one which appeals to its audience in a different manner than the performance itself. The Grimmerie, then, should be addressed as a text in and of itself, an archive of the performance that, like the cast recording and promotional images, can never comprehensively document the full and embodied performance of Schwartz’s Wicked.

With Maguire’s text acting, similarly to Baum’s, as the “stable signifier” (Taylor 19) of Wicked, both the versions of Maguire and Schwartz blur the boundaries between the archive and repertoire. Maguire’s novel remains grounded within the discourse of the text; however, the embodied acts of adaptation and performance, as well as promotional images connecting the novel to the Broadway production situate Maguire’s work at the
center of several embodied performances. On the other hand, while Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* is first and foremost a live, embodied stage performance, attempts at archiving such as the cast recording, promotional images, and Cote’s *Grimmerie* explicitly ground Schwartz and Holzman’s musical in text as well as performance. The versions of *Wicked* produced by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman once again blur the lines between Taylor’s categories of the archive and the repertoire, combining concrete text and embodied performance to create new and structurally-hybrid reinventions of the traditional *Wizard of Oz* narrative.

**REIMAGING TEXT AND PERFORMANCE**

As these texts show, it is necessary to re-imagine text and performance as overlapping and intersecting, rather than as separate, demarcated categories in addressing Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, MGM’s 1939 film classic, Lumet’s *The Wiz*, and the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman. In addition, neither text nor performance can effectively be addressed without taking the role of the active audience into consideration because, through numerous performative practices, the audience assumes the responsibility of making meaning, of constructing, articulating, and responding to the significance of the work before them. The role of the active audience is particularly central to theorizing the implications of the text in addressing a narrative, such as that of the *Wizard of Oz*, which serves as a unique cultural script or myth. These works and their meanings, in this case of mythmaking, do not remain static; instead, they change and become reinvented or rearticulated in response to their contemporary moment and the concerns central to the work of that culture. Therefore, a mythic American narrative like
the *Wizard of Oz* can only be productively addressed in its multiple forms by blurring the lines between text and performance, by embracing the repertoire within the archive, and vice versa. In addition, it is only through this theoretical hybridity that such diverse versions as Baum’s children’s book, the films of Fleming and Lumet, Maguire’s novel, and Schwartz and Holzman’s musical can be productively put into dialogue with one another. This engagement of text and performance produces a new way of speaking about cultural expression, which allows the critical reader or viewer to move beyond the narrative development of written works, the misé-en-scene of films, and the vocal register of musicals. Instead, it is necessary to address each of these diverse forms of this cultural narrative as simultaneously textual and performative. Incorporating this hybridity of text and performance, it becomes possible to address significant discourses of American myth and cultural values, including the active and ongoing process of mythmaking. In the case of the *Wizard of Oz*, the revisionist discourse of myth is evidenced most clearly by the shifting representations of gender, race, home, and magic which run throughout all these versions of this familiar story.
CHAPTER THREE:
WICKED AND WONDERFUL WOMEN

“Once upon a time there lived a beautiful princess ...”

This is a familiar first line of countless fairy tales and, signaling the liminal space between storytelling and everyday life, not only ushers in the tropes of the tales themselves, but also introduces the structure of gender that defines these stories, a traditionally dichotomous and restrictive construction. Gender representations are particularly significant within mythic structures, in large part because they outline the acceptable parameters of gender behavior within the larger culture. Fairy tale discourses codify individual behaviors, social structures, and cultural value systems, making fairy tales especially instrumental in demarcating the range of culturally-validated femininities.

In traditional fairy tales, female characters generally fall into categories of good or evil, the beautiful princess or the evil witch. Characters embodying the first archetype are coded as lovely and good, with virtue established through a selflessness demonstrated by a willingness to help others and a passivity to the goals and desires of more dominant, often male characters; this compulsion is also often seen in a propensity for self-sacrifice of identity and agency. In short, the ideal “good girl” of fairy tales is relatively one-dimensional and “decoratively unobtrusive” (Waelti-Walters 5), giving up individual motivation to support the forward motion of the fairy tale, a direction which is almost invariably dictated by more active male characters. In direct contrast, the figure of the “bad” woman, usually occupied by a wicked witch or evil stepmother, is characterized by her self-serving manipulation of circumstances to satisfy her own desires. From the evil
queen who tricks Snow White into eating a poisoned apple to the Wicked Witch of Oz’s obsession with Dorothy’s magic shoes, these monstrous women are defined by their willingness to do whatever they have to in order to get what they want. Vilified in comparison to their virtuous counterparts, these women are set apart by their agency and active longing, which separates them from both the beautiful princesses and the men who fear their ruthless power. As Waelti-Walters points out, in this polarized representation of good and evil, the wicked woman has “full possession of an awareness of herself [and] has a more varied and different potential from that of a man; one which he fears and represses because he cannot or will not understand it, because its workings are not visible and unidirectional as are his own” (82). Therefore, the good girl is predictable and ultimately containable, while her evil sister is marked as wicked by her ambition, power, and uncontrollable nature.

Negotiations of mythic narratives such as the Wizard of Oz tale are notable in the ways in which they validate, challenge, or reinvent such representations of gender. This revisionist process often reflects shifts in notions of acceptable femininity within the sociocultural discourses surrounding the stories themselves, the mythmaking impulse behind the myth. The images of women offered by these versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative become increasingly complicated as they are revised and reimagined. While early versions, such as Baum’s children’s tale and MGM’s classic film, provide audiences with a dichotomous view of femininity populated by women either good or evil, later versions unsettle these polarized notions of gender identity. The later versions of the Wizard of Oz story instead present complex and flawed female characters who fail to fit neatly into such clearly-defined categories, who participate in the construction of
their social images, and who highlight the performative nature of gender identities. In addition, femininity is an embodied performance, as well as an enacted one, and the physical appearances of these women also serve to visually code their characters. The embodiment of femininity through dress and appearance is a constant theme throughout these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* myth and this discourse becomes more self-reflexive as these revisions progress.

“ARE YOU A GOOD WITCH OR A BAD WITCH?”:

**DICHOTOMY, MORALITY, AND PERFORMATIVE GENDER IDENTITIES**

One significant area of representation of gender in these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative is the degree to which these women are constructed as diametrically opposed to one another, which is most clearly evident in the polarization of female characters in these stories as entirely good or evil, wonderful or wicked. However, while this dichotomous organization is prevalent in early versions, such as Baum’s fairy tale and MGM’s film, this structure gets complicated by later narratives. Instead, the heroines of *The Wiz* and both versions of *Wicked* are shown in positions of actively negotiating morality, public image, and their own performances of femininity.

In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum’s Dorothy is an active female hero, a notable divergence in fairy tales of the European tradition and emerging stories of the early twentieth-century. As Waelti-Walters argues, women in fairy tales have often been consigned to passive positions, awaiting either servitude or rescue: the “princess is relegated to the kitchen, shut in a tower, exiled, killed, and no matter how hard she works to fulfill the tasks given, her taskmaster or mistress is never satisfied” (6). Waelti-
Walters’ reference to the figure of the cruel “taskmistress” highlights the gendered
dichotomy of the female hero and the villainess as well, with women in traditional fairy
tales usually positioned as either the victim or the victimizer, often set against one
another. In contrast to the passive female hero of traditional fairy tales, Dorothy takes her
own fate in her hands in a number of ways. In doing so, Dorothy follows a distinctly
American trajectory of self-determination within a culture that celebrates individuality,
and has since the valorization of its first national adventurers, evident in the mythic
discourse surrounding such figures as Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone, and Lewis and
Clark. As Hearn points out,

Feminists have naturally claimed Dorothy as one of their own. *The Wizard of Oz* is now almost universally acknowledged to be the earliest truly feminist American children’s book, because of spunky and tenacious Dorothy … Homely little Dorothy refreshingly goes out and solves her problem herself rather than waiting patiently like a beautiful heroine in a European fairy tale for someone else, whether prince or commoner, to put things right. (13)

In fact, not only does Dorothy not need rescuing, she becomes a rescuer herself,
freeing the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion to accompany her on her journey,
as well as liberating Oz’s citizens from the tyrannical rule of two evil witches.

While Dorothy is an active heroine, her deeds are inevitably dictated and
circumscribed by her coded position as a “good girl,” a structure in which the dichotomy
of good and evil women continues to be upheld. In Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*,
good and bad women are clearly demarcated, in accordance with the belief that “[t]he
single most essential law … is that good is more powerful than evil” (Rahn 88), and the
female characters and plot are organized in reflection of this polarity. This good/evil
dichotomy is consistent with gender representations in traditional fairy tales, though
Dorothy is a much more active, self-sufficient heroine than her predecessors. This polarization is evident in Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, with Dorothy and the Good Witch of the North on the side of right and the Wicked Witch of the West on the side of fright. Dorothy is a “good girl,” so any misbehavior on her part in her quest to return to Kansas is glossed over, the discrepancies downplayed in order to further foreground Dorothy’s goodness. Even behaviors punished in regular children, such as temper tantrums, are permissible for Dorothy; for example, the Witch’s refusal to return Dorothy’s shoe “made Dorothy so very angry that she picked up the bucket of water that stood near and dashed it over the Witch, wetting her from head to foot” (Baum 225), which results in Witch’s death. Conversely, the Wicked Witch of the West is framed as so evil that any act against her is justifiable; after all, she is surely only getting what she has had coming to her as a result of her evil nature. Not only is Dorothy not punished for her tantrum and subsequent, if accidental, murder of the Witch, she is celebrated and rewarded for this violence, echoing the celebration of the Munchkins when her house lands on the Wicked Witch of the East. After all, these witches cannot be allowed to live. In fact, as Sheldon Cashdan comments in *The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives*, “[t]he Witch, representing all that is ‘bad’ in Oz—and in Dorothy—must be destroyed” (232-3). Dorothy has arguably seen her own ambition reflected in the face of the Wicked Witch, and seeing her own desire as monstrous and aberrant, must now effect its destruction. Destroying the Wicked Witch, Dorothy also silences her own longing for more than her humble Kansas home, distancing herself from the monstrous femininity of the Wicked Witch, with Dorothy reestablishing herself as a self-sacrificing and “good” girl. Therefore, in attacking everything culturally unacceptable in the form of the Witch,
Dorothy is also simultaneously eradicating that which is “bad” within herself, and attacking all threat and transgression of ideal femininity as well.\(^{19}\)

MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* does not dispose of the good/evil dichotomy established by Baum and tellingly, Glinda’s first question to Dorothy is to inquire whether the girl is “a good witch or a bad witch.” Instead of disrupting the dualities of good and evil, this film version makes Garland’s Dorothy\(^{20}\) even more saccharinely sweet and innocent, while further Othering and demonizing the Wicked Witch of the West, memorably played by Margaret Hamilton. This visual representation of the green-faced, cackling witch also marks a significant shift in responses to her death within these narratives. While Baum’s witches are coded as deserving of death, in the MGM film the deaths of the witches of the

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\(^{19}\) Significantly, this is a dichotomy to which the male characters of Baum’s book are not subjected: the moral neutrality which the Wizard is afforded is the most striking example of this relativism. The Wizard sends Dorothy and her friends to kill the Wicked Witch, promising to grant their wishes in exchange for this task; however, after killing the witch, the travelers return to find that the Wizard has lied to them. As the Wizard himself confesses, “[w]hen you came to me I was willing to promise you anything if you would do away with the other Witch; but now that you have melted her, I am ashamed to say that I cannot keep my promise” (Baum 268). The Wizard has manipulated Dorothy and her companions into attempting this dangerous journey, with no regard for their safety or well-being, considering it a necessary sacrifice for concealing his identity and maintaining his power. However, the Wizard is not punished for this dishonesty, but is instead reinvested with power in the symbolic gifting the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion demand of him. The Wizard is profusely thanked by Dorothy’s companions and falls immediately to praising himself and “smiled to think of his success in giving the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman and the Lion exactly what they thought they wanted” (ibid). Even though the Wizard has given them nothing but an illusion, he is rewarded with thanks and praise as though he had really granted all their wishes; he is forgiven his deceit and reinvested with power by those whom he had tricked, not so long ago. On the other hand, women are afforded none of this moral relativism, but instead are framed as either entirely good or evil, and are rewarded or punished accordingly.

\(^{20}\) Garland’s performance as Dorothy has been inextricably intertwined with her biography, with her portrayal of innocence in *The Wizard of Oz* often contrasted with her tragic and abbreviated life. As biographer Gerold Frank asks,

Who here or abroad did not know it in roughest outline: from childhood vaudeville star through *The Wizard of Oz* and the all-too-many musicals, the exploitation by her mother and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the regime of sleeping pills and wake-up pills, the broken marriages, the concert tours, the suicide attempts, the repeated illnesses and nervous breakdowns and inability to perform invariably followed by triumphant comebacks in which she transformed audiences into manic worshippers screaming “Judy, we love you!”—yet through it all, the endless, heartbreaking, unavailing search for personal happiness so achingly captured in her song “Over the Rainbow”? (xii).

While the fan-based discourse surrounding Garland will not be a central concern of this work, it is impossible to read Garland’s characterization and the lasting popularity of *The Wizard of Oz* outside of the context of Garland’s iconographic status.
East and West are exuberantly celebrated; this tone of merriment is most evident in the Munchkin singing of “Ding Dong, the Witch is Dead,” when Dorothy crushes the Wicked Witch of the East with her house. In a pattern that can be traced back to European fairy tales, the death of the witch has been traditionally met with expressions of relief and a measure of celebration. In addition, the violence of killing the witch has been excused altogether, such as Hansel and Gretel’s shuttling of the witch into her own oven to escape back to home and family, domesticity and goodness. However, the energy, glee, and enthusiasm of the Munchkin’s song and dance in Fleming’s classic film is unparalleled in these previous narratives.

This macabre display of joy is a trend echoed in later versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale and marks the figure of the Wicked Witch as irredeemably grotesque. Any understanding of the grotesque must necessarily be traced back to the psychoanalytic theory of the “uncanny,” which was pioneered by Sigmund Freud. The “uncanny,” or *unheimlich*, is literally translated as “unhomely.” As Freud explains, the uncanny or *unheimlich* is “the opposite of what is familiar” (931), the unknown. However, the familiar can easily become unfamiliar. In fact,

> among its different shades of meaning the word *heimlich* exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, *unheimlich.* What is *heimlich* thus becomes *unheimlich* … In general, we are reminded that the word *heimlich* is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight. (Freud 933)

As Freud explains, the uncanny is simultaneously familiar and terrifying, fascinating and horrifying. The discourse of the uncanny is particularly significant in addressing representations of magic, though which the everyday becomes unknowable. Bernard
McElroy applies this theory in *Fiction of the Modern Grotesque*, describing the uncanny as “the eerie, unsettled feeling, the combination of fascination and revulsion so difficult to define but so unmistakable in our felt response to certain situations and certain kinds of art” (3). Building upon this notion of anxiety, McElroy argues that the uncanny is especially relevant in considering representations of magical power and the supernatural, claiming that “response to the grotesque … has as a fundamental component that sense of the uncanny which arises from the reassertion of the primitive, magical view of the world. It seems to me inescapable that the grotesque is linked definitively to aggression in human nature” (4), specifically aggression against the magical.

In conjunction with Freud’s theory of the uncanny, Julia Kristeva’s notion of abjection is also significant in addressing the Wicked Witch figure and the unrestrained celebration which follows her death. As Kristeva defines the abject, it “has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to *I*” (1, emphasis original). In being not of the self, the abject is the alien, the unfamiliar; in being unknown, it is a threat and must be ejected from the self and the body. The abject echoes Freud’s theory of the uncanny in many respects; however, the key difference between the two concepts is that the abject holds no sense of familiarity for its viewer. While the abject may, like the uncanny, be simultaneously fascinating and horrifying, it is defined predominantly by its position of being unrecognizable, unfamiliar. As Kristeva argues, “[e]ssentially different from ‘uncanniness,’ more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar” (5). The abject has to be distanced from the self, with force if necessary. Therefore, while the Wicked Witch as the uncanny figure both compels and repels viewers, the abjection of the witch demands her destruction. Following Kristeva’s
emphasis on the "abjection of self,"\textsuperscript{21} the killing of the Wicked Witch is a symbolic
gesture of Dorothy's destruction of that which is wicked within herself. Once the
Wicked Witch has been coded as grotesquely uncanny and abject, any action against her
is not only legitimized but also freed from the cultural taboos typically surrounding the
celebration of death. As a result, the Wicked Witch of the West is horrific in her
vengeance, though the Munchkins do not become monstrous in their singing.

Following the discourse established by Baum, in MGM's \textit{Wizard of Oz} any
actions against the witch, including her murder, become admissible because of her status
as "wicked." Dorothy is similarly circumscribed by her position as a "good girl," which
requires a careful balance of force and passivity and, more importantly, excuses any
questionable action or misbehavior on her part, much as in Baum's tale. Even though
Dorothy has more agency than the majority of her fairy tale sisters, the representation of
her gendered body and behavior neutralizes her motion, creating a heroine who is
constantly negotiating positions of activity and passivity. Though Dorothy is the leader of
her small group's adventure, Bonnie Friedman argues of Dorothy that, "[t]he drama of
the daughter's journey is: who will control her? Will she capitulate to the Wicked Witch
or will she make it home?" (24). It is ironic, Friedman continues, that "Dorothy, who
loves freedom, liberates as she goes" (25), though she herself continues to be controlled
by Wizard's commands and her gendered role within her family, as the well-behaved and
dutiful niece of Aunt Em and Uncle Henry (Charley Grapewin). In MGM's \textit{Wizard of Oz},
even Dorothy's heroism is accidental. Though her dousing of the witch in Baum's

\textsuperscript{21} However, the abject and the self can never be entirely separated from one another; as Kristeva explains,
because these two are inextricably intertwined, when one attempts to destroy the abject, "I expel myself, I
spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish myself" (3,
emphasis original). Attacking the abject, therefore, cannot be accomplished without recognizing and
attempting to destroy the abject within the self.
Wonderful Wizard of Oz was the result of temper, it was at least an active performance of agency on Dorothy’s part. However, in the film The Wizard of Oz, Dorothy’s melting of the Wicked Witch is altogether accidental: the witch gets wet as Dorothy—ever the “good girl”—is putting out the Scarecrow, who the witch has set on fire. So not only is Dorothy’s killing of the Witch validated by the Wicked Witch’s evilness as it was in Baum’s version, but Dorothy is absolutely exonerated of both blame and responsibility because it was an accident, with Dorothy altruistically acting to save the life of the Scarecrow. Dorothy is selfless in her goodness, giving to her friends and expecting little in return, other than to be sent back to her proper place in Kansas. The Wicked Witch of the West, on the other hand, is an embodiment of the monstrous-feminine, and what is most dangerous about her, as Friedman points out, is that “[t]he Witch of the West is a woman who wants” (23, emphasis added). As such,

This depiction of an autonomous woman is of course a nightmare vision of feminine power, a grotesque of female appetite—as if to say that to be a woman who wants is to be a woman who can only want, whose wants are by definition out of control, oceanic, threatening to swamp the world like nature gone awry, or liable to suck back spitefully into herself on a salty tide all that she has engendered, a birthing in reverse. The suppressed has surfaced, and, volcanic, might blot out the world. (24)

Again, Dorothy and the Wicked Witch of the West are depicted as polar opposites: while the Wicked Witch wants power, the shoes, and everything, Dorothy wants nothing other than to help others and to go home. Finally, Dorothy once again has her body and female identity scripted as passive when she wakes up to find her adventure has been only a

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22 This term was coined by Barbara Creed in her 1993 work, The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis, where Creed argues that “[a]ll human societies have a conception of the monstrous-feminine, of what it is about woman that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject” (1). Significantly, gender is central to the fear inspired by the monstrous-feminine because “[a]s with all other stereotypes of the feminine, from virgin to whore, she is defined in terms of her sexuality” (3). Therefore, the figure of the monstrous-feminine is defined by her own power, desire, and sexuality.
dream. It is marginally acceptable, then, for “good girls” to unconsciously dream of adventure from the safety of their own homes and beds, but not to actually go on those adventures themselves, or—heaven forbid!—even want to. Dorothy has longed to leave Kansas to find “someplace where there isn’t any trouble,” but the dangers of the outside world, the safety of family, and the reaffirmation that “there’s no place like home” return Dorothy to the domestic sphere and leave her desire for the outside world problematized, if not negated altogether.

*The Wiz* marks the beginning of a disruption of the good/evil dichotomy established by Baum and continued by MGM. While Dorothy is still firmly situated as a “good” character, her actions are not subsumed to that sense of goodness; this represents a significant departure from previous Dorothy characters, who could do no wrong simply because of their status as “good girls,” an entitlement which justified all behavior, including the killing of the Wicked Witch of the West, whether in a fit of temper (Baum) or by accident (MGM). When *The Wiz*’s Dorothy is ordered by the Wizard to kill the Wicked Witch, Dorothy refuses, responding in horror. Instead of unquestioningly obeying, Dorothy is thrown into a moral quandary, debating whether getting home is worth murdering the Wicked Witch Evillene. Dorothy consciously questions the world around her and the power structures epitomized by the Wizard and his demand. Though Dorothy is eventually forced into killing Evillene to save her friends, she does not do so without doubts, echoing her remorse at the inadvertent death of Evamean, the Wicked Witch of the East.

In *The Wiz*, Dorothy’s critical responses to the world of Oz and the Wizard, as well as her empathy for the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion identify her as a good
character and allow her to assume a self-reflexive power previously situated exclusively with the Wizard. Dorothy’s indictment of the Wizard’s lies and her branding of him as a “phony” are more scathing than similar confrontations in earlier versions; after all, even though the Wizard is revealed as a fraud in both Baum’s book and the MGM film, Dorothy’s friends still demand the symbolic gifts they have been promised, reinvesting the Wizard with the power that he lacks. Dorothy is the first character within the Wizard of Oz narrative tradition to denounce the Wizard. As her friends mourn the loss of their chances at getting a brain, a heart, and some courage, Dorothy takes on the role previously embodied by the Wizard alone, the investment of patriarchal power in the naming and conferring of gifts. As Dorothy tells her companions,

> You don’t need them now because you’ve had them all the time. Scarecrow, you’re the one who figured out how to find the Yellow Brick road and how to destroy Evillene, and every smart move we’ve made, didn’t you? Lion, you wouldn’t even give up when Evillene strung you up by your tail. And, Tin Man, you have more heart than anyone I’ve ever known … You never needed anything from this fake Wizard anyway.

Through helping her friends and with a little guidance from Glinda the Good (Lena Horne), Dorothy discovers her own identity as well; as director Sidney Lumet argues, Dorothy’s “self-knowledge comes from helping others find theirs” (x). While Dorothy’s assistance of her friends continues to situate her within a traditional female role, she refuses feminine-coded passivity in her interaction with the Wizard, as she refuses to reestablish patriarchal power when the Wizard turns to her, asking for advice and absolution. As Dorothy points out, her friends “have had what they’ve been searching for in them all along. I don’t know what’s in you, but I do know you’ll never find it in the safety of this room … There’s a whole world out there and you have to begin by letting people see who you really are.” Dorothy denies the Wizard the opportunity to hide
behind the façade of power and politics that have shielded him thus far. Reflecting the context of second-wave feminism and the women’s movement contemporary with *The Wiz*, Dorothy critiques the structure of patriarchy and public identity to a degree absent in earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale.

Evillene, the Wicked Witch of the West, does not struggle with issues of morality and power in the same way Dorothy does. Rather, Evillene is wholly evil, as demonstrated by her actions, her appearance, and even her name itself. In the case of Evillene, the polarized structure of fairy tale women as entirely good or evil remains undisturbed. Following in the tradition of Baum and MGM’s Wicked Witches, Evillene’s construction as monstrous makes her wholly irredeemable and worthy of death. “Evil” is explicitly scripted as part of her identity, just as her sister’s character is inscribed in her name as well: Evamean. It is Evillene’s identity as a Wicked Witch that justifies Dorothy’s actions, even when Dorothy herself doubts their validity. Evillene runs a sweatshop, where she literally whips her employees to higher productivity, hinting at her capacity for further violence. When Dorothy and her friends are captured and Dorothy refuses to give Evillene the silver shoes the witch covets, Evillene attempts to persuade Dorothy through torturing her companions. Evillene dismembers the Scarecrow with an electric saw, crushes the Tin Man in a steam press, and hangs the Lion from the ceiling by his tail, delighting in the psychological torture she is inflicting upon Dorothy, as well as the destruction she wreaks on the bodies of Dorothy’s friends. In addition, it is implied that Evillene is cannibalistic, or at the very least has unrestrained and unnatural appetites. When the Wicked Witch sends her gang of Flying Monkeys to capture Dorothy and her companions, her henchman asks whether Evelline would prefer them “on white or rye?”
The final straw that forces Dorothy’s hand in killing Evillene is the Wicked Witch’s threat that she will eat Toto; with the small dog dangled precipitously over an open fire, Evillene asks if Dorothy would “like sauerkraut or mustard, my dear, on your hot dog?” Once Evillene has been established as a sadistic tyrant and probable cannibal, Dorothy becomes justified in her murder of the Wicked Witch: the witch’s death has become necessary to reestablish the equilibrium of Oz and expel the monstrous feminine.

However, even when the death of the Wicked Witch has become validated and unavoidable, Dorothy still needs the Scarecrow’s guidance, who brings the building’s sprinkler system to her attention, while Dorothy hovers on the edge of hysterics. In contrast to Evillene’s irredeemable monstrosity, Dorothy’s goodness is further demonstrated by her horror at killing another human being, no matter how justifiable the death. This remorse is a significant departure from the post-killing responses of the Dorothy characters of Baum and MGM. For example, in Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, though Dorothy is “sorry” for the death of the witch, her initial response is to matter-of-factly clean up the mess and reclaim her shoe. As Baum writes, “seeing that she [the Wicked Witch] had really melted away to nothing, Dorothy drew another bucket of water and threw it over the mess …. After picking out the silver shoe, which was all that was left of the old woman, she cleaned and dried it with a cloth, and put it on her foot again” (225-7). In contrast, *The Wiz’s* Dorothy is horrified by the witch’s death. Shifting between tears and near-hysterical shrieking, Dorothy is immobilized by terror at what she has done—but not for long. As in Fleming’s film version of the *Wizard of Oz*, after a moment of shocked silence, enthusiastic celebration breaks out, with Evillene’s former sweatshop slaves showering Dorothy with exuberant thanks before breaking into high-
spirited song and dance. This energetic festivity restores equilibrium, firmly reestablishing Dorothy as a “good girl,” despite her own misgivings, rescripting the gendered bodies of Dorothy and Evillene back into their familiar polarized positions, and relieving Dorothy of any guilt or moral accountability for the murder of the Wicked Witch.

In *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, Maguire repositions his narrative, retelling the *Wizard of Oz* tale from the perspective of Elphaba, previously known only as the Wicked Witch of the West. This reframing is a unique shift in that it usurps the narrative position from the heretofore unquestioned “heroine” Dorothy, an act which “deliberately recast[s] a ‘canonical’ text from the point of view of a subordinated or scapegoated character” (Caputi 73). By reframing the narrative focus in his address of the familiar *Wizard of Oz* story, Maguire follows in the footsteps of *The Wiz* by drawing attention to that which has been silenced or occluded in earlier versions, creating space for questioning that which is told and that which remains untold. As Gossy points out, the recognition of the untold story creates the perception of a lack and an attendant desire to have that absence eradicated, the untold story told (6). Maguire creates this desire and is then free to fulfill it in innovative ways, deviating from the traditional and usually polarized structure of gender in fairy tales.

To this end, Maguire complicates this good/evil dichotomy, instead populating his novel with fragmented and flawed female characters, including Elphaba, Galinda/Glinda, and tangentially, Dorothy. Elphaba cares for others, including aiding her disabled sister Nessarose and fighting for the rights of sentient Animals. Shifting between violence and charity, “the free-spirited Elphaba grows up to be an anti-totalitarian agitator, an
Animal-rights activist, a nun, then a nurse who tends to the dying—and ultimately, the headstrong Wicked Witch of the West in the land of Oz” (Steinberg 45). Elphaba occupies both ends of the polarized gender spectrum, perceived as vibrant and desirable in her relationship with Fiyero and later, as almost demonic as the Wicked Witch of the West. However, rather than constructing Elphaba as wholly good or evil, Maguire instead highlights the multi-dimensionality of his heroine, as well as her personal and psychological development. As Steinberg points out, over the course of her abbreviated life, Elphaba occupies many roles and adopts a wide range of identities. Rather than being entirely active or passive throughout the course of the novel’s narrative, a pattern established by traditional fairy tales, Elphaba has alternating moments of selflessness and ambition, refusing a singular, static identity. She is a flawed and imperfect woman; as such, Elphaba defies easy categorization as “good” or “evil,” necessitating a more complex reading of gender identity which encompasses a wider range of active and psychological performances. For example, when Elphaba’s lover Fiyero is murdered, presumably because of his connection to her, Elphaba heads to the West of Oz in mourning, prompted by her lingering devotion and her feelings of responsibility for his death, her own simultaneous feelings of desire and guilt prompting her pilgrimage. Elphaba’s main motivation in heading to Kiamo Ko in the West of Oz is to seek forgiveness from Fiyero’s widow for Elphaba’s role in his murder. While Elphaba feels a powerful connection and debt to Fiyero’s survivors, she also sees this confession as an obligation she must make before retreating from the world altogether; as Elphaba explains, her purpose is “[t]o retire from the world after making sure of the safety of the survivors of my lover. To face his widow, Sarima, in guilt and responsibility, and then to
remove myself from the darkening world” (Maguire 238). Elphaba contradictorily feels
tied to members of this unconventional extended family and simultaneously wants
nothing more than peace and isolation. However, the forgiveness Elphaba seeks is
continually deferred and denied altogether when Sarima is kidnapped and presumed
dead: Elphaba gets neither the comfort of society nor the solace of a solitary life.

Elphaba, rather than being truly evil or even magically gifted, simply names
herself a “witch” in response to her position on the fringes of community, and for the
freedom of movement and power the title affords her. As Elphaba tells her old classmates
Boq and Milla, “I call myself a Witch now: the Wicked Witch of the West, if you want
the full glory of it. As long as people are going to call you a lunatic anyway, why not get
the benefit of it? It liberates you from convention” (Maguire 357). However, even
Elphaba’s claiming of the Wicked Witch title is imperfectly embodied, with her family
and old friends refusing her this position and choosing instead to believe in her goodness
and humanity. Even the Wizard, who stands to benefit the most from her vilification, tells
Elphaba she is “only a caricature of a witch” (Maguire 354). However, the social
construction of Elphaba as evil is successful enough to warrant an armed surveillance
regiment stationed near her castle and to send Dorothy and her friends all the way across
Oz to murder the Wicked Witch. In addition, Elphaba’s choice to call herself the Wicked
Witch of the West marks a significant shift from earlier versions, in which only the
Wizard could legitimately claim his own means of social construction and the benefits it
afforded him. By consciously choosing her own identity, Elphaba becomes an equally-
matched foe in her battle with the Wizard, at least temporarily creating a position of
power within her embodiment of “wickedness.”
Glinda, on the other hand, temporarily loses control of her own public image and is socially constructed as “good” by the Wizard, as she publicly performs altruistic acts while dressed at the height of fashion, rewarded for not challenging the Wizard’s power. However, similar to Maguire’s complication of Elphaba’s wickedness, Glinda’s social climbing is critiqued as much as her charity is commended: Glinda is criticized for failing to question the structural violences and discriminations perpetuated by the Wizard in order to focus on improving surface appearances, once again juxtaposing the real with the constructed illusion, mirroring a contemporary sociopolitical milieu that celebrates activism and rejects complacency. When Elphaba comes to pay her respects for her sister Nessarose after the latter has been killed by Dorothy’s falling house, Glinda and Elphaba are reunited and it soon becomes clear that, while Glinda has a firm grasp of the significance of outside appearances, she is not as deft at manipulating her public identity as Elphaba is, for better or worse. Glinda approaches in a gown even more extravagant than those of their shared college days and Elphaba chides her old friend, telling Glinda “you look hideous in that getup. I thought you’d have developed some sense by now” (Maguire 340). However, Glinda sees her appearance as playing a particular role in the social and political construction of her public identity, informing Elphaba that “[w]hen in the provinces … you have to show them a little style” (ibid). Glinda has a point: her over-the-top resplendent appearance gains her popularity among the local people, affording her a certain measure of power and influence. However, Glinda’s self-reflexive construction of her own identity does not extend to the social issues that preoccupy Elphaba; while Glinda does makes “public charity” (Maguire 341) a staple of her daily life, she remains
unconcerned with the rights of sentient Animals and other structural abuses, such as the tyranny of the Wizard.

Significantly, Glinda also undergoes a maturation early in *Wicked*, which raises her own awareness of truth and illusion, as well as the social and political importance of each. While she begins her studies at Shiz University obsessed with appearances, prejudiced against Elphaba on the grounds of her color and class, and deaf to the plight of the Animals, she develops into a self-assured and socially aware woman. As Glinda becomes more devoted to her youthful studies at Shiz, one of the cultural centers of Oz, she begins to notice her own maturation; as Maguire writes, “Glinda was changed. She knew it herself. She had come to Shiz a vain, silly thing, and she now found herself in a coven of vipers” (133, emphasis original). However, Glinda’s newfound ability to see through the façade of social posturing does not prevent her from embodying her own role to perfection. As a grown woman, Glinda devotes herself to acts of public philanthropy and good works, and she happens to be in Munchkinland making an appearance at an orphanage when Dorothy’s house lands on Nessarose, who is Elphaba’s sister and the infamous Wicked Witch of the East. After quick analysis of the political climate, Glinda sends Dorothy on her way to see the Wizard with Nessarose’s magic shoes, out of the way of uprisings and political negotiations. As Elphaba remarks to Glinda after hearing her friend’s account of events, “[a]n eye to public affairs, well, somehow I’m not surprised … I always knew you were in there somewhere” (Maguire 343). Appearances are not always what they seem; underneath the delicate and feminine image Glinda has cultivated is a shrewd and critical mind. Echoing Elphaba’s personal and psychological development, Glinda grows and changes over the course of Maguire’s tale, from a
morally-ambiguous and spoiled young woman to a publicly-revered altruist, whose intellect has caught up with her image.

Like Maguire’s characterizations of Elphaba and Glinda, Dorothy’s goodness is also complicated in the narrative highlighting of that which she lacks. Maguire achieves this by emphasizing the similarities between Dorothy and Elphaba rather than setting them dichotomously against one another. Dorothy and Elphaba follow almost identical trajectories across the geography of Oz, setting off across the wilderness of the west following a fateful meeting with the Wizard. Like Elphaba before her, Dorothy sets off for Kiamo Ko driven by guilt and seeking absolution. As Dorothy pleads of the Witch,

“Would you ever forgive me for that accident, for the death of your sister; would you ever forgive me, for I could never forgive myself?” … The Witch shrieked in panic, in disbelief. That even now the world should twist so, offending her once again. Elphaba, who had endured Sarima’s refusal to forgive, now begged by a gibbering child for the same mercy always denied her? How could you give such a thing out of your own hollowness? (Maguire 402)

Despite their physical differences, Dorothy and Elphaba are shown to be more similar than either would have suspected. Both suffer under self-imposed guilt stemming from their inadvertent roles in another’s death; both seek forgiveness and absolution that will never be provided. Dreaming of her own childhood and of Dorothy, Elphaba reflects that “I see myself there: the girl witness, wide-eyed as Dorothy. Staring at a world too horrible to comprehend” (Maguire 383). Each wavers between self-identification as guilty and an embrace of the self as heroine, fluctuating between the polarities of wicked and wonderful.

Schwartz and Holzman’s Broadway musical Wicked blurs these lines to an even greater degree in its representations of women. Elphaba remains a conflicted character,
shifting between her desire to do good and her externally assigned label of “wickedness,” this time forced upon her as the result of a direct refusal of the Wizard’s commands. Through this externally-enforced Othering, Elphaba’s agency becomes a liability which she is forced to shoulder, resulting in her exclusion from community by necessity rather than choice, though she later claims it as her own in a dynamic act of self-naming.

Central to issues of gender representation in *Wicked* is the primary theme of Elphaba and Glinda’s enduring friendship, a female relationship or partnership missing altogether from earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. The only other representation of such female relationships or potential for solidarity is Maguire’s *Wicked*, where the friendship between Elphaba and Glinda is also present, though prematurely severed. However, while Maguire’s heroines are estranged first by physical separation and later by ideology, Elphaba and Glinda’s friendship takes a central narrative position in Schwartz and Holzman’s stage version of *Wicked*. As Don Sewey remarks of Elphaba and Glinda in “Which Witch is Wicked?,” “[a]lmost despite themselves, these two rub off on each other. Elphaba gains some of Galinda’s self-confidence, especially in regard to her magical powers, and Galinda (who will, of course, become Glinda) finds herself doing good deeds in her own way,” including Glinda’s zealous, if misplaced, campaign to make Elphaba “Popular.”

In addition, Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* is significant in that its foregrounding of a same-sex relationship presents a “queered” reading of the familiar story by focusing on the intense friendship between Elphaba and Glinda, which overshadows all others, including the traditional heterosexual romance narrative between
each woman and Fiyero. As Stacy Wolf points out in “‘Defying Gravity’: Queer Conventions in the Musical *Wicked,*” the queer relationship between Elphaba and Glinda is established with the two women’s first duet, “What Is This Feeling?” As Wolf analyzes this exchange,

Elphaba, the smart, green-skinned outcast, and Glinda, the popular blond, sing to each other in alternating lines, “What is this feeling so sudden and new?” / “I felt the moment I laid eyes on you” / “My pulse is rushing” / “My head is reeling” / “My face is flushing”; and then, in unison, “What is this feeling?” The audience might think the pair is singing a queer love song until they get to the punch line, and it turns out that “this feeling” is “loathing!” (2)

As Wolf notes, this discourse follows that established by the contentious love/hate romantic relationship which serves as the focus of countless Broadway musicals from *Oklahoma!* to *Guys and Dolls* (ibid). Therefore, Schwartz’s “What Is This Feeling?” communicates to theatre audiences that *Wicked* “will follow the conventions of mid-twentieth-century musical theatre, but queerly, with two women as the musical’s couple” (ibid). Following this paired structure as established in the musical’s first act, the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda remains the central focus of *Wicked,* with each woman’s romantic relationship with Fiyero tangential. The same pattern is repeated in the couple’s final duet, “For Good,” when Elphaba and Glinda must prepare to part; as Wolf points out, “[t]he women sing to each other with passion, longing, and appreciation …

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23 Significantly, MGM’s classic *Wizard of Oz* has also been read from a queer perspective in Alexander Doty’s “‘My Beautiful Wickedness’: *The Wizard of Oz* as Lesbian Fantasy,” where Doty argues that Glinda is an overfeminized “drag queen” character entrusted with guiding Dorothy “along the road to straight womanhood” (139). The Wicked Witch of the West, in contrast, is predatory, creating “the division of lesbianism into the good femme-inine and the bad butch, or the model potentially ‘invisible’ femme and the threateningly obvious butch” (145). However, in the end, both film and heroine remain “ambivalent and incoherent about its relationship to lesbianism” (Doty 151). There are also intimations of same-sex desire in Maguire’s novel, such as when Glinda reflects that “she could scarcely dredge up an ounce of recollection about that daring meeting with the Wizard. She could recall far more clearly how she and Elphie had shared a bed on the road to the Emerald City. How brave that had made her feel, and how vulnerable too” (344). Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* is the first of these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story to advance an openly queer reading of the tale, though it arguably builds upon this preexisting discourse.
Although *Wicked*’s plot separates the women, the music continues to present them as unified and as a couple” (“‘Defying Gravity’”16). From start to finish, Elphaba and Glinda have been powerfully attracted to one another, though the tenor of their feelings shifts from “loathing” to love and mutual respect. Fiyero may appear at the musical’s end to spirit Elphaba away through a trap door, but Elphaba’s last longing look is toward Glinda, who is mourning her friend’s death.

Elphaba and Glinda are simultaneously brought together and forced apart by the Wizard’s campaign against them as well. While the Wizard acts to polarize these two friends by branding Elphaba as a dangerous fugitive while lifting “Glinda the Good” to celebrated visibility as an altruistic socialite, nothing short of Elphaba’s “death” can come between these women, each of whom is strong in her own unique way, largely due to that which they have learned from one another. As Wolf argues, Elphaba and Glinda “are constructed in opposites: pretty and ugly, popular and outcast, dumb and smart, silly and political, femme and butch, white and ‘colored’ … The two women form a couple of both sameness and difference” (“‘Defying Gravity’” 9). This “queering” of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative and the depiction of women’s strength in friendship and community further challenges the dichotomous positioning of female gendered subjects by privileging the support and reflection they provide for one another as more important than their romantic competition for the affections of their heterosexual love interest, Fiyero. Though these two women are outwardly Othered in many ways, their very Otherness from one another unites and enriches each in a mutually nurturing relationship. In fact, Glinda’s self-confidence and her performative, playful approach to public identity informs Elphaba’s most powerful performance of her own agency in claiming the “Wicked Witch” title for
herself, making her own that which has previously been forced upon her by outside sources, with the exception of Maguire’s novel. In the fluidity and fragmentation of these female identities, both versions of Wicked disrupt the traditional good/evil gender dichotomy to create in-between spaces for these women to speak (or sing) from sites of negotiation and fluidity.

“IT’S GOOD TO SEE ME, ISN’T IT?”:
FEMININE EMBODIMENT AND PERFORMANCE

The heroines in these versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative are also developed through their varying embodiments of femininity, most significantly realized in their physical appearances and wardrobes. Similar to the complication of these female heroes beyond categories of good or evil, these women become more self-reflexive in their negotiations of performative identity as the mythic tale gets revised and revisited. While women’s bodies in the early versions of Baum, MGM, and Lumet are explicitly connected to their moral positions, the play and performativity of public appearance come to a peak in Maguire’s descriptions of fashion and the decadent costumes of Broadway’s Wicked, designed by Susan Hilferty.

Much like their dichotomously-structured positions as good and evil women, in Baum’s Wonderful Wizard of Oz Dorothy and the Wicked Witch are additionally juxtaposed in their physical appearances, which are represented as directly mirroring their individual moral characters. Dorothy and the Wicked Witch represent different kinds of visibility through the forms of their physical bodies; as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argues of the female body and ideal femininity in Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring
Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature, “[f]eminization prompts the
gaze; disability prompts the stare. Feminization increases a woman’s cultural capital;
disability reduces it” (28). This feminization is performed and realized through gendered
action as well, such as in Dorothy’s selflessness in her quest as opposed to the witch’s
single-minded desire for Dorothy’s magic shoes, but is more publicly significant in the
physical bodies and appearances of these two female characters.

W.W. Denslow’s illustration of Dorothy shows a young and cheerful girl with
flowing hair and a serene smile. Dorothy appears attractive, happy, and healthy, but she
has no truly distinguishing physical characteristics. As Hearn comments of Dorothy, she
is “an Everyman—an Everychild” (14), an energetic and merry little girl, matching Oz’s
Munchkins in size, and thus immediately afforded physical ability upon entering this
strange land, because all there is suited to her form, function, and needs (Hearn 34). In
contrast, Denslow’s illustrations in Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz show the
Wicked Witch as gaunt and wrinkled with a protruding nose and chin, nearly bald, and
missing teeth; the witch’s appearance, coupled with her clear intent to harm Dorothy and
her companions, results in a quite monstrous and ferocious figure. In this case, Dorothy’s
ability is constructed both individually and socially, with her physical surroundings and
almost all of the people she meets perfectly fitted to her own size. Baum’s Wicked Witch
is alternatively scripted through her bodily difference, with magic represented as deviant
ability, powerful but lacking official validation. In “From Wonder to Error,” Garland-
Thomson defines “freak discourse” as “the exceptional body’s appropriations in Western
culture” and the theoretical implications of these representations (4), arguing that “[f]reak
discourse structured a cultural ritual that seized upon any deviation from the typical,
embellishing and intensifying it to produce a human spectacle whose every somatic
feature was laden with significance before the gaping spectator” (5). The body of Baum’s
Wicked Witch is not only rejected for its aberrance, but also has its bodily difference
forced to signify her larger psychological and sociocultural deviance.

Reflecting the “freak discourse” addressed by Garland-Thomson, the magical figure
in folk and fairy tales is codified as both performatively and physically unnatural, and the
image of the witch’s form as the site of bodily difference is a fairly standard
representation. As John Widdowson argues, “[t]he physical appearance of witch-figures
is typically frightening and is often almost a caricature of all the most unpleasant human
characteristics” (202). The witch becomes the antithesis of all that is good in Dorothy, an
embodiment of femininity to be avoided at all costs, her aberrant body moralized through
her violent actions and necessary destruction. In addition, the maligned characteristics
embodied in the witch figure have often been historically representative of the least-
desired traits of the age from which their respective folk tales and legends originated, and
Baum’s Wicked Witch possesses many such attributes, lending new significance to the
witch’s vilification. As Widdowson continues,

    Extreme ugliness, bodily deformity of all kinds, birthmarks, warts and
    similar features are typical of descriptions both of living women
    denounced as witches during the Inquisition and also those depicted in
    folk narrative. They are usually old, wrinkled, bent, crippled and reclusive
    …. They may mutter to themselves or display other signs of abnormal or
    antisocial behavior. (202)

Therefore, in addition to being juxtaposed with Dorothy, who represents the feminine
ideal, the body of the Wicked Witch is also forced to stand in for the sociocultural
tensions surrounding magic, witchcraft, and mysterious female power.
While Denslow’s illustrations provided an image of Dorothy for readers, film is by nature a distinctly visual medium and much of Dorothy’s character in MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* is signified by Garland’s physical embodiment and characterization of the now-teenaged character. Dressed in a blue-and-white gingham gown, with her auburn curls falling in ribbon-tied pigtails at her shoulders, Garland’s Dorothy is a starry-eyed adolescent. While Baum’s Dorothy had to have the world of Oz brought down to her size to create an immediate sense of equality, the Dorothy of the MGM film soars over the Munchkins. Physically, Garland’s performance as Dorothy problematizes the child-like wonder championed by Baum’s text. As Aljean Harmetz argues, “[w]hat is lost is innocence … Sixteen-year-old Judy Garland might be carefully corseted and dressed in gingham to appear twelve, but she could never have made believable the simple, uncritical acceptance of the very young child who was Dorothy in the book” (39-40).

However, though Garland’s maturity complicates a reading of the previously innocent and childlike Dorothy, Rushdie argues that Garland’s specific physical embodiment works to make this characterization successful. As Rushdie writes, “the odd stockiness, the gaucherie that endears us precisely because it is half-unbeautiful … [t]he scrubbed, ever so slightly lumpy *unsexiness* of Garland’s playing is what makes the movie work” (27, emphasis original), addressing intersections of childhood and maturity, posturing feminine beauty and its lack. While the embodiment of Oz’s heroine remains problematic, Garland’s performance is characterized by a mixture of “[v]ulnerability and sincerity” (Harmetz 109), which makes Dorothy a more compelling and critical character, allowing a discourse of maturation and self-discovery to participate in mythic cycle of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. Combining the innocence of her predecessor with a deep,
adolescent longing to move beyond the space of home and family, Dorothy becomes a more self-sufficient heroine.

In addition, one of the most significant repercussions of Garland’s embodiment, and one of the most widely-recognized elements of the entire *Wizard of Oz* narrative, is Garland’s soulful singing of “Over the Rainbow.” Using the cinematic medium to combine image and sound, “Over the Rainbow” characterizes Dorothy as strong yet vulnerable, adding a dimension to the character which is absent in Baum’s fairy tale. As Rushdie reflects of Dorothy’s song,

> What she expresses here, what she embodies with the purity of an archetype is the dream of leaving, a dream at least as powerful as the countervailing dream of roots. At the heart of *The Wizard of Oz* is a great tension between these two dreams; but as the music swells and that big, clean voice flies into the anguished longings of the song, can anyone doubt which message is the stronger? (23)

Home and away, strength and vulnerability—the dualism of these desires shape both the film’s narrative and the characterization of Dorothy herself, adding a new layer of complexity to the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. The song became an instant classic and Garland’s embodiment of Dorothy would thereafter dominate future imaginings and negotiations of the young Kansas heroine.

MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* also marks the introduction of the cackling, green-skinned Wicked Witch of the West who would go on to permeate cultural memory, as well as inspire the character of Elphaba central to the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman. Though this Wicked Witch embodies Otherness and feminine monstrosity, she is physically whole, as opposed to the deficiency represented by the incomplete figure of Denslow’s witch, with missing eye, teeth, and hair. Instead, Fleming’s Wicked Witch is powerful and able to move throughout Oz with ease, stalking Dorothy along her
travels on the Yellow Brick Road rather than waiting passively in her castle for the arrival of the young female hero and her friends. In the MGM film, the Wicked Witch of the West appears shortly after Dorothy’s house lands in Munchkinland, disrupting the celebration and terrifying the Munchkins into an imitation of death. The shocking suddenness of her appearance, with a bang and an explosion of red smoke, establishes the power and force with which the Wicked Witch is able to infiltrate even those spaces of Oz under the protection of good witches, such as Glinda. In fact, the Wicked Witch torments Dorothy throughout her adventure, appearing in the woods to set the Scarecrow on fire and later flying above the Emerald City to spell out her command to “Surrender Dorothy.” This mobility makes the Wicked Witch of the West a constant threat to Dorothy’s safety, rather than a fixed obstacle to be overcome; the witch pursues confrontation with Dorothy and the young girl cannot avoid the Wicked Witch, in the west of Oz or anywhere else.

In addition, the Wicked Witch of the West commands the gaze of the viewer: she is impossible to look away from. Her visible Otherness, her shrill and abrasive cackle, and her numerous, surprising reappearances demand recognition and refuse dismissal. Perhaps the most striking example of the Wicked Witch’s power to compel the gaze is her appearance in the crystal ball in the tower room where Dorothy is imprisoned. As Dorothy looks into the crystal ball, lamenting her Aunt Em’s distress, the ball goes dark and Aunt Em’s image is replaced by that of the Wicked Witch of the West, taunting Dorothy and cackling once more at the girl’s panic. In her power to manipulate the attention of Dorothy, as well film viewers, the Wicked Witch seizes control of her own representation and the way in which her body and actions are viewed and interpreted. In
his film guide to *The Wizard of Oz*, Rushdie evidences a fascination with the Wicked Witch character that has been shared by many viewers, pointing out that although she is shown as wholly evil and not above killing Dorothy and her friends to get the shoes she covets, the witch is simultaneously terrifying and fascinating, an uncanny and exoticized *femme fatale* of sorts. Comparing the two witches of Oz, Rushdie notes that the Wicked Witch

seizes hold of the film from her first, green-faced snarl … Of course, Glinda is ‘good’ and the Wicked Witch ‘bad’; but Glinda is a trilling pain in the neck, and the Wicked Witch is lean and mean. Check out their clothes: frilly pink versus slimline black. *No contest.* Consider their attitudes to their fellow-women: Glinda simpers upon being called beautiful, and denigrates her unbeautiful sisters; whereas the Wicked Witch is in a rage because of the death of her sister, demonstrating, one might say, a commendable sense of solidarity. We may hiss at her, and she may terrify us as children, but at least she doesn’t embarrass us the way Glinda does. (43, emphasis original)

Therefore, though the Wicked Witch of the West is terrifying and constructed as the embodiment of the monstrous feminine, her strength and mobility also represent the potential for a positive gender reading. As Rushdie argues, “just as feminism has sought to rehabilitate pejorative old words such as hag, crone, [and] witch, so the Wicked Witch of the West could be said to represent the more positive of the two images of powerful womanhood on offer here” (ibid). Within the narrative, this power is curtailed when the witch meets the same watery end as her predecessor in Baum’s fairy tale. The strength of the representation of gendered identity and the embodiment of the exotic Other of MGM’s green-faced witch would inspire later rewritings, including the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman.

In *The Wiz*, the Wicked Witch Evillene’s monstrosity is mirrored in her physical embodiment, which epitomizes excess and sloth. Evillene is a large and domineering
woman, whose laziness is foregrounded in her introductory musical number “No Bad News.” In this song, Evillene brags of sleeping past noon and demands that her workers leave her undisturbed, giving her “no bad news,” that might require her to take action or otherwise focus her energy or attention. Instead of supporting herself, Evillene benefits from the work of her subordinates, kept obedient through the constant threat of suffering; the Wicked Witch has established her independence by ensuring the slavery and forced labor of those who work in her sweatshop. She is a woman given to excess and indulgence, whose appetites cannot be trusted. While previous representations of the Wicked Witch in the *Wizard of Oz* story are engaged with discourses of lack, Evillene instead embodies female monstrosity as excessive, out of control both psychologically and physically. As previously discussed, Friedman reads the Wicked Witch of MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* as an image of grotesque femininity, a “woman who wants” (23), and is therefore monstrous. While MGM’s Wicked Witch is horrific because of her desire for power and Dorothy’s magical shoes, Evillene is the embodiment of a more immediately physical desire, reflected in her excessive, uncontrolled body and her implied cannibalistic appetites. With Evillene, *The Wiz* confronts viewers with an image of the desiring and autonomous woman in the flesh, the unrestrained appetite for power displaced onto the physical body, which becomes uncontrollable. Evillene is also explicitly connected with the physically abject; the ornate throne from which Evillene surveys her servants is, in fact, a giant toilet, into which Evillene disintegrates and disappears. The body of the Wicked Witch is therefore visually coded in conjunction with bodily waste, the epitome of the abject which must be expelled and flushed away. The physical representation of her large and uncontrollable body as abject also mirrors the
discourse surrounding Evillene’s consumption and unnatural appetites. The suggestion that the witch plans to consume Dorothy and her friends, as well as her overt threat of eating Toto, offers a material explanation for Evillene’s excessive body, mirroring the explicit desire for power and control evidenced in her tyranny over her workers and her demand for Dorothy’s magic shoes.

A good deal of criticism has centered on the embodiment of The Wiz’s Dorothy as a twenty-four year old woman, as played by Ross, who was in her mid-thirties at the time of filming. Admittedly, this physical representation is not unproblematic; however, the image of Dorothy as a grown woman allows for a wider range of female heroes within the Wizard of Oz narrative, which has had continued significance in the works of Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman. Though the Dorothy of Baum’s children’s book was a young girl and the female hero of Fleming’s film was a teenager, Lumet argues that Dorothy’s age is immaterial to the story itself. As the director claims,

this idea of self-knowledge had such validity that … [i]t didn’t matter whether Dorothy was eight years old, as Baum wrote her, or fifteen years old when Judy Garland played her, or twenty-four years old as Diana Ross plays her. Because that search for self-knowledge is true for all people at all ages. And heaven knows when we achieve it, or if we ever do. (viii-ix)

Regardless of the success or failure of this characterization, it is undeniable that Ross’s performance of Dorothy as simultaneously strong and vulnerable took the Wizard of Oz story out of the realm of the juvenile female hero. While Dorothy seems problematically frozen in a state of arrested development, by the film’s end she is stronger and more independent than she was at its start, demonstrating a clear trajectory of maturation and growing agency. As such, The Wiz’s Dorothy marks a significant departure from the female heroes of Baum and MGM, who achieve reincorporation only through the
sacrifice of their individual experiences, subsuming themselves once more to the
domestic sphere. Ross’s Dorothy is flawed, a realistic woman of strengths and
weaknesses, and while many of the latter have resulted in criticisms of the actress’s
performance, *The Wiz* succeeds in challenging earlier representations of the female hero
in two distinct ways. First, Dorothy is not compelled to go back to her home as an
exclusively domestic space, but through her journey of self-discovery can pursue both a
familial identity and a personal one, without being required to subsume or marginalize
either. Second, *The Wiz*’s Dorothy presents viewers with a female hero who is a grown
woman, rather than a child or adolescent, inviting a wider range of possibilities for self-
identification and the development of more mature female protagonists in later heroines,
such as Maguire’s Elphaba.

In Maguire’s *Wicked*, a spectrum of female bodies is presented, with Glinda
depicted as the ideal feminine body, attractive and sufficiently contained, the standard
against which all others are measured. Self-reflexively aware of her physical appearance,
Glinda constructs her outward image in order to create a position of power for herself, as
well as to gain the adoration of others. As Maguire first describes Glinda, “[s]he reasoned
that because she was beautiful she was significant, though what she signified, and to
whom, was not clear to her yet” (65). Glinda’s position as occupying the space of the
complete and able female body allows her a wide range of performative gender options
and invests her with public visibility and power. Glinda identifies herself first and
foremost through her appearance, her body, and her clothing, which are carefully
cultivated to express both her elevated class position and her own individual and social
importance.
Glinda’s body is also the ideal through which all others are defined as acceptable, lacking, or excessive. For example, though Elphaba’s sister Nessarose eventually gains public power and visibility equal to Glinda’s own, Nessarose’s body is scripted as one of feminine lack. Physically, Nessarose’s body is incomplete: she has no arms. Because of this anomaly, Nessarose is unable to stand on her own and must be catered to and cared for by those around her.\textsuperscript{24} This inadequacy is echoed in her personal identity as well; Nessarose remains on the fringes of the Shiz social milieu, preferring instead to devote herself to piety and religious meditation. Glinda attempts to help alleviate some of Nessarose’s inability by casting a spell on Nessarose’s silver shoes, which “gave her the power to stand upright by herself” (Maguire 347). However, Nessarose’s overcompensation for her previous lack makes her monstrous; she rules over the citizens of Munchkindland with tyranny and the threat of magical destruction, wielding her power and newfound independence over her subjects. Nessarose is afforded a public position of prominence and performativity, though unlike Glinda’s power, Nessarose’s is achieved through fear and compulsion, rather than awe and adoration.

In contrast to Glinda’s perfection and Nessarose’s lack, Elphaba is constructed as physically excessive and sexually deviant. Not only is Elphaba’s body coded as aberrant by the greenness of her skin, but she is also portrayed as potentially hermaphroditic. The midwives attending her birth argue at length about Elphaba’s gender. As they are cleaning Elphaba’s body after the birth,

\textit{For a minute they were in disagreement, even with the child naked before them. Only after a second and third rub was it clear that the child was}

\textsuperscript{24} In Schwartz and Holzman’s \textit{Wicked}, Nessarose is shown as wheelchair-bound rather than armless, displacing her physical anomaly from the realm of incompleteness to that of disability. However, the circumscription of Nessarose’s abilities are similar and the magic shoes give her identical abilities, making her able to stand independently.
indeed feminine. Perhaps in labor some bit of organic effluvia had become caught and quickly dried in the cloven place. (Maguire 20)

Though the midwives seem in agreement about Elphaba’s gender, this mystery follows Elphaba throughout her life. Such speculation contributes to the mythology surrounding her as the Wicked Witch of the West; as the Tin Woodman reports to his friends, Elphaba “was castrated at birth … She was born hermaphroditic, or maybe entirely male” (Maguire 1). As the Tin Woodman’s description shows, Elphaba is unnatural by her bodily excess and the impossibility of categorizing her as physically male or female. Either way, regardless of the uncertainty surrounding Elphaba’s biological sex, she is both aberrant and powerful. However, unlike Glinda, Elphaba’s physical distinctiveness and the aberrance of her questionably feminine body curtail her options for public identity and performativity; as such, Elphaba must enact her embodied power outside the realm of social acceptability, marginalized as a witch. Therefore, the success in their individual embodiments of femininity and the public possibilities their bodies afford them remain a significant distinction between Elphaba and Glinda.

In addition, fashion remains a constant point of tension between Glinda and Elphaba in Maguire’s Wicked. This struggle begins with their first meeting at Shiz University and becomes increasingly integral in Glinda’s performative gender identity. Elphaba’s dark shifts are repeatedly contrasted with Glinda’s extravagant couture and conscious manipulation of her appearance. At a co-ed university gathering, Glinda’s obsession with being seen is revealed in minute detail. As Maguire writes, Glinda “brought out her cerise satin gown with the matching shawl and slippers and an heirloom Gillikinese fan, painted with a pattern of ferns and pfenix. She arrived early to lay claim to the upholstered chair that would best set off her own attire, and she dragged the chair
over to the bookshelves so that the light from the library tapers would gently fall on her” (82). Though fashion is a continual source of argument between these two women, Glinda grows more self-reflexive and adept at manipulating her image as she matures and becomes a public figure, participating in the discourse of Mary Ann Doane’s theory of the masquerade, which “in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance” (25). Glinda’s overly feminine appearance is purposefully cultivated and affords her privileged spaces of power and gender negotiation. As Maguire describes the final meeting between Glinda and Elphaba,

Glinda approached slowly, either through age or shyness, or because her ridiculous gown weighed so much that it was hard for her to get up enough steam to stride. She looked like a giant Glindaberry bush, was all the Witch could think; under that skirt there must be a bustle the size of the dome at Saint Florix. There were sequins and furbelows and a sort of History of Oz, it seemed, stitched in trapunto in six or seven ovoid panels all around the skirting. (340)

Meeting Elphaba’s criticisms with good humor, Glinda explains that her regal and extravagant couture grant her power and prestige among provincial Ozians, as she self-reflexively manipulates her physical appearance and performative identity for her own benefit. In contrast, as Glinda uses her clothing to construct her social image and establish her place in the world around her, Elphaba wears the same old dark dresses and heavy boots, developing her identity instead through her behavior and her act of self-naming.

Glinda uses Elphaba’s disregard for appearances to defend her gifting of Nessarose’s magic shoes to Dorothy, admonishing “[c]ome on, Elphie, since when have you cared about shoes, of all things?” (Maguire 346). The shoes are complicated beyond fashion, however. They have assumed a position of magical significance and for this
reason, Elphaba wants them for herself and Glinda wants to get them out of Munchkinland. From Elphaba’s perspective, the shoes are a sign of her father’s love for Nessarose, a love that she herself has been denied because of her greenness and spiritual intractability. As Glinda points out, the magic shoes have become associated with Nessarose’s tyranny over the Munchkinlanders, who “put too much credit in those silly shoes” (Maguire 347). The shoes have political use for Glinda and deep personal significance for Elphaba, even though Glinda argues of the shoes that “[t]here is no power in them for you, Elphie …. They won’t make your father love you any better” (347-8). The shoes will not enable Elphaba to claim her father’s affection or her place within the family. The significance of the shoes is complicated, however, when it becomes apparent that they could give the Wizard power over all of Oz and allow him to reannex Munchkinland by force, as a direct result of the Munchkinlanders’ superstitious fear of the shoes. Elphaba wants the shoes, Glinda continues defending her decision to give the shoes to Dorothy, and neither woman will admit fault or folly:

They stood glaring at each other. They had too much common history to come apart over a pair of shoes, yet the shoes were planted between them, a grotesque icon of their differences. Neither one could retreat or move forward. It was silly, and they were stuck, and someone needed to break the spell. But all the Witch could do was insist, “I want those shoes.” (Maguire 348, emphasis original)

After surviving quarrels over magic, politics, and Animal rights, Elphaba and Glinda’s friendship is finally severed by this ideologically-loaded matter of fashion.

Furthering negotiations of the female body, though Dorothy’s blue-and-white gingham gown remains immediately recognizable to fans of Baum and Fleming’s visions of the young female hero, the girl’s body is rescripted in Maguire’s Wicked. The beautiful Dorothy, best captured in the iconic representation provided by Judy Garland, becomes
coarsened when seen through Elphaba’s eyes. As Elphaba watches Dorothy and her friends from afar, she sees Dorothy as “not a dainty thing, but a good-size farm girl ….

The Witch’s fingers dug into the bark of the tree. She could not see the girl’s face, just her strong forearms and the crown of her head where her dark hair was pulled back into pig tails” (Maguire 3). Through the glamorization of Elphaba and the simultaneous demystification of Dorothy’s beauty, Maguire highlights the similarities of these two heroines rather than directing attention to their physical differences. In addition, by the time Elphaba and Dorothy confront one another, both are also worn out and exhausted, Elphaba by her constant struggles with the Wizard and her guilt over Fiyero’s death, and Dorothy by her long journey across Oz and her remorse over killing Elphaba’s sister Nessarose. Mirroring one another, the bodies of both Elphaba and Dorothy bear the marks of their penance and incompleteness, Elphaba through her green skin and Dorothy through the exhaustion of her travels.

As the only live performance of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative under consideration, issues of feminine embodiment are of central importance in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, achieved through physical appearance and costuming. One of the most significant bodily performances achieved by this musical is the recentralization of Elphaba’s body. Building on the image of the green-skinned Wicked Witch of the West first introduced by MGM’s classic film, *Wicked* visually rescripts a body that had been largely invisible since 1939. The reinvention of the Wicked Witch of the West as an embodied female hero in *Wicked* moves beyond the grotesque monstruousness emphasized in the MGM film, depicting Elphaba instead as stunning and glamorous. As make-up designer Joe Dulude II comments of Elphaba’s appearance, “Elphaba is not supposed to
be ugly, she’s supposed to be beautiful. People just hate her because she’s green” (Cote 129). While Elphaba’s greenness had been narratively reformulated in Maguire’s novel, the onstage physical presence of this exotic female hero creates a more immediate and performative understanding of the character, including her transformation from girl to woman, young student to Wicked Witch. As Dulude explains of this physical change, at the intermission “[w]e glam everything up. We arch and extend her eyebrows. We smudge the eyeliner, put some lashes on, increase the contour on her eyes, cheeks, and jawline …. In Act II, she’s more witchy, but in a glamorous way” (ibid). The theatre audience witnesses Elphaba’s metamorphosis, physically as well as psychologically.

Just as fashion is an integral point of tension and conflict between Elphaba and Glinda in Maguire’s novel, the stage production of *Wicked* emphasizes the importance of dress in the female protagonists’ construction of their own gendered identities. Costume designer Susan Hilferty drew on a number of inspirations in dressing Elphaba and Glinda, using their couture to reflect their personal journeys and the development of their characters over the course of the performance. Echoing Maguire’s description of his female hero, Elphaba first appears in dark, drab skirts and sweaters, keeping to the shadows and working to appear as inconspicuous as possible. Hilferty built Elphaba’s first-act costumes around the idea of “a young girl trying to hide herself” (Cote 120). As *Wicked* progresses, Elphaba undergoes a metamorphosis, becoming more confident and empowered, a change which is visually reflected in her appearance. As Hilferty remarks of her costuming, Elphaba is

connected to things that are inside the earth. So the patterns and textures I wove into her dress include fossils, stalactites, or striations that you see when you crack a stone apart. I mixed different colors into her skirt, so everything is literally twisted …. When I designed her clothes for Shiz
[Act I], I gave her heavy boots, so right away she’s connected to the earth, and then a cap that she pulls down low …. Now, by the time she gets to the Emerald City, she feels she belongs. I change her shoes so that she has a lighter pair. We take her glasses away, her hair comes down, and she’s wearing a lighter color. And suddenly she feels accepted and even, you could say, fashionable. (Cote 120)

As Elphaba becomes a sexualized figure through her affair with Fiyero, she is also transformed, from her dull school clothes to the long, flowing gowns of a “formidable, sultry sorceress” (Cote 122), revealing more of her feminine figure.

Elphaba’s hat also plays a central role in her use of fashion to establish her own identity and claim the Wicked Witch title. Shortly after their first meeting, Glinda offers Elphaba an iconic witch’s hat to wear to a party, intending to embarrass her roommate by making her appear hopelessly out of fashion, an act of sabotage disguised as feminine guidance. As Glinda sings in offering the hat to Elphaba, “[y]ou deserve each other / This hat and you / You’re both so smart / You deserve each other / So here, out of the goodness of my heart …” (“Dancing Through Life”). However, instead of being mortified in the face of this public humiliation, Elphaba reasserts her individuality and confidence by joining in the party and taking to the dance floor, where she is soon joined by a repentant Glinda. This transition from teasing to solidarity binds the two young women together in a friendship that will shape the rest of their lives. From this moment on, Elphaba claims the hat as a personal signature, a constant staple of her wardrobe that positions her within the culturally-recognizable image of the witch and serves as a reminder of Elphaba’s strength and self-possession. In the final scene of the musical, Elphaba has escaped, leaving behind only her hat, which Glinda clings to as a physical reminder of their friendship, an artifact of fashion that must stand in for the body of her lost friend.
Glinda is also characterized in large part through her costuming. The complete opposite of Elphaba, Glinda “favors anything that’s frilly and ultrafeminine” (Cote 123), though like Elphaba, the change in her appearance over the course of the musical reflects Glinda’s personal transformation, by which she becomes more self-possessed and takes control of her own image. As Hilferty describes her approach to Glinda,

Glinda is the epitome of good, so I did research by asking little girls what goodness looks like. They said like a princess, like a bride. I collected and studied pictures of Queen Elizabeth II from her coronation, Lady Diana’s wedding dress, and all of the dresses that are emblematic of perfect femininity. When you look at any of the English coronation images, it’s hysterical, because it’s all about impressing in a certain way. Even Queen Elizabeth, in the 1950s, wore a crown and a long robe and held her scepter, and I wanted to tap into that. Glinda is also connected to the sky, sun, and stars. That influenced her tiara and wand. The sparkles on her dress are all about that, too. She symbolizes lightness, air, bubbles. (Cote 120)

Glinda’s costuming is informed to a degree by cultural images of ideal femininity, though much of Glinda’s transformation is revealed in her playfulness and negotiation of her dress and appearance. As Glinda asks her Munchkin admirers in the first act of Wicked, “[i]t’s good to see me, isn’t it?” Following the significance of Glinda’s beauty addressed in Maguire’s novel, in Schwartz and Holzman’s Wicked, Glinda uses her appearance and dress to claim power and agency, to control the world around her and establish her privileged place within it.

In the party scene at Shiz, when Glinda is attempting to romance Fiyero, she clothes herself in a pink dress with a scoop neck and a multitude of ruffles, working to embody Fiyero’s goal of finding “the prettiest girl,” demure and ultrafeminine (“Dancing Through Life”). However, after the party, Glinda reveals the thought and planning that go into constructing the ideal public image when she lectures Elphaba on how to be
“Popular.” As Glinda sings to Elphaba, “I’ll teach you the proper ploys / When you talk to boys / Little ways to flirt and flounce / I’ll show you what shoes to wear / How to fix your hair / Everything that really counts to be popular!” (“Popular”). As Glinda’s tutoring shows, the feminine image is carefully cultivated through dress and behavior. However, as the narrative goes on, Glinda becomes more self-aware and begins using her performative prowess to establish her public image and power, rather than to get dates. The citizens of Oz revere Glinda as a benevolent, good witch and she plays this role effectively and with great extravagance. For example, in the opening scene of *Wicked*, Glinda appears to the Ozians by dropping in from the sky on a giant contraption that shoots soap bubbles into the air; this dramatic entrance cultivates her pure, magical image which, in turn, ensures the awe and admiration of the people of Oz, as well as providing her the power to rule. Glinda’s dress changes notably as well, having come a long way from the frilly, pink attire that characterized her as a girl at Shiz. Instead, when she appears to her faithful followers, Glinda is now dressed in a full and regal gown, exuding an impression of sovereignty, elevating her—both physically and metaphorically—above the Ozians to whom she speaks. Like Elphaba, Glinda’s change in costuming signals her performative claiming of her own gender identity, as well as signifying the internal transformation of her character.

CONCLUSIONS

Representations of women have shifted dramatically in the *Wizard of Oz* narrative over the past century through its multiple tellings and retellings. While Baum’s young Dorothy exemplified the feminine ideal of a woman’s place within the home, validated by
Dorothy’s longing to return to Kansas, Judy Garland’s Dorothy in the MGM film
highlighted the coexistent and contradictory impulses for safety and adventure, for the
warmth of home and the thrill of the world beyond. The goodness of Garland’s Dorothy
remained invested in her embrace of her domestic responsibilities and her unwavering
belief that “there’s no place like home.” Lumet’s The Wiz challenged the stigma of the
woman outside of the context of home and family, with Diana Ross’s Dorothy learning
about herself and her own abilities to live outside of the maternal bosom of Aunt Em’s
Harlem apartment. Maguire repositioned the Wicked Witch of the West, the green-
skinned Elphaba, at the center of his novel Wicked, reclaiming notions of good and evil,
the wonderful and the wicked, by highlighting the constructed nature of feminine identity
evident in the iconic characters of Elphaba and Glinda. Finally, Schwartz and Holzman’s
Wicked combined the constructed identities of Maguire’s heroines with the performative
visibility of the live Broadway production; in addition, Schwartz and Holzman made the
friendship of the two women and the queer romantic discourse posited by their
relationship the central concern of their stage production, empowering their heroines
through notions of performativity, solidarity, and love.

Representations of appearance and feminine beauty have also been challenged as
this narrative has been remade and reinvented, in tandem with the challenging of the
witch as wicked, and therefore, automatically ugly, with a physical body of either excess
or lack. In addition, the moral implications previously inherent in the witch’s physical
appearance have been problematized as well. While the wickedness of Baum, MGM, and
Lumet’s witches are monstrous, in Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman’s versions of
Wicked, visible difference is not morally-coded and while the form of the witch’s body
differs little from that established by Hamilton and MGM, the range of potential positions for reading her have been expanded. The constructed and negotiated notions of identity highlighted in both versions of *Wicked* are echoed in the appearances of Elphaba, described by Maguire and first embodied onstage by Idina Menzel as gorgeous and sexually desirable. Dress and masquerade have also emerged to play a significant role in the negotiation of feminine identity, especially in the costuming of Elphaba and Glinda, where the clothes in fact make the witch.

As this progression of heroines demonstrates, these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale have been instrumental in validating shifting notions of acceptable femininity, from the home to the workplace and beyond. In addition, the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman have also created spaces of empowerment and reimagination of canonical narratives, reclaiming the ideologically-coded vilification of the powerful woman as witch; Schwartz and Holzman have also addressed the homosocial conventions of female friendship and devotion, creating spaces for addressing and embracing same-sex desire within the structure of American myth, foregrounding a previously marginalized perspective and allowing room for their heroines to sing from a position largely ignored in traditional mythic and fairy tale discourses.
CHAPTER FOUR:
RACE, HISTORY, AND REPRESENTATION

Historical and metaphorical discourses of race have been central to the *Wizard of Oz* narrative since the first publication of Baum’s book, which appeared just a few years after his well-publicized support for the genocide of Native Americans in the Dakota Territory. In these 1890 and 1891 *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer* editorials, Baum argued that “the best safety of the frontier settlements will be secured by the total annihilation of the few remaining Indians” (qtd. in D’Amato 231). In the process, Baum also implicitly outlined his beliefs on who counted as an American citizen (settlers) and who did not (Native Americans), a contested and value-laden conversation that invariably has roots in race and ethnicity, as well as national identity.

As a distinctively American myth, the *Wizard of Oz* narrative has continued to be preoccupied with racial difference and the body of the American citizen, whether this inclusion is addressed through historically-positioned representations of race, as in Baum’s children’s book and Lumet’s *The Wiz*, or through more general representations of Otherness, as in the works of MGM, Maguire, or Schwartz and Holzman. As Robert

25 Significantly, considerations of Baum’s editorials, as well as the writings themselves, are difficult to find. Those who have written biographies of the author have largely glossed over his support of genocide, remarking only that the editorials are “atypical” and “may be explained—though not, of course, justified—by his depression at the time and the fears he shared with the other settlers in Dakota” (Rogers 272, fn. 34). The full-text of both editorials were found in the unlikeliest of places, in Brian D’Amato’s “The Wooden Gargoyles: Evil in Oz,” a critical consideration included as an appendix to Barbara D’Amato’s Oz-themed murder mystery, *Hard Road: A Cat Marsala Mystery*. Baum’s biographers, as well as those who have written nostalgically of the utopia presented by *Oz* generally maintain a conspicuous silence surrounding this chapter of Baum’s life, furthering the innocence and escapism of *Oz* at the expense of considering the sociohistorical influences on Baum at the time of the writing of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. For this reason, quoted excerpts of Baum’s editorials will be drawn from D’Amato’s critical article.
Miles and Malcom Brown explain the significance of representations of the Other,26 these are “images and beliefs which categorise people in terms of real or attributed differences when compared with Self (‘Us’). There is, therefore, a dialectic of Self and Other in which the attributed characteristics of Other refract contrasting characteristics of Self, and vice versa” (19). Representations of the Self and the Other are not static but instead are inextricably engaged with “a dialectic of representational inclusion and exclusion” (Miles and Brown 50). Within the framework of American myth and the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, representations of the Self and Other are implicated in the construction of American identity, including who can be read as a viable national citizen and who, on account of Otherness, has to be assimilated fully into the dominant culture in order to neutralize the threat of difference; if such assimilation proves impossible, the Other must be excluded, marginalized, and even destroyed. Finally, like shifting representations of gender, images of race are under constant contestation. Therefore, in exploring the figure of the Other within these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale, the sociocultural context of each set of representations must be taken into account. As Miles and Brown point out,

> representations of the Other are holistically neither static nor unitary. They have undergone transformation over time, in response to changing circumstances … The characteristics attributed to the Other, the evaluation of those characteristics, and the explanations offered for difference, have therefore been altered, though rarely holistically. (51)

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26 The discourse of the Other as that which is different from the Self has a rich philosophical and theoretical history, addressed by Edmund Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, Claude Levi-Strauss, Jacque Lacan, and Michel Foucault, among others. Building on this intellectual tradition, this dissertation will draw theories of Otherness adapted to address issues of race outlined by Miles and Brown, as well as that outlined by Kenan Malik in *The Meaning of Race: Race, History, and Culture in Western Society* (1996), where Malik argues that contemporary representations and theoretical discourses “define racial difference in terms of the Other” (221).
Representations of the Other are consistently developed as contrary to the Self and privileged identity. However, each adaptation of the *Wizard of Oz* story reimagines the Other in ways which illuminate the anxieties and tensions surrounding racial difference in its own sociohistorical moment and context.

Images of race in these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story fall into two distinct though interconnected discourses: historical and metaphorical representations of race. The historical discourse remains grounded in lived experiences of discrimination and Othering; as such, a consideration of historical representations of race must be positioned within a specific sociocultural moment and position. For example, while Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* may not directly address issues of race and ethnicity, given the author’s public opinions regarding Native Americans, the regimentation and strict segregation of the various parts of Oz take on a more ominous and troubling significance, which must be read within the context of Baum’s notions of an exclusionary and genocidal American identity. In addition, Lumet’s *The Wiz* is positioned in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement and features an all-African American cast, with the film performing a dynamic appropriation of the American myth represented by the *Wizard of Oz* narrative and claiming a new and personal meaning for the African American community. The representations of race and ethnicity within the works of Baum and Lumet are positioned within specific sociohistorical moments of exclusion, discrimination, and privilege, and the role of racial difference in these versions of the *Oz* tale must be read within the context of the everyday racial discourses surrounding these works of popular culture.
While the representations of race in MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* and the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman remain similarly grounded in the larger racial and social realities of their cultural moments, these works address race from a metaphorical standpoint, rather than investing themselves dynamically in a specifically historical representation. Drawing on a discourse of Otherness, these revisions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative address the visibility of race in part through representations of greenness, the skin color difference that sets the Wicked Witch of the West/Elphaba apart from her fellow Ozians. In addition, while Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* physically-codes the Munchkins who welcome Dorothy to Oz as her equals, her own size and stature, the classic MGM film dramatically Others the Munchkins and emphasizes the difference between them and Dorothy, racially situating these small-statured Ozians as an Other against whom Dorothy can be positioned. In addition, Maguire’s *Wicked* reveals the segregation within Oz that the works of Baum and MGM veritably gloss over, highlighting the tension between different races within Oz, as well as the martial and ideological struggles between them. Finally, both versions of *Wicked* complicate the understanding of biological Otherness through the introduction of sentient Animals, who are intelligent and empathetic, differing from humans only in the physical form of their bodies; the fight for equal rights and the systemic imprisonment and genocide of Animals are central to Maguire’s novel and pivotal in the Broadway production of Schwartz and Holzman. Echoing Baum’s editorials on Native Americans, the treatment of the Animals has also been read from a variety of historically-based racial and ethnic perspectives, with the Animals read by some critics and theorists as metaphors for twentieth and twenty-first century realities, including the experiences of Jews during World War II. However, both
versions of *Wicked* also work to deconstruct the pathological discourse of race engaged by Baum and his contemporaries, celebrating difference while simultaneously confronting real-world experiences of discrimination and violence. The complex and compelling representations of racial Otherness engaged in the works of Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman therefore highlight the interconnected nature of historical and metaphorical representations of race, as well as struggles between internal and external definition. Significantly, while these metaphorical representations of race have diffuse roots in historically-grounded discourses of race and ethnicity, they operate largely in terms of identifying and positioning that which is Other outside of the realm of American identity, defining the citizen in part through that which it is not and critiquing the position of the Other within American cultural realities and representations.

Historical and metaphorical representations of race are inextricably intertwined, with past realities establishing the images of common use, while symbolic representations have a real-life impact on how readers and viewers understand and respond to racial difference in their everyday lives. As such, none of the versions of the *Wizard of Oz* to be addressed here fall exclusively into categories of historical or metaphorical representations of race. Metaphor and history are often inextricably connected and the representations of race within these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative often blur the lines between these two types of representation. While these texts are discussed here as predominantly shaped by historical or metaphorical discourses of race and ethnicity, each remains invested in these dual conversations. Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Lumet’s *The Wiz* are addressed within their sociohistorical context, acknowledging their unique and transformative moments in constructing American identity and the role of
Native Americans in the former and African Americans in the latter within these notions of citizenship, a concern for many immigrant groups, both contemporary and historical. In contrast and in conjunction, MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz*, Maguire’s *Wicked*, and Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* are considered within the context of metaphorical representations of race and ethnicity, engaged through discussions of Otherness, situated predominantly in the visible Otherness of the greenness of the Wicked Witch of the West/Elphaba and difference, through the diminutive Munchkins of the MGM film and the sentient Animals of Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman. In addition, the dual discourses of historical and metaphorical representations of race are considered together in their role in shaping and demarcating acceptable American identity as reflected by the revision and negotiation of these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative.

SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION:

HISTORICAL DISCOURSES OF RACE AND DIFFERENCE

While all five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative under consideration here include representations of race and Otherness central to their tales, Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Lumet’s *The Wiz* are unique in their position of speaking to experiences of marginalization and discrimination that were in reality being addressed at the time of their individual creation. As such, Baum’s children’s book and Lumet’s film can be viewed as actively engaging with the lived experiences of groups of Americans and the struggles they were engaged in preceding or concurrent with the publication of Baum’s book or the release of Lumet’s film. Later versions would adopt a comparatively more metaphorical approach to representations of race and Otherness, with both versions of
Wicked, for example, situating their considerations in the displacement of ethnicity onto the bodies of green-skinned witches and talking Animals, at a remove from the reality of contemporary and historical discourses of race and ethnicity in America. However, by Baum and Lumet’s grounding of their representations of race—including segregation, discrimination, and extermination—within their contemporary cultural milieu, these two men positioned themselves in a more immediate position of commenting upon their surrounding sociohistorical contexts. While Baum was writing in the final days of westward expansion and Lumet was reflecting on the African-American experience in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement, both engaged with dynamic discourses of race, ethnicity, and Otherness through their participation with, and in Baum’s case his creation of, the Wizard of Oz story.

Baum’s dialogue surrounding race, which would result in representations of Otherness and segregation within the magical land of Oz, remains historically grounded in two editorials Baum published in the Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer, a newspaper he also edited, which “advocate[ed] a genocidal policy against remaining Indians” following the assassination of Sitting Bull (D’Amato 241). As Baum wrote in his editorial of December 15, 1890,

The Whites, by law of conquest, by justice of civilization, are masters of the American continent, and the best safety of the frontier settlements will be secured by the total annihilation of the few remaining Indians. Why not annihilation? Their glory has fled, their spirit broken, their manhood effaced; better that they die than live the miserable wretches that they are. History would forget these latter despicable beings, and speak, in later ages, of the glory of these grand Kings of forest and plain that [James Fennimore] Cooper loved to heroism … We cannot honestly regret their extermination, but we at least do justice to the manly characteristics possessed, according to their lights and education, by the early Redskins of America. (qtd. in D’Amato 242)
In Baum’s opinion, which was lamentably in keeping with that of many frontiersmen during this era, Native Americans were excluded from participation as American citizens because the white settlers had become “masters” of the frontier through conquest and subjugation of the Native Americans. As such, Baum discounted them as deserving of life itself: they were not viable citizens and therefore, by extension, not viable human beings, always already excluded in the pursuit the American tenants of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” to the extent that Baum argued these Native Americans could be killed without conscience and that, in fact, to do so would be doing them “justice,” granting the favor of an honorable and masculine death. As Brian D’Amato points out, while there is no justification for Baum’s genocidal campaign, the author “shared a kind ofjejune, romantic, all-or-nothing mentality with many Americans of the period; in those days—it seems to us—many people thought about groups first and later about individuals, and were so sold on notions like ‘national honor’ that putting the enemy out of its misery was often seen as (almost) the liberal opinion” (243-4). Baum was outlining the parameters of his “America” and part of that included deciding who belonged and who did not, who should be excluded by dint of their Otherness. In identifying the Other as that which is not the Self, the colonial impulse realized in itself a “European drive to conquer and enslave the Other [which] assumed accordingly the force of a moral imperative” (Goldberg 25), which was further reinforced by the discourse of the Other espoused by the myth of the frontier. In the context of this nationalistic fervor, taken to the extreme, Baum called for the extermination of the Native Americans.

While Baum’s life can and arguably should be separated from his works of children’s fiction, his hostility toward Native Americans is significant in considering
Baum as the author of the first American fairy tale. As such, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz outlines the figure of the new American hero in Dorothy, the importance of perseverance and self-discovery, and the prized personal attributes of intellect, empathy, and courage embodied by Dorothy’s companions. In considering the ideal American citizen and the cultural values explored through Baum’s tale, the notion of who can rightfully call themselves an American remains an implicit point of concern. In codifying the ideals of the American hero and her journey through little Dorothy, the issue of who is privileged and who is excluded deserves significant consideration within the process of mythmaking in which Baum was, unwittingly or not, participating. As D’Amato asks, “[a]t any rate, the questions we Ozians can’t help asking ourselves … is whether our knowing about Baum’s ‘genocidal editorials’ should recolor our view of Oz. Have we been reading the books through emerald-tinted glasses? Is there something in Oz we’ve been missing? Something sinister?” (244). Many Oz fans argue that this is not the case and that Baum’s biography can and should be addressed outside of the context of his writing, and vice versa. During preparation for a festival in Aberdeen, South Dakota celebrating Baum, organizers were met with a concerted “Lakota petition-and-boycott campaign” (ibid) against the event. Festival organizers responded with an “Apology and Pledge,” in which they claimed that “Baum’s books are a sharp contrast to this call for genocide. Difference is valued in his stories; he describes groups of creatures with different characters and beliefs who work out the logistics of living together in respect and harmony. Oz is a multicultural kingdom” (qtd. in D’Amato 244). As such, the Aberdeen festival planners were following a celebratory discourse surrounding Baum, which commemorates his literary work and honors the utopian vision of Oz that stands as his legacy; however, this
idealization of Baum and Oz are enacted at the expense of the historical reality established in his editorials and the contentious sociocultural context at the time of his writing.

This contradiction is further heightened with the realization that while Baum does not explicitly address issues of race and the Native American community in his Oz books, there are other significant representations of Otherness which engage with this discourse, including the segregation of the land of Oz itself and the justified murders of both of Oz’s wicked witches in The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. In Baum’s Oz books, the magical land is conceived “as a rectangular country bordered by impassable deserts, the rectangle divided into five regions whose prevailing colors were green in the center, at the Emerald City, and purple, blue, red, and yellow in the north, east, south, and west respectively” (D’Amato 235), with mapped illustrations of this geography featured in many of the Oz books. Each region, in addition to being color-coded and clearly separated from the other areas of Oz, is also home to a singular racial group: Gillikins in the North, Munchkins in the East, Quadlings in the South, and Winkies in the West. While the citizens of Oz, especially the Munchkins, help Dorothy and her friends along their journey, they rarely cross the borders themselves and when they do, it is almost exclusively under the protection and companionship of Dorothy and other privileged visitors to Oz. Instead,

27 D’Amato considers representations of Otherness throughout the Oz canon, including the Scoodlers of The Road to Oz, the Totenhots of The Patchwork Girl of Oz, and the wooden gargoyles in Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz referred to by D’Amato’s title. In each of these cases, the Othered Ozians Dorothy and her companions come across and must inevitably defeat are defined by their physical difference, cultural practices which the travelers deem odd or nonsensical, and oftentimes, a focused hostility toward Dorothy and her friends. Biographer Katherine M. Rogers defends Baum, arguing that these derogatory representations “are thoughtless lapses, in which Baum unthinkingly went along with contemporary attitudes. When he was applying his mind, he ridiculed ethnic prejudices” (272, fn. 34). While Baum does in fact include a variety of positive representations of Otherness and critiques of racism, the canon of his work is complex and at times contradictory, and these images of the racial Other who must be defeated cannot be dismissed.
these Ozians assist and accompany Dorothy and her friends as far as the borders of their own land and send them on from there with wishes for safe travel. As such, the differing populations of Oz remain effectively segregated, separated from and strangers to one another and the larger geographies of Oz. While this segregation and attendant stereotyping takes on a more sinister significance in later versions of *Wicked*, in Baum’s *Oz* stories, the separation of races receives barely a mention, unquestioningly accepted within the narrative as a matter of course.

The narrative element within Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that bears the closest correlation with the author’s infamous Aberdeen editorials, however, is the moral ambiguity surrounding Dorothy’s killing of the wicked witches of Oz, especially in the case of the Wicked Witch of the West. While the Wicked Witch is also vilified through her aberrant femininity, both in performance and embodiment, she is first and foremost constructed as occupying a space of Otherness which excludes her from citizenship, echoing the concerns of American identity that preoccupied Baum in his editorials, as well as in the discourse surrounding westward expansion and the myth of the frontier. The Wicked Witch has positioned herself in direct opposition to the patriarchal ruling authority of the Wizard and poses a threat to the idealized and neatly-compartmentalized existence of Oz and its citizens. Therefore, as a result of her Otherness, the Wicked Witch can—and in fact, *must*—be destroyed.

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28 The impossibility of border-crossing is echoed in MGM’s film, where the Munchkins sing and dance along with Dorothy, encouraging her to “Follow the Yellow Brick Road.” As Glinda tells Dorothy, “[t]he Munchkins will see you safely to the border of Munchkinland.” However they can, or will, go no further and stop abruptly at the outskirts of Munchkinland, smiling and waving Dorothy on her way.
While Baum remains silent on the subject of race, ethnicity, and Native Americans in his Oz books, representations of these conflicts remain implicit in the fantasy land Baum created and the lively characters with which he populated it. While predominant discourses surrounding Baum and his literary works marginalize or silence the historical context established by the author’s Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer editorials, Baum’s perspectives on race and Otherness are arguably present in his creation of Oz, through representations of segregation and the extermination of Oz’s wicked witches. In his construction of Oz, Baum’s racial discourses remain largely silenced, including the historical lived experiences which informed them. However, later versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative, including both versions of Wicked, engage these discourses more explicitly, interrogating the significance of the racially-coded categorization of the citizens of Oz and the social and political ramifications of such a system.

While Baum’s Wonderful Wizard of Oz implicitly engages with discourses of race and Otherness, Lumet’s film The Wiz explicitly addresses African American experiences in the 1970s, positioning the familiar Wizard of Oz narrative in post-Civil Rights Movement America and dynamically reclaiming this mythic discourse for an African American audience. Before Lumet’s film, however, The Wiz was a Broadway success; as Newsweek’s Jack Kroll argued of the show, “American blacks have been moving down a yellow brick road (badly in need of repair) for a long time, looking for Oz or the Emerald City or some other dream deferred, so the idea of an all-black version of The Wizard of Oz

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29 The racial Other makes a more explicit appearance in Baum’s adventure books for boys, specifically in Sam Steele’s Adventures in Panama, one of the books in Baum’s Sam Steele series. In this work, the hero comes into conflict with the Techla, a fictional Panamanian tribe descended from the Aztecs. As Rogers summarizes Baum’s treatment, the author “was capable of respecting and despising Indians at the same time, largely on the basis of whether they had been corrupted by contact with whites” (274, fn. 13). As Baum’s representation here demonstrates, his approach seems coincident with the “Noble Savage” discourse of Otherness regarding Native Americans and arguably supports a reading of his representations of the racial Other as complicated by simultaneous infatuation and condescension.
Oz makes perfect sense” (qtd. in Great Rock Musicals 3). The Wiz marked an appropriation of the familiar Wizard of Oz narrative to speak to the experiences of an African American audience, a tale which had up to this point been an exclusively white phenomenon, with the notable exception of Hamilton’s green-skinned Wicked Witch in the classic MGM film. However, the greatest significance of this discourse of whiteness lay in its very invisibility. As Richard Dyer points out in White, “[w]hites must be seen as white, yet whiteness as race resides in invisible properties and whiteness as power is maintained by being unseen” (45). As always already white, the racial signification of Dorothy was simultaneously acknowledged and dismissed. The Wiz highlighted the implicit and heretofore invisible discourse of whiteness privileged within the versions of the Wizard of Oz by Baum and MGM. As Toni Morrison argues in Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination, blackness has historically been engaged in literature as a means through which to define the whiteness that served as the Self to its Other, with explicit ramifications for national identity. As Morrison asks, “[w]hat parts do the invention and development of whiteness play in the construction of what is loosely defined as ‘American’?” (9). Resituating the Wizard of Oz narrative from an African American perspective highlighted the always already white image of American identity unaddressed in earlier versions, with the national citizen constructed through that which it was not, whether Munchkin, Wicked Witch, or other fantastical figure.

This exclusion was carried out within the Hollywood film tradition as well; as Jaap Van Ginneken points out in Screening Difference: How Hollywood’s Blockbuster Films Imagine Race, Ethnicity, and Culture,

Hollywood is often called the Dream Factory: Blockbuster successes provide appealing new dreams (and nightmares) to the larger part of the
world population every week. Most people, however, are made to share other people’s dreams, to look through the eyes of others—not only at themselves, but also at their neighbors—because those movies are primarily made by and for a very small part of the world’s population. (231)

The Hollywood system has historically privileged the perspectives of the white, middle-to upper-class men making the movies, forcing the vision of the few to stand in for that of the many, with notable deficiencies. However, the 1970s witnessed a dramatic increase in African American cinema, largely in Blaxploitation films of that decade, which generally “centered on black narratives, [and] featured black casts playing out various action-adventures in the ghetto” (Guerrero 69). Given the popularity of Broadway’s The Wiz and the boom in African American films, a cinematic adaptation of the show was almost inevitable, given the increased accessibility such a transformation would provide for viewers, as well as the cultural resonance of this retelling of the Wizard of Oz tale. As Lumet has argued on several occasions, the Wizard of Oz story is universal and the “idea of self knowledge had such validity” that its setting was largely inconsequential (viii). Reframing this familiar myth from the perspective of the African American experience, featuring an all-African American cast, resituating Dorothy’s home from Kansas to Harlem, and adding an urban element to Oz through Lumet’s fantastical reimagining of New York City promised to add another dimension to the classic Wizard of Oz story. In the process, The Wiz also worked to challenge the exclusively white notion of the American citizen furthered by the earlier versions of Baum and MGM.

Representations of race are always already grounded in the tensions and realities of the surrounding culture, under constant contestation. As Ed Guerrero argues in Framing Blackness: The African American Image on Film, the cinematic representation
of race must necessarily be addressed as permanently unfixed, as a “shifting ‘relation’
defined and conditioned by social struggle, the demands of the historical moment, and the
material imperative of an industry that privileges economics and short-term profit before
all other human, aesthetic, or philosophic possibilities or concerns” (2). The Wiz’s 1978
release was firmly situated in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement and came on
the heels of the height of the Blaxploitation era’s popularity, merging the genre traditions
of the former with the more conservative discourse of the family film, the context within
which its MGM predecessor was positioned. Lumet acknowledged the simultaneous
familiarity and exceptionality of The Wiz in an interview with Ralph Applebaum in which
the director argued of MGM’s Wizard of Oz that “[t]here’s a reason there’s a cult around
it. It’s about finding home—home being inside of yourself rather than a place to live.
And this statement becomes doubly important when thought of in terms of the black
experience” (78). Appropriating the Wizard of Oz story to express an African American
perspective worked to build upon the status and recognizable nature of the versions
which had come before while dynamically reimagining it for a new audience and
contemporary moment.

In resituating the Wizard of Oz narrative in The Wiz, Lumet performed two
simultaneous and contradictory discourses of inclusion and exclusion, adding a layer of
complexity and reality to the simplicity of the literary and cinematic versions which had
preceded it. First, the African American audience was now explicitly included in the
discourse of the Wizard of Oz narrative, including realistically-based challenges Dorothy
and her friends must face, such as hailing a cab in New York City. Manthia Diawara
argues in “Black American Cinema: The New Realism” that those African American
films focused on symbolic narratives\textsuperscript{30} are “concerned with the specificity of identity, the empowerment of Black people through the mise-en-scène, and the rewriting of American history” (10). Dorothy’s fruitless attempts to get a cab echo her individual experience as a young African American woman, while rewriting the historical memory posed by the familiar \textit{Wizard of Oz} narrative, which is negotiated and challenged in \textit{The Wiz}. As Dorothy searches for the Yellow Brick Road that will lead her to the Wizard, all she can find are exaggeratedly cartoonish yellow cabs, which go “off duty” and leave her stranded every time she tries to flag one down, reflecting real-life discrimination experienced on a daily basis by African Americans and other non-whites denied services based on their visibly-coded Otherness. As the Scarecrow laments, it “seems like we’re going to have to find our own Yellow Brick Road,” and Dorothy and her friend proceed to do just that, finding the road on their own, beginning with scattered and isolated bricks, followed by the intact road itself. As the two break into the film’s first rendition of its signature song, “Ease on Down the Road,” the Scarecrow reasserts their independence and lack of desire or need for the assistance of the taxis, laughing that “we don’t need no cabs.” Instead, they proceed to make their way down the Yellow Brick Road on their own. Significantly, as the film progresses, it is Dorothy and her friends who refuse the cabs, dancing on top of them and walking over them, seizing their own unique means of success rather than acquiescing to the newly-opened status quo theoretically posed by the waiting taxis. While many of the narrative elements of the familiar story remain the same, such as the heroine’s search for the Wiz and the road she must take to get there, the quartet of heroes achieves their goals by a different route, echoing the racial

\textsuperscript{30} Diawara contrasts these symbolic narrative films with those which employ a realistic style and narrative focus (10), which are the central concern of his essay.
marginalization and alternative means of self-empowerment employed by contemporary African Americans.

In addition to the basic plotline of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, *The Wiz* maintains the lack lamented by Dorothy’s friends: the Scarecrow’s missing brain, the Tin Man’s lack of a heart, and the Lion’s cowardice. However, in Lumet’s film version, these shortcomings are reframed in terms of racial discrimination, Otherness, and the African American experience of the Civil Rights-era United States. In doing so, Lumet simultaneously engages with a previously white narrative31 by claiming inclusion within a mythic American discourse and highlighting the exceptionalism of the racially-Othered experience. In the reimagining of these central characters, Lumet negotiates the familiar traits of each while foregrounding concerns of African American identity and masculinity, in addition to moving beyond the discourse of stereotyped characterizations. As William R. Grant argues, “the fundamental problem with the American film industry is that ‘Blackness’ as a film construct has a long history of being confined to stereotyped caricatures typically used to establish supporting characters” (5). In engaging with *The Wiz*, these caricatures draw on the lack posited by the *Wizard of Oz* narrative up to this point, while highlighting the racial stereotypes surrounding the Other as unintelligent, callous, and cowardly.

The Scarecrow’s lack is located not only in his visible difference, but situated specifically within his head, from which he keeps pulling words of wisdom on fortune cookie-like shreds of paper, foregrounding the unfounded nature of racist discourses of

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31 Some critics argue that despite the all-African American cast of *The Wiz*, the story is still situated within the context of white representation, given that the director (Sidney Lumet) and writer (Joel Schumacher) were both white.
intellectual inferiority. The Scarecrow is also the victim of what Dorothy refers to as “negative thinking,” becoming complacent in his own marginalization. Institutionalized discourses of racial discrimination are further highlighted by the fact that the Scarecrow is kept “in his place” by a group of man-sized crows, nodding to both the Scarecrow’s failed purpose and the Jim Crow laws which excluded and segregated African Americans within the United States prior to the Civil Rights movement. Further emphasis of his self-identified inferiority comes when the crows force the Scarecrow to sing “the crow anthem,” with the Scarecrow accepting through recitation that “[y]ou can’t win / You can’t break even / And you can’t get out of the game” (“You Can’t Win”). Finally, the Scarecrow has been told time and again that he “can’t win” and has come to believe this underestimation of himself. As a result, the Scarecrow is externally defined as Other through the argument that he is intellectually inferior, while also internalizing the racism inherent in his treatment through his lack of confidence and his complicity in his own marginalization, only able to claim his true identity when he refuses complacency and realizes his own ability and self-worth.

The perceptions of lack embodied by the Tin Man and Cowardly Lion seem rooted in anxieties surrounding gender, as well as race. The Tin Man finds himself literally crushed beneath the weight of a domineering woman, while the Cowardly Lion is found wanting not only because of his individual behavior but in large part as a result of the sociocultural expectations of other lions, who have exiled him from their society. As bell hooks points out, discourses surrounding African American masculinity “suggested
that all black men were tormented by their inability to fulfill the phallocentric masculine ideal as it has been articulated in white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (89).

Significantly, in *The Wiz*, the Tin Man and Cowardly Lion both reflect on what they have lost, with Tin Man literally having to break out from under the dominance of Teenie, who is a carnival statue and his latest wife, and the Cowardly Lion wanting to prove himself so he can go back home and reclaim the kingdom he has lost. The Tin Man defines himself in relation to his role as an unconventional romantic hero, telling Dorothy and the Scarecrow that “[t]he genius who created me only took care of my dashing good looks, my razor sharp wit, and my irresistible attraction to the wrong women,” sardonically reflecting upon his own masculinity. However, he remains adamant in casting off the ample-bodied woman who has suffocated him, heckling the inanimate caricature of excessive African American womanhood with the taunt that he is free from her, referring to his wife as a “hulking she-devil.” However, hooks argues that “[c]ontrary to the phallocentric representation of black masculinity … the woman-hating black men are really shown to be in need of love from females” (105). 33 This discourse is highlighted later in the film when the Tin Man must cry over Dorothy and the Lion to break the spell of the poppies. As the Tin Man laments his lack of a heart, the Scarecrow encourages him to “think of Teenie.” This is the magic word, it seems, for the Tin Man is soon in tears over his lost love, demonstrating simultaneous disdain and desire, while saving his friends with the heart he presumably lacks.

In contrast, the Lion is seeking to recapture his previous prestige. As the Lion tells his friends, “[o]nce I was a king, a lion amongst lions, ruler of beautiful kingdom by a

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33 hooks makes this observation in her consideration of Eddie Murphy’s 1989 film *Harlem Nights*, though the discourse is equally applicable to the gender relationships established in *The Wiz*. 
waterfall,” until he was “exiled in disgrace.” While the specific causes for the Lion’s casting out are not explored, his masculinity has clearly been called into question and as a result, disqualified him from his former society. The Lion’s longing for his former freedom and power can also be productively read as a reference to the strong and independent African, brought to America as a slave, denigrated and stripped of his identity, with the Cowardly Lion serving as a dynamic metaphor for the American abuses of the African man. Significantly, the Tin Man and Cowardly Lion are reestablished in terms of their masculine power through their relationships with Dorothy, who encourages each to “in your own way, be a lion,” drawing on their individual strengths and identities to reestablish themselves as valid figures of masculine power. Through these narrative reframings, the lack experienced by these central characters is contextualized within the perspective of a specifically African American set of social conditions, echoing tensions and anxieties surrounding acceptable masculinity, as well as the elements of character and identity championed in the ideal American citizen, as imagined in multiple versions and revisions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative.

The representation of African American womanhood embodied by Ross as Dorothy was further complicated, especially given the anxiety surrounding independent women in the wake of the women’s and Civil Rights movements, the intersection of which made the image of the strong African American woman a figure of conflict and contestation. As hooks explains, “[m]ost of the Black women I talked with were adamant that they never went to movies expecting to see compelling representations of Black

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34 Significantly, Dorothy is the only character unchanged following her musical number “Be a Lion” and her admonition for each of her companions to claim their own identity and power, underscoring the patriarchal discourse through which Dorothy follows her friends rather than leading them, in contrast to earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative.
femaleness” (119), instead finding representations of African American womanhood as the deviant dichotomy of their “pure” or “desirable” white counterparts. However, black power heroines of action and agency like *Cleopatra Jones* and *Foxy Brown*, established in representations of African American womanhood “a mixture of masculine admiration, sexual desire, and anxiety” (Dunn 90). In comparison to these representations of power and agency, Ross’s Dorothy was a disappointment. The passivity of her performance as Dorothy was even more dramatically highlighted within the context of her star persona and previous cinematic performances, as many of the film’s contemporary critics complained. As Bogle points out in his article on *The Wiz*, “[i]n her first films *Lady Sings The Blues* and *Mahogany*, the great thing about Diana Ross was her portrait of the independent, assertive, modern urban young black woman, a creature determined to get what she wanted, not always using her head, perhaps, but using her guts anyway …. Here stood a black girl/woman who could do anything” (231-2). Given her performances as a strong woman in earlier films, as well as in her time with The Supremes, Ross’s Dorothy as a lost little girl far past adolescence grated on audiences who expected to see an independent Dorothy, as well as those who wanted to see a by-now typical Ross embodiment of an assertive heroine. While Ross’s earlier films were not unproblematic in their representations of black womanhood, the passivity and panic of *The Wiz’s* Dorothy fell short of giving the heroine an identity altogether.

The figure of Dorothy within the *Wizard of Oz* narrative has traditionally been cast as the heroine and, while the representations of performative gender in many

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35 For more on black power action heroines, see Stephane Dunn’s “*Baad Bitches* and *Sassy Supermamas: Black Power Action Films* (2008), which explores the intersections of race and gender in representations of female action heroes in films of the 1970s, as well as the lasting influence of these figures on contemporary hip-hop.
versions of the familiar story complicate readings of Dorothy as a character of clear agency, she is generally a compelling quest figure, transformed by her adventures. However, *The Wiz*’s Dorothy is often panicked, following her companions rather than leading them. In this case, Dorothy does not fall easily into the category of domestic and idealized femininity, for she is highlighted as being on the fringes of the family and uncertain of her place within its structure; neither does she embody the strong and brash womanhood of contemporary heroines of the black action film tradition addressed by Stephane Dunn. While the representations of the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion pointed toward anxieties surrounding contemporary African American masculinity, raising more questions than answers, Dorothy’s identity goes largely undefined, giving viewers little to relate to and resulting in the negative critical responses toward the film in general and Ross’s performance in particular.

In reinventing the traditional *Wizard of Oz* narrative, Lumet’s *The Wiz* simultaneously creates space within the mythic discourse for the specificity of the African American experience and claims a position within the distinctly American narrative of identity established by the story itself. Engaging with historically-based representations of race and Otherness, Lumet addresses lived experiences of marginalization as well, such as not being able to hail a cab in New York City, to tensions and anxieties surrounding contemporary African American identity. In doing so, the familiar *Wizard of Oz* story assumes new dimensions, highlighting the previous whiteness implicit in the tale itself, as well as its revisions and the discourse surrounding this American fairy tale and the codified system of privileged characteristics and
elements of national identity contained within its narrative and further established through recognition and repetition.

The role of historically-grounded representations of race within the discourse of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative remains significant, whether explored implicitly, as in Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, or more explicitly as with Lumet’s *The Wiz*. As Daniel Bernardi argues, “[r]ace is conceived as both a social structure and a cultural discourse … Anything but an illusion, race as identity is meaningful, even if not biological or divinely determined, because it has a real impact on everyday life, on social practice, and on the stuff of representation” (xvi). Therefore, contemporary discourses of race are constructed at the intersection of historical realities and metaphors of racial difference, building upon one another to create a wide range of representations of Otherness throughout multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. Through this negotiation, later versions of this story continue to revisit and revise one of the central notions of this distinctly American myth in discourses of who counts as a citizen, of America and of Oz, framed by the *Wizard of Oz* tale’s approach to the valorization of desirable personal attributes and the negation of unacceptable embodiments.

“UNNATURALLY GREEN”: METAPHORS OF RACE AND OTHERNESS

While the versions of Baum and Lumet remain firmly situated within their individual historical contexts, MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* and the transformations of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman engage in metaphorical discourses of race and representation through the address of the Otherness posed by green-skinned witches and sentient Animals. In engaging with race and Otherness as metaphor rather than historical reality,
these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative are able to address race from a dynamically different perspective. In MGM’s classic film, the figure of the Other is found in the denizens of Oz Dorothy encounters along her travels, from the Munchkins to the girl’s newfound friends and, most dramatically, the verdigris Wicked Witch of the West. In this instance, the unfixed metaphor of Otherness justifies Dorothy’s interactions with the Ozians she encounters, from her narrative and physical validation above the Munchkins to her authority over her traveling companions as an early American film heroine, and lastly, to justify her killing of the Wicked Witch of the West. The versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman assume a radically different approach to the physical difference of Elphaba and the Animals, jettisoning the infantilizing and vilifying urge of the MGM film in favor of inviting the self-identification of readers and viewers. As Schwartz argues, Elphaba’s difference and the trials and tribulations that come along with it invite the identification of viewers who have felt like outsiders, for whatever the reason. As Schwartz explains,

> The idea of the story created a sympathetic resonance in me … and I know that I’m not alone. Anyone who is an artist in our society is going to identify with Elphaba. Anyone who is of an ethnic minority, who is black or Jewish or gay, or a woman feeling she grew up in a man’s world, or anyone who grew up feeling a dissonance between who they are inside and the world around them, will identify with Elphaba. Since that’s so many of us, I think there will be a lot of people who will. (qtd. in de Giere 274-5).

Therefore, rather than commenting exclusively on a specific historical moment, these versions of *Wicked* demonstrate the accessible affinity readers and theatre-goers have with Elphaba, who creates a touchstone for anyone who has ever felt different or out of place. The role of the Animals in the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman arguably stand in for more systematic racially-based discriminations, such as
the critical reading of the Animals in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* as a representation of the attempted genocide of the Jewish community during World War II, one of many contemporary interpretations. The approach of MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz* and the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman open the narrative up to more generally address issues of difference and the demonization of the Other.

Building upon the representation of the Other established by Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, MGM’s classic film visually and narratively codes onscreen characters as different from Dorothy, positioning her near the apex of a hierarchy of power that includes an all-powerful good witch and a “humbug” of a Wizard. Dorothy’s superiority is established immediately upon her arrival in Oz, as she towers above the Munchkins, who initially hide from the girl, giggling with childlike glee in the bushes. The Munchkins’ small stature is a significant departure from Baum’s fairy tale, where Dorothy is an energetic and merry little girl who matches Oz’s Munchkins in size, and is thus immediately afforded physical ability upon entering this strange land, because all there is suited to her form, function, and needs (Hearn 34). The MGM film positions Dorothy as towering over the Munchkins, with Glinda serving in a saccharinely

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36 *Wicked* is a dynamic reflection of its contemporary sociocultural moment as well, including Stephen Schwartz’s comparison of the Wizard of Oz to President George W. Bush; as Schwartz reflects of this character, “[t]he Wizard makes a lot of choices that aren’t very moral out of personal weakness, but he’s not a bad man. He’s just someone who had no business being the ruler of a country. Sound like anyone we know?” (qtd. in de Giere 404). Further situating the musical within the political context of the Bush administration, one reviewer comments on Elphaba’s power, which “makes her dangerous—and the campaign to brand her as wicked spreads faster than you can say Karl Rove” (Sewey). In addition to the Animals as representative of Jewishness, another reading forwarded by Advocate reviewer Don Sewey shortly after the musical’s opening in 2003 positioned the Animals within the context of the detaining of terror suspects; as Sewey argues, “[i]n a pretty explicit reference to the U.S.’s current penning-up of Arab suspected terrorists at Guantánamo Bay, the animals of Oz are being caged and deprived of the power of speech.” It is unlikely that this situation, not yet occurred at the time of Schwartz and Holzman’s writing, was in the mind of the writers throughout the creation of *Wicked* and no one affiliated with the creation of the musical has agreed that this “pretty explicit reference” was intentional on the part of the show’s creators. However, one of the strengths of addressing race as metaphor, as evidenced in both versions of *Wicked*, is that the representations provided by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman can be employed in reading a wide variety of real life experiences Othersness and discrimination.
benevolent and maternal role, encouraging the Munchkins to “come out, come out / Wherever you are / And meet the young lady who fell from a star” (“Come Out”).

Convinced of their safety, the Munchkins emerge from their hiding places to hear of Dorothy’s adventure and to congratulate her for killing the Wicked Witch of the East. However, instead of addressing one another as equals, at least in physical stature, as played out in Baum’s children’s tale, Dorothy towers over the Munchkins as she regales them with the tale of her terrifying journey. The Othering of the Munchkins aligns Dorothy with Glinda, as a maternal figure, while the Munchkins caper and perform for her, with the Lullaby League and Lollypop Guild breaking into spirited songs of welcome and reverence. Overall, the Munchkins in the MGM film have little narrative significance and instead appear onscreen as a dramatic physical spectacle and an early illustration of the Otherness Dorothy will encounter in Oz, as well as indicating her ability to masterfully preside over such difference in the assurance that her own body is the standard against which all others will be judged and found wanting, a belief furthered by the physical similarities between Dorothy and Glinda.

However, the most dramatic representation of difference is the physical and performative Otherness of the Wicked Witch of the West, which serves as a justification

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37 Significantly, in Baum’s work Glinda herself is also much more comparable in size to the Munchkins than the pink chiffon vision of Billie Burke in Fleming’s film. When Dorothy first arrives in Oz, Baum describes the unnamed good Witch of the North of equal size and stature as the other Munchkins, with the exception of her age, as “the little woman was doubtless much older: her face was covered with wrinkles, her hair was nearly white, and she walked rather stiffly” (36). The figure of the Munchkin-sized Good Witch of the North becomes transformed in Fleming’s film version into a glittering and regal figure, a more suitable physical and narrative correlation with Dorothy herself.

38 The visual spectacle presented by MGM’s Munchkins remains a point of fascination for many Wizard of Oz fans, who seem particularly intrigued by the recitation of tales of on-set wild behavior, violence, and sexual misconduct during filming on the part of the actors and actresses portraying the Munchkins. Notably, historical discourses surrounding the Munchkins fall into two distinct categories: those of formal commemoration, such as Meinhardt Raabe’s biography Memories of a Munchkin: An Illustrated Walk Down the Yellow Brick Road (2005), and the less formal discourse of gossip and sensationalism which continues to unofficially shape viewers’ understanding of and response to the diminutive characters.
for Dorothy’s destruction of her. The Wicked Witch’s appearance and actions position her outside the discourse of acceptable femininity; however, these same differences also code the Wicked Witch as the racialized Other, in this case one who poses the threat of destruction and domination. The threat of the ethnically-coded enemy was especially resonant with 1939 film audiences; while the start World War II was not officially declared until the September 1939 German invasion of Poland, the unrest in Germany and Japan had been brewing for almost a decade prior to this point. As Robert W. Brockway argues, *The Wizard of Oz* “evoked the mythic vision of America on the eve of World War II when the beleaguered European democracies seemed to be very fragile and even decadent in the face of German, Japanese, and Soviet totalitarianism” (122). Facing international enemies in Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union, the metaphor of the dangerous Other carried sociocultural weight, with the figure of the Wicked Witch of the West providing a cathartic metaphor for the threat, resistance, and the eventual destruction of the villain. Within this context, the Wicked Witch serves a dual purpose as the racialized Other as both visibly different (Japanese) and behaviorally aberrant (German Nazis).  

The Wicked Witch’s green skin visually marks her as the Other, foreshadowing the discrimination against Japanese Americans on the basis of appearance that would

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39 Self-reflexive representations in Hollywood film generally operate at a lag of a few years after the historical events which have inspired them. As Molly Haskell points out in the second edition of *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (1987), “[t]he usual Hollywood time lag accounts for Depression-related comedies and melodramas being produced well into the late thirties, just as World War II films continued to be released into the late forties” (191). While this delay between reality and representation explains the Kansas sequences in *The Wizard of Oz*, I would also argue that the tensions surrounding Otherness and the figure of the enemy in the early years of World War II, as well as the tensions which preceded Germany’s invasion of Poland, preoccupied many Americans, including Hollywood filmmakers. As such, while *The Wizard of Oz* is not a historical representation of these World War II issues of race and Otherness, the representation of the Wicked Witch of the West can be read as engaging with the racially-based anxieties pervading American culture and international relations at the time of the film’s release.
continue to have repercussions on Americans throughout World War II and prompt the internment of Japanese Americans.\(^{40}\) The difference of the witch’s appearance is coupled with her quest for power, her desire to control Oz, and the inexplicable and unquestioning obedience of her Winkie soldiers, an avariciousness and compliance that would characterize Adolf Hitler’s attempts at conquest and extermination, as well as Nazi soldiers’ submission to his orders. This complicity is especially disturbing, indicating a wider and more systematic discourse against the racial Other and, at least for some viewers, the mindless subservience of the Wicked Witch’s henchmen in *The Wizard of Oz* created discomfort and unrest. As Hamilton recalls, after her young son Ham saw the movie, he was less disturbed by his mother’s monstrous onscreen appearance than by the behavior of the witch’s Winkie henchmen. As Hamilton remembers, referring to the soldiers, Ham asked, “what did you do with them?” (qtd. in Harmetz xx, emphasis original). Hamilton attempted to contextualize the Winkie’s behavior within cinematic terms, telling her child that “they are not really guards; I am not really a witch, am I?” (ibid). When Ham continued to repeat his question, with growing distress, Hamilton reflects that

> I was a little desperate; then I realized that I had not listened to his question. I was answering something that I had not been asked. “You see, the Witch had cast a spell on the guards,” I explained, “and they had no choice; they had to do as she wished until she was melted …. Then her spell was broken and they were all free to do as they wished and I am sure they wished to go home.” “Oh,” he said with a sigh of evident relief. “I see.” (ibid)

\(^{40}\) For more on this, see Mary Matsuda Gruenewald’s *Looking Like the Enemy: My Story of Imprisonment in Japanese-American Internment Camps* (2005), which, as the title suggests, connects visible difference with containment during World War II-era America. Other sources on this historical moment include *Unfinished Business: The Japanese-American Internment Cases*, a 1985 documentary directed by Steven Okazaki and *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese-American Internment Experience* (2000), edited by Lawson Fusao Inada
The question posed by Hamilton’s son pinpoints not only the actions of the Winkie soldiers of Oz but also gestures toward the seemingly inexplicable behavior and events of Nazi Germany that preoccupied many Americans during and in the aftermath of World War II, and this mentality of “following orders” has continued to trouble critics and historians throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. While the Wicked Witch served as a metaphor for racial and international unrest, the film positioned the danger of this Otherness within the microcosm of the cinematic world, making it concentrated and containable. Displacing the metaphor of the racial Other from the news reels to the heady fantasy world of *The Wizard of Oz*, viewers were offered the temporary release of seeing the Other defeated and the heroine victorious.

Maguire’s literary version of *Wicked* once again picked up the now-familiar figure of the green-skinned Wicked Witch of the West, though Maguire took a dramatically different approach to the figure of the Other, inviting identification rather than inspiring destruction. Elphaba’s skin color sets her apart and it is even momentarily suggested that her verdigris appearance might be the result of her mother’s drunken dalliances with tree elves. As Nanny reflects on Elphaba’s coloring,

> Was Elphaba devil’s spawn? Was she half-elf? Was she punishment for her father’s failure as a preacher, or for her mother’s sloppy morals and bad memory? Or was she merely a physical ailment, a blight like a misshapen apple or a five-legged calf? …. Perhaps, thought Nanny, little green Elphaba chose her own sex, and her own color, and to hell with her parents. (Maguire 31)

Elphaba’s physical Otherness is never entirely explained, though the main culprit is held to be a green miracle elixir, brought to Melena by one of her many lovers to induce drunken giddiness. However, this does not stop those surrounding Elphaba to attribute their own significances to the girl’s difference, as hinted at by Nanny’s ruminations.
Melena sees the green baby as a testament to her sins and distances herself physically and emotionally from her child; Frex tells his grown daughter that “[y]ou are my fault … For what I had failed to do, you were born to plague me” (Maguire 339). Building on the discourse of aberrance and ugliness established by the monstrous witch in Fleming’s *Wizard of Oz*, Frex tells his daughter that as a child, “[y]ou didn’t look at yourself … you hated to. You hated your skin, your sharp features, your strange eyes” (ibid). Throughout much of the novel, Elphaba’s visible Otherness is addressed as relatively inexplicable, positioned as one and the same with her performative deviance from accepted tropes of femininity and power, with her external appearance serving as a mirror of her internal difference.

However, in Maguire’s reframing of the familiar *Wizard of Oz* narrative and his presentation of a new perspective on the erstwhile Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba’s greenness is occasionally recast in terms of beauty by those closest to her. The celebration of Elphaba’s strange beauty engages with the Other as exotic, with its “initial signification of ‘foreignness’” (Figueira 1). As Dorothy M. Figueira argues in *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest*, within this context the figure of the Other “exerts a special force … it can be strangely or unfamiliarly beautiful and enticing. This physical and (meta)physical identification at the heart of the exotic accounts for the tension often present between extraneity and the erotic” (ibid). The discourse of the exotic Other shapes discussions of Elphaba’s beauty, in both her friendship with Glinda and her love affair with Fiyero. When the two girls are rooming together at Shiz, Galinda (not yet Glinda) talks Elphaba into trying on an overly feminine hat in order to laugh at the green girl’s ridiculous appearance. As Maguire writes of the hat,
On the wrong head it would look ghastly, and Galinda expected to have to bite the inside of her lip to keep from laughing … But Elphaba dropped the whole sugary plate onto her strange pointed head and looked at Galinda again from underneath the broad brim. She seemed like a rare flower, her skin stemlike in its soft pearlescent sheen. (78)

As Galinda admits to Elphaba, “you terrible mean thing, you’re pretty … there’s some strange exotic quality of beauty about you. I never thought” (ibid). Elphaba dismisses Galinda’s praise as teasing flattery, though this realization of the green girl’s beauty and the intimacy of the conversation shared between the two young women mark the birth of their growing friendship and initially begrudging respect of one another. This theme of the exotic Other is furthered later, in her affair with Fiyero, through his wholesale physical and sexual acceptance of her, when Elphaba “at last understood that she was beautiful. In her way” (Maguire 206). The discourse of exoticism and Otherness continues to color the physical descriptions of Elphaba through this relationship as well, with Elphaba often described wearing a scarf brought to her as a gift from Fiyero, which serves as both ornamentation and as a distinction between Elphaba and Sarima, Fiyero’s wife in far-off Kiamo Ko. On one occasion, Fiyero shops for his family back home while reflecting on his feelings for Elphaba. As he muses, “Elphie wasn’t just a different (not to say novel) provincial type—she seemed an advance on the gender, she seemed a different species sometimes …. He bought three, four, six scarves for Sarima, who didn’t wear scarves. He bought six scarves for Elphaba, who did” (Maguire 207, emphasis original). Fiyero is attracted to Elphaba because of her Otherness, rather than in spite of it, attributing to her an exotic and secretive beauty, much as Glinda had done so many years before.
Fiyero’s appreciation of Elphaba’s beauty and difference also occurs within a rigid system of racialization which dominates all of Oz and through which he himself is also positioned as an outsider, physically marked by a pattern of blue diamonds which adorn his skin and face, signaling his regal position at Kiamo Ko. The discourse of the racial Otherness is inculcated in the children of Oz from an exceptionally young age, codified in a popular nursery rhyme. As Nanny recites, “Gillikineses are sharp as knives, / Munchkinlanders lead corny lives, / Gliikkuns beat their ugly wives, / Winkies swarm in sticky hives …” (Maguire 53). Fiyero is a Winkie, from the Vinkus in the west of Oz, a community which lives according to tribal law. As a member of the royal family, Fiyero’s adornment sets him apart as dramatically as his darker skin. Arguably, Elphaba and Fiyero are drawn to one another in part because of their respective differences, greenness and social exclusion on Elphaba’s part, racial difference and finding himself out of his element in the Emerald City on Fiyero’s. If Fiyero views Elphaba as exotically attractive, she sees him in much the same terms, echoing her own mother’s love affair with the Quadling Turtleheart. As Fiyero himself notes early in their unconventional courtship, “[t]he next time he came, he thought, he must wear a shirt open at the neck, so she could see that the pattern of blue diamonds on his face continued unbroken down his chest … Since she seemed to like that” (Maguire 190). In fact, Maguire typifies the union between Elphaba and Fiyero in terms of their differences, describing the lovers as “[moving] together, blue diamonds on a green field” (Maguire 192). Separated from the Emerald City and its society which surrounds them, Elphaba and Fiyero bridge the differences that separate them from one another, transforming the Otherness of each into exotic beauty.
Metaphors of race and difference are also addressed through the role of sentient Animals in *Wicked*, most significantly in the character of Doctor Dillamond, a Goat and a professor at Shiz University.41 In Maguire’s reinvented Oz, non-human creatures fall into two distinct categories: those Animals with the capabilities for intelligent expression, “[t]hose with a spirit” (Maguire 66), and those animals without. However, as Elphaba heads to Shiz, the Wizard begins establishing “banns” against Animals, limiting their movement and constructing discriminatory practices which threaten to force Animals out of the public sphere altogether. Though Dillamond will become Elphaba’s mentor, it is Glinda who meets him first, on the train to Shiz. Dillamond attempts to explain the significance of the Wizard’s campaign to the self-absorbed young socialite:

As things now stood, his own ancient mother couldn’t afford to travel first class, and would have to ride in a pen when she wanted to visit him in Shiz. If the Wizard’s Banns went through the Hall of Approval, as they were likely to do, the goat himself would be required by law to give up the privileges he had earned through years of study, training, and saving. “Is that right for a creature with a spirit?” he said. “From here to there, there to here, in a pen?” (ibid, emphasis original)

While Glinda remains undisturbed by the realities facing Dillamond and other Animals, instead remaining consumed with the pursuit of her own pleasures, the Animals Rights situation grows increasingly dire over the girls’ years at Shiz. Their emerging awareness begins with a poetry reading hosted by Madame Morrible, where the headmistress features a style of verse referred to as a Quell, which includes a “revealing contrast between rhyming argument and concluding remark” (Maguire 83). Morrible reads two

41 The role and perspective of sentient Animals is more fully developed in the third book of Maguire’s *Wicked Years* series, *A Lion Among Men*. Told from the point of view of the Cowardly Lion, *A Lion Among Men* serves as part biography of the lion himself, including his growing self-awareness and fraught interactions with humans and other Animals, and an extended interview with Yackle, an old woman who was omnipresent on the fringes of Elphaba’s life and is believed to hold secrets regarding the iconoclastic green girl.
Quells to the gathered audience, though it is the second which is the most disturbing to
the gathered listeners. As Morrible concludes this Quell, she urges her pupils to “[l]et
your especial history / Be built upon sorority / Whose Virtues do exemplify, / And Social
Good thus multiply. / *Animals should be seen and not heard*” (Maguire 84, emphasis
original). The indication of anti-Animal sentiment just below the surface of polite society
indicated by Morrible’s poetry reading escalates from that point forward, to decreased
public visibility of Animals in Shiz to the final affront of Doctor Dillamond’s murder the
following year, which silences the majority of Animal Rights agitation at the university.

In contrast to the obliviousness of flighty Glinda, the plight of the Animals
resounds more productively with Elphaba, whom Doctor Dillamond takes on as a
research assistant the summer following her first year at Shiz, as she aids him in the work
that will eventually lead to his murder. When Boq asks Elphaba about her work with
Dillamond, she explains that the Goat is currently seeking to “determine by scientific
method what the were real differences between animal and Animal tissue, and between
Animal and human tissue” (Maguire 110). Elphaba’s work with Dillamond marks one of
her few moments of true optimism. As she continues to clarify their mission for Boq,

“I admire the Goat intensely. But the real interest of it to me is the political
slant. If he can isolate some bit of the biological architecture to prove that
there isn’t any difference, deep down in the invisible pockets of human
and Animal flesh—that there’s no difference between us—or even among
us, if you take in animal flesh too—well, you see the implications.”

“No,” said Boq. “I don’t think I do.”

“How can the Banns on Animal Mobility be upheld if Doctor
Dillamond can prove, scientifically, that there isn’t any inherent difference
between humans and Animals?” (ibid)

In this moment of dedication and activism, Elphaba naively believes in clear-cut
distinctions of right and wrong, and the inevitable pursuit of justice, anticipating the
reshaping of the world itself around the new information she and Dillamond are
diligently outlining in the doctor’s laboratory. As her exchange with Boq shows, not only
does Elphaba view the political implications of their research as matter-of-fact and sure
to be acknowledged, she has full faith that the Wizard will respond humanely and
responsibly to their findings and give the Animals the equality and freedoms they
deserve. In this moment alone, Boq is more cynically grounded than Elphaba, cutting
through her impassioned optimism with a cold dose of reality. As he tells his friend, “I
don’t believe, Elphie, that the Wizard is open to entertaining arguments, even by as
august an Animal as Doctor Dillamond” (Maguire 111). The Wizard’s power is
established, in part, through his control over the Animals and the limitation of their
freedoms, and no new knowledge or virtue of humanity will change his course, despite
Elphaba’s fervent belief that the Wizard is “a man in power, it’s his job to consider
changes in knowledge” (ibid). In this case, Boq’s consideration of events and likelihoods
is more accurate and rather than acknowledging and considering Doctor Dillamond’s
new-found facts, those in power instead have the Goat murdered, his throat slit in his
laboratory.

The death of Doctor Dillamond destroys Elphaba’s optimism and she is never
able to recover it, though she does continue on with Dillamond’s work, fueled by her
anger, betrayal, and the systematic discrimination and violence realized in the Goat’s
death. Elphaba first pursues formal avenues of validation, by bravely going to the Wizard
himself, and later through her more informal and private experimentation at Kiamo Ko.
First, Elphaba and Glinda flee to the Emerald City, where Elphaba tells the Wizard of
Doctor Dillamond’s findings, clinging to the last shreds of her belief in decency and
justice. These final hopes are dashed, however, when the Wizard dismisses Elphaba, telling her “I know of Doctor Dillamond and I know of his work … Derivative, unauthenticated, specious garbage. What you’d expect of an academic Animal. Predicated on shaky political notions … I know of his interests and his findings. I know little of what you call his murder and I care less” (Maguire 174). Elphaba makes a final attempt to reason with him, appealing to him as a “right-thinking ruler” (ibid), which the Wizard laughingly dismisses, calling the green girl’s belief in his justice “touching” (ibid). Dismissed out of hand, Elphaba must go forward to find less officially-sanctioned ways to fight for the rights of Animals and continue Dillamond’s promising research.

From her audience at the Wizard’s palace, with her ideals and belief in the inevitability of justice dashed, Elphaba sets out into her self-imposed exile, first to the Emerald City and later to the isolated wilderness of Kiamo Ko, where she once more picks up her old mentor’s research. Moved to anger whenever she sees sentient Animals chained or tethered, Elphaba continues to fight for their freedoms, clandestinely releasing them where she finds them. However, Elphaba’s investment in the rights and intelligence of Animals culminates most powerfully in a creative impulse, when she works with her snow monkey, Chistery, to induce him to speech and later, when she gives him wings.42 Significantly, when Elphaba continues Doctor Dillamond’s work, she brings her own powers to the task, exploring the nature of the sentient Animal through a mixed discourse of science and magic; building on the biological sciences of Dillamond, Elphaba “had found spells to convince the axial nerves to think skyward instead of treeward. And once she got it right, the winged monkeys seemed happy enough with their lot” (Maguire 334).

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42 Here Maguire provides a generative myth not only for Elphaba herself, but for the infamous flying monkeys that have accompanied her since Baum’s first telling of Oz.
Combining her own powers with the intellectual promise of Dillamond’s truncated research, Elphaba is able to create a new race of creatures, though even the flying monkeys are not without their failures. They represent the intersection of two kinds of Animal—both animal and Animal—still proving largely unequal to the task of speech, as Elphaba reflects upon them in the dotage and revulsion of her unnatural motherhood.

In Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, the Animals continue to play a significant role in the narrative itself, approached as dramatically representative of the Wizard’s campaign of violence and discrimination. While the Animals in general and Doctor Dillamond in particular still remain closely aligned with Elphaba’s humanitarian efforts, this connection is on a more empathetic level, with no reference to the scientific research that draws Elphaba and Dillamond into collusion in Maguire’s novel. In contrast, the discourse surrounding Animals, including Doctor Dillamond, seems grounded in discourses of magic; for example, Dillamond is slowly and insidiously losing his powers of speech, a phenomenon which goes unexplained but appears implicitly connected with the Wizard’s campaign against Animals and the restriction of their freedoms within Oz. Finally, in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, Dillamond is kidnapped and held captive, rather than murdered outright, an injustice which has contributed to critical readings of the Animals as representing World War II-era Jews and their imprisonment in concentration camps.

From the wide range of Animals presented in Maguire’s *Wicked*, Schwartz and Holzman’s musical pares this population down to a handful of Animal characters, the most central of which is Doctor Dillamond. As Cote explains, “Doctor Dillamond is *Wicked* (the musical)’s main Animal representative and its most passionate civil rights
defender” (66). Following Maguire’s narrative, Dillamond is a respected professor at Shiz, though he is set apart as even more exceptional in the Broadway version by the fact that he is the only Animal featured in a position of authority and prestige. In addition to the heightened exceptionalism of Dillamond’s character in Schwartz and Holzman’s Wicked, the Wizard’s campaign against the Animals takes on the sinister tones of the unexplainable, with the marginalization of the Animals occurring at the intersection of magic and politics. The Wizard’s control and manipulation are still central to the growing exclusion of the Animals; as the Wizard remarks, “[t]he best way to bring folks together … is to give them a really good enemy” (ibid). But in addition to being publicly constructed as Other, the Animals are also physically losing their powers of speech. In “Something Bad,” the first-act song between Elphaba and Doctor Dillamond, the Goat tells her of the insidious changes creeping into the lives of the Animals. As Dillamond sings, “I’ve heard of an Ox / A professor from Quox / No longer permitted to teach / Who has lost all powers of speech … / And an Owl in Munchkin Rock / A vicar with a thriving flock / Forbidden to preach / Now he only can screech / Only rumors—but still— / Enough to give pause / To anyone with paws / Something bad is happening in Oz.” As he speaks, these troubling changes begin to overcome Doctor Dillamond as well, with his “bad” being replaced, to his embarrassment, with a bleating baa. The sudden

43 Significantly, in adaptation Doctor Dillamond becomes a professor of history and politics, rather than biology, which led him into more scientifically-based considerations of race and being in Maguire’s novel.

44 Other Animals featured include “an Antelope midwife, a Rat waiter, and Monkey servants” (Cote 66), all of whom serve humans in one capacity or another.

45 Dillamond’s descent into speechlessness is all the more devastating in contrast to the preceding action of the scene, in which his classroom lecture is engaging and eloquently expressed, before being cut off abruptly with his discovery of graffiti on the blackboard reading “Animals should be seen and not heard.” As Schwartz reflects of the writing process of this scene, he told the writers “I need to see him as the great teacher he is, so that his disintegration is even more compelling” (qtd. in Giere 355). The contrast between Dillamond’s well-crafted intellectual speech and his involuntary bleating highlight the intersecting
inability of Dillamond to speak in his usual refined fashion is arguably a direct result of the political marginalization of the Animals of Oz: in having his speech discounted, Dillamond has been physically as well as psychologically silenced, magic and political campaigns combining to situate Dillamond as dramatically Othered, robbing him and other Animals of their voices in the process of excluding them as viable citizens of Oz.

Doctor Dillamond’s fate also undergoes a dramatic revision in the transformation from Maguire’s novel, with Dillamond imprisoned and further deprived of his speech and intellectual faculties, held captive in the palace of the Wizard himself. One of the most consistent criticisms of Schwartz and Holzman’s adaptation is the diminished role of the Animals, with detractors arguing that the marginalization of the Animal subplot results in the musical becoming “vapid and apolitical” (Wolf, “‘Defying Gravity’” 2) in comparison to Maguire’s original novel. This seems to be the case with Doctor Dillamond’s imprisonment and Elphaba’s discovery of the Goat at the Wizard’s palace. However, this discovery is an integral moment within the narrative itself. After Elphaba has been branded “wicked” by the Wizard and his public attacks on her, the two meet in a moment where reconciliation seems temporarily possible: the Wizard promises Elphaba acceptance in return for her help and in exchange, he promises to release the Monkeys he has tricked her into bewitching. The Wizard keeps his word and frees the Monkeys, but then Elphaba discovers Doctor Dillamond cowering in a corner, hidden under a blanket. When she attempts to speak to him, it is only to find that he is a shell of his former self, denied speech altogether. This injustice and her powerlessness in the face of the Wizard’s violence against the Animals end the hopeful interlude, with Elphaba telling the Wizard influences of magic (his literal loss of his voice) and political repression (the blackboard grafitti) in the marginalization of the Animals.
that “[y]ou and I have nothing in common. I’m nothing like you and I never will be. And I’ll fight you till the day I die!” (Cote 167). As Cote explains, “the Animal subplot is extremely important; it supplies Elphaba with her motivation to oppose the Wizard” (66). From this point forward, Elphaba gathers her energy against the Wizard and in turn, his focus shifts from her containment to her destruction.46

While it is true that Dillamond serves as a catalyst to move Elphaba toward her own maturation and identity, the narrative of captivity which replaces Maguire’s genocide adds a complicating layer of Otherness and containment to the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. As Cote argues, the plight of the Animals in *Wicked* also “gives the fantasy world of Oz a gritty and thought-provoking new dimension” (ibid). One critical reading of the role of the Animals in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* argues that these figures are representative of anti-Semitism. As Wolf argues, “the Animals stand in for the racialized Other, with strong associations to Jewishness in the musical” (“‘Defying Gravity’” 10), bringing metaphors and lived experiences of race into engagement with

46 Interestingly, Schwartz and Holzman had intended a different ending than that which appears in the stage production. In the team’s originally conceived ending, there was “a final scene with Elphaba and Dr. Dillamond to be acted out downstage (while upstage, at the Wizard’s palace, the celebration of the death of the Witch continued)” (de Gier 356). Elphaba would use her magical abilities on Dillamond, returning to him a halting and fragmentary, though promising, ability to speak once more. As such, Elphaba would become “a healer for these Animals who were destroyed by the Wizard’s policies” (de Gier 357). As Schwartz reflects on the cut scene, “[t]he musical structuralist in me knew it had to go, but the philosopher in me really misses it” (qtd. in de Gier 358), highlighting the unique form and function of the megamusical. Instead of the reunion of Elphaba and Doctor Dillamond, the final stage production concludes with the romantic resolution of Elphaba and Fiyero together again, escaping after Elphaba’s assumed death.

47 Wolf argues that the racially-coded representation of the Animals shifts Elphaba outside the range of the racial Other. As Wolf posits, “[b]y portraying another character (primarily Dr. Dillamond, but also the group) as so definitively marked as Jewish and as racialized, and by positioning Elphaba as a defender though not a member, the musical certifies that her color is not a ‘race’ and stresses her difference from all others” (“‘Defying Gravity’” 10). However, I argue that the visible difference that connects Elphaba’s experiences to those of the Animals codify her as a similarly racialized Other, though in this case one without a larger community, as the lone green-skinned character within *Wicked*. In addition, Elphaba’s empathy for the Animals and the featuring of her as a main character and Dillamond as a key figure within the musical establish both individuals as outside of the dominant racial culture of Oz and position the experience of Otherness and discrimination to invite the self-identification of viewers in a way that
one another. In addition to the explicit campaign against Doctor Dillamond, signaled by the blackboard graffiti that “Animals should be seen and not heard,” Wolf cites a scene later in the musical which “shows scientists who look strikingly like Nazis experimenting on and caging Animals” (ibid), drawing a connection between the marginalization and detainment of the Animals with the concentration camps and execution of World War II German Jews. The plight of the Animals, as represented in the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman echoes anti-Semitic propaganda used by Nazis to justify their containment and extermination of German Jews, which was “framed within a specific racial scientific ideology, [and] institutionalized through the myriad of so-called racial laws” (Ehrenreich 165), echoed by the Wizard’s banns. In addition, the testing scene Wolf addresses refers to a moment in the musical in which the Animal being experimented upon is none other than the Cowardly Lion himself, whose fear stems from the torture he suffers as a cub in the name of science, doubly situating the abuse of Animals in the two recognizable figures of Dillamond and the Lion, enabling viewer identification through the presentation of key sympathetic characters.

Like the Elphaba of Maguire’s novel, the heroine of Schwartz and Holzman’s Broadway musical invites self-identification through her Otherness, rather than participating in a discourse that necessitates the destruction of the racial Other. Elphaba’s difference is clear even before she physically appears upon the stage. As Elphaba’s mother gives birth, her husband and an Antelope midwife surround her, anticipating the baby’s arrival. However, Elphaba confounds their expectations and “[l]ike a froggy, ferny cabbage / The baby is unnaturally … Green!!” (“No One Mourns the Wicked”). Elphaba privileges difference rather than explicit race, though because of her appearance, like Dillamond, Elphaba is always already racialized as Other.
is narratively, as well as visually, coded first and foremost in terms of her difference. As Wolf argues, Elphaba’s “awkward outward ‘difference’ (her green skin) signifies her internal difference (her sensitivity, awareness, and intelligence) and both render her sympathetic to almost all girl fans” (“Wicked Divas” 48). The range of this embrace of the Other is most clearly visible in teen girl’s responses to the musical and their critical engagement as fans and viewers with the characters onstage, a response which, in regard to Broadway musicals, seems to be almost exclusively focused on *Wicked*. As Wolf notes, there is a thriving internet community of young women engaging with the musical who arguably “feel empowered by the musical and by their relationship to it” (“Wicked Divas” 44), in embracing the beauty of difference and Otherness represented by Elphaba. These young women enact their fandom in a variety of ways, including discussing their self-identification, establishing their expertise on the musical and characters, and creating their own individual art, where *Wicked* “actually provides them with the material for the acts” (“Wicked Divas 58), where young women “become creators, producers, and artists themselves” (ibid). The self-identification of young women with Elphaba marks an intersection of race and gender, culminating in the experience of Otherness shared by these fans and represented by the heroine of *Wicked*.

The representations of the racial Other in MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz* and the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman are metaphors of race and difference in that they do not refer explicitly to specific lived experiences, though as the reading of Jewishness and the role of the Animals in Broadway’s *Wicked* demonstrates, metaphor and history can never be clearly separated from one another. The figure of the racial Other remains under constant contestation in these multiple versions of the *Wizard*
of Oz narrative, beginning as an image against which the heroine can define herself and progressing in later versions, such as both versions of Wicked, to find embodiment in the heroine herself, championing difference rather than calling for its destruction.

CONCLUSIONS

While these five versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative engage primarily with historical or metaphorical discourses of race and Otherness, these two conversations cannot be separated from one another and each must be read in light of its counterpart. In the more than one hundred years since Baum’s first publication of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, issues of national identity within this specifically American myth have continued to be preoccupied with race, ethnicity, and the Other, in demarcating who counts as a national citizen and who is marginalized and excluded. As such, it is not surprising that multiple reinventions of the Wizard of Oz tale have returned to these issues time and again.

Baum’s support for racial segregation and clear-cut notions of the American citizen is reflected in the regimentation of his Oz, complicating the largely multicultural discourse of his Oz series and other works. Lumet’s The Wiz also participates in historical representations of race, negotiating the African American appropriation of the Wizard of Oz story in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement, claiming a privileged position within the discourse of this previously white American myth, as well as highlighting anxieties surrounding other elements of African American identity, including problematic notions of masculinity and exclusion. The works of Baum and Lumet position themselves within the historical moments of their individual creation, engaging with the anxieties surrounding race and national identity of their contemporary moments.
In contrast, MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* and the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman engage in metaphorical discourses of race, framing these interventions through difference and Otherness. MGM’s classic film positions the Other as subordinate (the Munchkins) or dangerous and worthy of destruction (the Wicked Witches), with the dichotomy of Self and Other established to further validate Dorothy’s heroism and identity as an ideal American citizen. Resituating discussions of Otherness through sentient Animals invites identification while simultaneously engaging with discourses of biological difference and metaphorical representation of real-world discrimination and abuse. Both versions of *Wicked* further reestablish the Other as a figure of self-identification by recasting Elphaba as a heroine rather than a villainess, highlighting a discourse which embraces and celebrates those who are different and unique, a distinct response to the segregation and vilification of the versions which have preceded it. However, Elphaba still faces destruction, achieved in Maguire’s novel and simulated in the Broadway version of Schwartz and Holzman, suggesting that the discourses of race and national identity are far from settled.
CHAPTER FIVE:
HOME SWEET HOME

The return home and the reincorporation into the domestic sphere and the family unit have been central to the *Wizard of Oz* narrative since Baum’s first writing. This preoccupation is likely best epitomized by Judy Garland’s ecstatic and relieved proclamation that “there’s no place like home” as young Dorothy in MGM’s classic *The Wizard of Oz*. However, as the figure of the female hero and her journey have become increasingly complicated over the past century, her place within the home and nuclear family has also required multiple negotiations and reinventions. Anxieties surrounding the idea of home and family remain central to considerations of gender representations and the quest of the female hero in popular culture, the structure of American myth, and the continuing reinvention of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative.

The idea of the frontier within the American mythic structure is central in the simultaneous celebration of both adventure and home evident in many of these versions of the *Wizard of Oz*. Arguably, the myth of the frontier is implicit in the narrative structure of countless fairy tales as well, in which young heroes or heroines often set out into the wilderness, are initiated into maturity through their trials and survival, and return home as adults, following the familiar trajectory of Campbell’s hero. The myth of the frontier is particularly significant within American culture because of the romanticized westward movement that initially established the grit and perseverance which epitomized early national identity. In addition, notions of the land as feminine established it as that which must be conquered and transformed in the face of civilization. As Kolodny asks,
“was there perhaps a need to experience the land as a nurturing, giving, maternal breast because of the threatening, alien, and potentially emasculating terror of the unknown? Beautiful, indeed, that wilderness appeared—but also dark, uncharted, and prowled by howling beasts” (9, emphasis original). Though threatening, the wilderness was also thrilling and exciting, promising a wealth of heretofore unimagined possibilities for adventure, wealth, and development. However, as civilization expanded to the Pacific coast, the frontier shrunk and then became nonexistent; once conquered, there was a diminished sense of adventure and danger that had characterized the earlier discourse of westward expansion. Rather than surrendering the ideal of the frontier, this image was resituated to signify exotic lands and was explored within popular cultural narratives of exploration and adventure. As Hearn points out of Baum’s original story, once the American West had been civilized, “people wanted to read about foreign lands … At the turn of the century, the genteel literary public wanted fanciful stories, and Baum would provide the same for the children. If their parents were heading off to medieval nations and mythical European duchies, why should they not read about a new fairyland?” (l). Therefore, the frontier lived on in the imagination of readers who could pick up a book and embark on an adventure in a strange and fantastical land anytime they chose.

However, the myth of the frontier was untenable without its opposite: the idealized safety and happiness of the home. As exciting as the notion of the frontier and the self-sufficient hero were, a central emphasis in establishing national identity lay in constructing citizens as part of the larger American society, beholden to their communities and their nation. Therefore, while the tales of fantasy and adventure were enjoyable and popular, readers were generally reminded at tale’s end that their true place
was within the community, and their success and fulfillment lay within the structures of home, family, and nation. As Campbell points out, the heroic figure must tackle “a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will” (Hero 238). Upon return, the hero must be reincorporated into the surrounding society; in order for this reintegration to be successful, the hero must sacrifice individuality, turn over knowledge achieved through his or her adventures to the community at large, and be positioned once more as one out of many, rather than as a lone crusader. Baum’s Wonderful Wizard of Oz follows the traditional journey of the mythic hero, returning Dorothy to Kansas with little lingering complication in the book’s final—and shortest—chapter; Dorothy runs back into her dear aunt’s arms, exclaiming “oh, Aunt Em! I’m so glad to be at home again!” (357). Dorothy has had thrilling adventures, made new friends, and discovered her own power; however, her obsession throughout her journey has been to return home to Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. In the end, she must return to Kansas and happily does so, reassuming her position within the family and larger social structure.48 Thus begins a preoccupation with home and family that has permeated almost every version of the Wizard of Oz narrative over the past one hundred years.

Finally, the notion of home refers to much more than a house and family; as Richard Selcer argues, home “has become more than a place to Americans; it is an institution. During the good times in our history, it has been a symbol of everything good in American life. During the bad times, its status has been used as a yardstick for the decline of America” (qtd. in Mackey-Kallis 127). Therefore, the representations of home and family featured in these versions of the Wizard of Oz tale can be read as indicative of

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48 The validity of this return is unsettled when, in Baum’s later Oz books, Dorothy repeatedly returns to Oz, developing an adventurous and independent life outside the context of home and family.
not only the role of women within the sphere of domesticity, but also of the larger
sociocultural milieu inspiring each retelling. Mirroring the complication of female
characterization within these stories, the privileged position of home has been questioned
and negotiated in several of the reinventions of the *Wizard of Oz* story. First and
foremost, the journey of the female hero differs significantly from that of her male
counterpart. Reincorporation within the community is less complicated for the male hero;
he is expected to set out on adventures, with these separations from home and community
seen as a form of initiation into manhood. In contrast, the departure of the female hero is
often seen as a betrayal or abandonment of those she loves and is presumably supposed to
care for and nurture. Therefore, while the male hero returns to celebration, the heroine
reenters society as deviant and perhaps even dangerous. In addition, the female hero’s
return is complicated by the home to which she returns, as well as her position within it.
The domestic space of the home is invariably more confining for the female hero than for
the male hero; therefore, while the male hero often returns to a new position of power and
respect, the female hero is rarely afforded the same privilege. The reentry to the home is,
for the heroine, often a process of rehabilitation, marked by attempts to resituate the
aberrant female hero within the acceptable structures and performances of femininity in
the given society.

*As the Wizard of Oz* narrative has progressed over the past one hundred years, the
nature of the home itself has been complicated as well. Rather than a space of domestic
bliss, the home and the nuclear family which inhabit it have become fractured and
contentious, with home often marked as a space of anxiety, tension, and conflict. Finally,
considering the traditional gendering of the domestic space as feminine, the figure of the
mother can be read as the personification of the home. In conjunction with the disruption of home and hearth, mothering becomes a contested identification in these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story. In addition, the figure of the mother has been complicated as well. For example, while Dorothy’s Aunt Em may not be her biological mother, she is an admirable surrogate in many ways, maternal and protective of young Dorothy; in contrast, Elphaba’s mother in both versions of *Wicked* could hardly be read as an “angel in the home,” with her marginally-attentive parenting and various addictions constantly distracting her from her children. The negotiation of the female hero’s journey, the complication of home and family, and the disruption of the role of the mother figure are significant in reading negotiations of home and the frontier myth in these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz*.

“THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME”: REPRESENTATIONS OF HOME AND THE COMPLICATION OF THE HEROINE’S RETURN

As representations of gender in the *Wizard of Oz* narrative have become more performative, they have also deviated increasingly further from the traditional formula of the hero’s quest. As previously outlined, Campbell’s theory of the hero’s journey has three main parts: initiation, separation, and return (*Hero* 30). Unlike the figure of the male hero, the heroine is always already an anomaly; as Pearson and Pope point out, popular cultural discourses surrounding the female heroic figure are often shaped by “the traditional belief that the female protagonist and her real-life counterpart seldom travel beyond the protective environment of home” (8). The women that do are therefore shown as being aberrant, deviating from socially acceptable roles and performances of
femininity. This stigma remains with female heroes upon return to their respective communities, setting them apart and denying them the potential for achieving the demanded reincorporation. In addition to the marginalized position of the returning heroine within her society, such reintegration often dramatically circumscribes the potential of her feminine performativity. The heroine has ventured out, been initiated, and proven herself as capable and independent; however, maintaining this spirit of self-reliance often makes successful social reentry difficult, if not altogether impossible. As a result, the female hero must necessarily face the possibility of losing this newfound identity if she wishes to be welcomed back into her original community. Therefore, it should not be surprising that as the Wizard of Oz narrative has been revised and reinvented, its heroines have increasingly negotiated the return stage of the hero’s journey and have even at times rejected it altogether.

Baum’s Wonderful Wizard of Oz follows the trajectory of Campbell’s hero almost to the last detail, aside from the notable exception of Dorothy’s gender. Campbell’s heroic figure is always male, with women appearing along the way to help or hinder his journey. However, Dorothy’s femaleness has little, if any, impact on the narrative arc of the story itself. As Rahn points out in The Wizard of Oz: Shaping an Imaginary World, Baum’s fairy tale follows “the traditional pattern of the magical quest story, in which a hero and his companions (usually all male) go in search of something virtually unobtainable yet infinitely desirable … and at last, after a long and hazardous journey, find what they are seeking” (9). Baum’s choice of a young heroine rather than a masculine hero is significant, of course; Dorothy establishes a trend of independent and adventurous female heroes and influences the wide spectrum of women who come to
populate Oz in later incarnations of the *Wizard of Oz* story. However, her position as a heroine fails to prompt a reimagina- tion of the structure of the quest narrative, which Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* follows with very little deviation. Dorothy arrives in Oz, sets off to see the Wizard, picks up friends along the way, and returns home to Kansas.

Baum’s fairy tale ends with Dorothy’s arrival in Kansas, with little indication of the repercussions of her absence. Will Dorothy be encouraged to share the knowledge she has acquired along her adventures? Will she be more self-sufficient and daring now that she is back in Kansas? Will her reincorporation into home and family be predicated on the revelation of her journey or on her suppression of these experiences, subsumed beneath the day-to-day rhythm of farm work and household chores? Baum leaves these questions unanswered, providing instead an easy and unproblematic return to Kansas for his young heroine. It is perhaps telling, however, that Baum wrote thirteen more *Oz* stories, in some of which Dorothy returns to Oz for further adventures and “eventually rejects her Kansas home and domestic life to join a community of homeless nonconformists” (Chaston 42). Notably, Baum’s continuation of the *Oz* stories was largely a response to the demands of his young readers. As Jack Snow comments in *Who’s Who in Oz*, “[i]t’s interesting to note … that the first word ever written in the very first Oz book was ‘Dorothy.’ The last word of the book is ‘again.’ And that is what young readers have said ever since those two words were written: ‘We want to read about Dorothy again’” (qtd. in Hearn 356).49 In addition to young fans’ enjoyment in escaping to fantastical lands with their favorite heroine, readers’ desire to see Dorothy return to Oz becomes more understandable when the contrasts between Kansas and Oz are considered.

49 The first line of Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* reads “Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with her Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer’s wife” (11). The final line is Dorothy’s exclamation to Aunt Em, “I’m so glad to be home again” (357).
First of all, the physical appearances of Oz and Kansas differ dramatically. As Baum describes Kansas,

When Dorothy stood in the doorway and looked around, she could see nothing but the flat gray prairie on every side. Not a tree nor a house broke the broad sweep of flat country that reached the edge of the sky in all directions. The sun had baked the plowed land into a gray mass, with little cracks running through it. Even the grass was not green, for the sun had burned the tops of the long blades until they were the same gray color to be seen everywhere. Once the house had been painted, but the sun blistered the paint and the rains washed it away, and now the house was as dull and gray as everything else. (18)

In contrast, Dorothy awakens in Oz to find herself in “a country of marvelous beauty,” full of green grass, lovely flowers, and “a small brook, rushing and sparkling along between green banks, and murmuring in a voice very grateful to a little girl who had lived so long on the dry, gray prairies” (Baum 34). The stark, monochromatic dullness of Kansas is also a boring alternative to the geographic differences of Oz, including deep forests, expansive poppy fields, the grandiose Emerald City, and the Dainty China Country, where the people and their world are made entirely of fine china. In Kansas, there is no difference in the land as far as the eye can see; on the other hand, in Oz, Dorothy never knows where she will find herself when she turns the next corner. Both places hold their own dangers: drought threatens the destruction of Uncle Henry’s crops, while in Oz winged monkeys, animated trees, and wicked witches lurk. However, in Oz Dorothy can meet the forces that threaten her head on, making friends with the flying monkeys, escaping the fighting trees, and defeating the Wicked Witch of the West, banishing her own uncertainty and charting her own path for home. The ability to manipulate her own physical surroundings suggests a degree of agency unavailable to Dorothy at home. She cannot control the weather to end the drought threatening the farm;
even her adolescent games and laughter disturb Aunt Em, who was “so startled by the child’s laughter that she would scream and press her hand upon her heart whenever Dorothy’s merry voice reached her ears; and she still looked at the little girl with wonder that she could find anything to laugh at” (Baum 18-20). In contrast, Oz is perfectly suited to Dorothy in both its size and its vibrancy; she is able to play, travel, laugh, and shout without remonstration.

The physical world of Oz and Dorothy’s ability within it allow her a position of independence and power unparalleled at home in Kansas; she shows herself capable of making good use of this agency, as she destroys wicked witches, reveals the Wizard of Oz as a sham, and helps her friends along the way. The female power demonstrated by Dorothy is enacted on a larger scale in Baum’s later Oz books, where “at least half of the many eccentric sub-societies also have female rulers” (Lurie 31). This female sovereignty is present as well in The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, however unofficially, in the struggle between the humbug wizard and the powerful witches who threaten his authority. Though the Wizard of Oz is terrified of the Wicked Witch of the West, few of Oz’s witches are evil or wicked; in the end, it is the good witch Glinda who has the power to send Dorothy home. Glinda succeeds where the Wizard has failed, instructing Dorothy on the use of her magical silver shoes and reuniting her with her Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. While Glinda’s beauty is matched by her goodness, not all of Oz’s powerful women are good and each one has her own individual flaws and idiosyncrasies. As Lurie notes of the female rulers of Oz, “[n]ot all of them are benevolent, but their faults are, in early-twentieth-century terms, more feminine than masculine. Some are willful and greedy; others are vain, idle, and self-centered” (31). As Lurie argues, though these
characterizations are situated within a discourse of sexism, Baum adds nuances to each character, individuating and personalizing them. Rather than presenting a female-ruled utopia, Baum presents a spectrum of women; each has her own strengths and weaknesses, such as the Wicked Witch of the West, whose single-minded covetousness of Dorothy’s silver shoes leads to the old woman’s death. However, these women continue to be dichotomously set against one another as either good or evil, though each is good or evil in her own way.

In contrast, Dorothy possesses none of the negative, feminine-gendered traits Lurie discusses; instead, “[h]er virtues are those of a Victorian hero rather than a Victorian heroine: she is brave, active, independent, sensible, and willing to confront authority” (ibid). As such, Dorothy is freed from many of the restrictive gender roles constructing acceptable, ideal femininity, either through the characteristics positioning her as a traditional, male hero or her journey into a fantastical and magical realm. For example, the land of Oz itself is instrumental in freeing Dorothy from the domestic chores that characterized a woman’s day in early twentieth-century America. As Lurie points out, “[o]ne of the themes of the early feminist movement was the presentation of housework as oppressive, since it was unpaid, underappreciated, and physically-exhausting … when vegetables had to be canned, clothes and floors scrubbed, ice chopped, and carpets beaten by hand” (33). It would be reasonable to assume that much of Aunt Em’s day was spent in chores such as these and, even if Dorothy had not assumed too many household responsibilities as a child, she could expect to do so as she grew older. In contrast, Oz offers an escape from these daily drudgeries. Instead, Baum’s “female protagonists are never instructed in the domestic arts, though ordinary women all
seem to be skilled in them. Meals in Oz often grow on trees or are prepared by invisible hands. When Dorothy and her friends are not on the road having adventures, they have nothing to do but play” (Lurie 34). When she is in Oz, Dorothy is invited to construct her own personal and gender identity, relatively free of the strictures of officially-sanctioned feminine performances. She need not be quiet or demure, play a maternal role to those around her, or take responsibility for domestic chores. Instead of a little girl in what is essentially a man’s world, she is a female hero in a world that seems designed specifically for her.

Yet Dorothy chooses to return to Kansas. Granted one wish, she asks to be sent home to her Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, championing the significance of home and family, and actively situating herself once again within the domestic sphere. Dorothy’s return positions her within the structure of the heroic journey, though it is complicated by her femininity. Arguably, her return functions as a validation of traditional gender roles: as a young girl, her rightful place is at home with her family rather than out on a grand, fantastical adventure. Campbell speaks of the “sacrifice” required of the traditional hero that must accompany social reincorporation. In Dorothy’s case, the sacrifice is more significant than that of her male counterparts; instead of giving up travel and adventure, Dorothy must also give up the independence, agency, and self-sufficiency that have allowed her to successfully make her journey through Oz. Through that sacrifice, traditional gender positions are reestablished and equilibrium is restored: Dorothy is home where she belongs and happy to be there.

The pattern of Dorothy’s heroic quest remains relatively undisturbed in MGM’s classic *Wizard of Oz*. Similar to Baum’s fairy tale, Fleming echoes the contrasting
descriptions of Kansas and Oz, though Fleming has the visual interchange of sepia-toned and Technicolor film to further heighten this distinction. Oz becomes more colorful and remarkable, with the film’s narrative introduction of images such as Dorothy’s slippers, now ruby red rather than silver, and the iconic Yellow Brick Road. Viewers get their first glimpse of Garland as a teenaged Dorothy among the shades of sepia characterizing her Kansas home. Fleming provides a longer introduction to Kansas than that included in Baum’s story, and before Dorothy and Toto are whisked away to Oz, the muted sepia scheme of Kansas comes to be associated with conflict, powerlessness, and yearning for the tale’s young heroine. Dorothy falls into the pig-sty, is scolded by Aunt Em, and has Toto confiscated by Miss Gulch, who threatens to have the dog “destroyed.” After Toto’s daring escape, Dorothy and Toto run away, meet a traveling magician, and run home in the wake of a tornado that keeps them isolated from the rest of the family. In the midst of these struggles, Dorothy wishes she could be somewhere “Over the Rainbow,” a song filled with a melancholy desire to be in a safer, more idealistic place. As Dorothy longingly sings, “[s]omeday I’ll wish upon a star / And wake up where the clouds are far behind me / Where troubles melt like lemon drops / Away above the chimney tops / That’s where you’ll find me.” Dorothy’s search for a place “where there isn’t any trouble” is a significant departure from Baum’s original story, in which Dorothy has no wish to leave home and family, seeming relatively happy on the gray Kansas prairie. Dorothy’s desire to find the fantastical frontier of which she sings is echoed in her willingness to run away with Toto to save the dog’s life and finally, is fulfilled when the twister transports her to Oz.
Perhaps it is Dorothy’s longing to separate herself from home and family that prompts her complete disavowal of this desire upon her return. As though her trip to Oz were the result of some self-fulfilling prophecy, Dorothy is single-minded in her attempts to get home and plagued by guilt that her Aunt Em might be worried or even have fallen ill in Dorothy’s absence. Dorothy has deviated from her expected gender position in leaving the domestic space, rejecting home and family, and her conscience suffers as a result. As Friedman argues, “[t]he boy’s coming-of-age story is about leaving home to save the world. The girl’s coming-of-age story is about relinquishing the world beyond home. It is about finding a way to sacrifice one’s yearning for the big world, the world of experience, and to be happy about it” (9). As a result, Dorothy must transfer her desire: rather than yearning for adventure, she must direct that same longing toward home. The heroine cannot return begrudgingly, wistfully looking over one shoulder at the excitement that could have been her own. As Friedman points out,

To return to her family, Dorothy must redefine her heart’s desire. She must stay home and not feel anything has been lost. The daughter must not come home resentfully. That might destroy home, much as the caged woman in Rochester’s attic and the chained woman in Roderick Usher’s basement finally burn down their mansions. She must choose home happily. (27)

Dorothy must sacrifice herself to rightfully claim her place within the domestic space of home and family. A significant part of restructuring her desire is the circumscription of acceptable longing. When Glinda asks Dorothy what she has learned in her adventures in Oz, Dorothy muses, “if I ever go looking for my heart’s desire again, I won’t look any further than my own back yard. Because if it isn’t there, I never really lost it to begin with!” In order to willingly return home, Dorothy must refocus the acceptability of her desire, confining her longing to what she finds within her own home, rather than in the
wider world outside of it. As Dorothy vows to her Aunt Em upon awakening, “I’m not going to leave here ever, ever again, because I love you all, and—oh, Auntie Em, there’s no place like home!” Coining an immediately-recognizable popular culture catchphrase, Dorothy has limited her yearning to home and family, her responsibilities to those she loves, and her place within the domestic sphere. This Dorothy, it seems, will not be going “over the rainbow” again anytime soon.

In addition, the Depression-era context of the MGM film’s production and viewing further romanticized the longing for home. As Susan Mackey-Kallis points out in *The Hero and the Perennial Journey Home in American Film*, the threat of losing home was especially resonant with 1930s film viewers; in fact, this fear “was experientially grounded for 1930s audiences in the demise of the family farm, the loss of family fortunes, and the rampant rise of homelessness” (126). Therefore, rather than reading Dorothy’s journey through Oz as exclusively one of self-discovery, the sociohistorical position of Dorothy and the family farm must be highlighted, in order to historicize the significance of her longing for a home she believes she may have lost forever and her absolute joy at being returned to the potentially-restrictive domestic sphere. The comforts of home are inextricably intertwined with ideal femininity. As Mackey-Kallis observes, drawing on the work of Richard Selcer, “attachment to the home, and particularly its redefinition in feminine terms (‘a woman’s place is in the home’), helped give rise to the nineteenth-century ‘cult of domesticity’ in which the ‘self-contained private home, overseen by the wife/mother, presented the highest ideal of American life’” (127). As such, the safety and security of the family farm is dependent, at least in part, on Dorothy’s acceptance of her position within the domestic sphere of home.
and family. After all, within this context, having limited possibilities within the home is infinitely preferable than having no home at all.

Other than Dorothy’s desire to leave home, the trajectory of the heroine’s journey remains nearly identical to that outlined by Baum at the turn of the twentieth-century, with the notable exception of the film’s closing, which ends with the suggestion that Dorothy’s adventures in Oz have been nothing but a dream. Dorothy awakens in her own bed once the storm has subsided and finds herself surrounded by her friends and family. Dorothy begins telling them of her adventures in Oz, even finding the friends she has left behind in the faces of those she loves, proclaiming one by one that “you and you and you were there.” However, Dorothy’s attempt to translate her newfound independence and agency from Oz to Kansas is abruptly curtailed with Aunt Em and Uncle Henry’s pronouncements that it was “just a bad dream,” undoubtedly brought on by the tornado and a “bump on the head.” Dorothy initially refuses this dismissal, asserting that her adventures in Oz have been real and not just a figment of her imagination. However, she quickly gives in to Aunt Em, and while Dorothy never explicitly agrees that her journey to Oz has been a dream, she seems to decide that her successful reincorporation into the domestic sphere of home and family is more important than arguing the point of her independence and self-reliance.

Lumet’s *The Wiz* marks a distinct shift in the meaning of home and family, removing the idea of “home” from the domestic sphere. Dorothy lives in a Harlem apartment with her Aunt Em (Theresa Merritt) and Uncle Henry (Stanley Green) and viewers first see the heroine helping her aunt prepare a holiday dinner for their large extended family. Bustling around the kitchen, preparing food, and cleaning the dishes,
Dorothy is single-minded in her task of caring for others, though she seems to remain problematically outside the immediacy of familial interaction. While others are laughing, talking, and embracing one another, Dorothy remains on the fringes of the celebration. Aunt Em attempts to introduce Dorothy to a young man named Gil Warren, in a good-natured attempt at matchmaking; however, Em’s romantic designs are quickly restrained by Dorothy who takes Gil’s coat and exits without a word. As they sit down to dinner, the family begins celebrating their closeness with the film’s first musical number, “The Feeling That We Have.” Dorothy does not sing along and, after a moment, leaves the table and heads to the kitchen alone. Listening to the voices of her family from the dining room, Dorothy muses that “I don’t even know the first thing / About what they’re feeling” (ibid). Occupying a peripheral space within the family, Dorothy hangs back, wondering about her own insecurities and loss of connection.

As an adult, it is unclear when Dorothy came to live with Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. Perhaps she, like her narrative predecessors, came to the family as a young child; it is clear that she knows little of the outside world and no other home than the one she shares with her aunt and uncle. It is the uncertainty of the outside world, the tumult that would be instigated by change, which seems most terrifying to Dorothy. However, as the family joins together in “The Feeling That We Have,” it becomes clear that the family unit is fundamentally based on the tension of separation and struggle, a child’s independence gained at the cost of a parent’s loss. Rather than treating this transition as traumatic, however, Aunt Em points out that it is natural, necessary, and desirable; there is no other way for children to break away from the family and begin to develop lives of their own. Dorothy’s stunted individual growth is contrasted dramatically with her
cousin, the unnamed daughter of Aunt Em and Uncle Henry; though seemingly around Dorothy’s age, instead of preparing dinner, Dorothy’s cousin returns with a husband and a baby, a woman coming back to the home of her childhood after setting out and creating her own home and family. Turning to her daughter, Aunt Em sings for the young woman to “[p]ut your arms around me, child / Like when you bumped your shin / Then you’ll know I love you now / As I loved you then” (ibid). Admitting the frustration and, at times, even hostility that this maternal separation prompts, Em reassures her daughter that even though sometimes “I lose my patience with you / And I suddenly start to scream,” she still loves her daughter and assures her that “you can come to me / Whenever you are sad” (ibid). In *The Wiz*, home and family are constantly in flux, always a site of struggle between pulling away toward individuality and finding solace in the comfort of the maternal embrace. As Aunt Em explains, while the family may not be ideal or without conflict, it will always be there upon the heroine’s return, ready to welcome her with open arms.

Like the Dorothy characters of Baum and Fleming who preceded her, *The Wiz*’s Dorothy is devoted to finding her way home from her first moment in Oz. Rather than being enchanted by the beauty and wonder of Oz as in earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, Dorothy is terrified and nearly hysterical when she realizes just how far from home she has come. When the Munchkins emerge from the graffitied walls in which the Wicked Witch had imprisoned them to thank Dorothy for freeing them, the young woman backs away in horror, refusing their gratitude and her own culpability in the death of the witch. Her path to see the Wizard brings Dorothy to her friends and along her own journey of self-discovery and independence. However, in contrast to earlier
versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story, *The Wiz* also shows Dorothy journeying through a world that has fantastical echoes of her own. The Oz of *The Wiz* is a skewed version of the New York City that intimidates Dorothy in her “real” life; as Lumet comments, “I wanted the story of Dorothy to be the odyssey of a young black girl who was afraid of crossing 125th Street, the border of Harlem, and who discovers New York” (Ciment 100). Therefore, as Dorothy gains mastery of her surroundings and becomes aware of her own independence, she is also conquering the fears that have debilitated her in her day-to-day life, the liberation of her fantasy carrying over directly into her real world life. Dorothy’s newfound confidence and self-awareness will not be forgotten upon return, like the “waking” of MGM’s Dorothy, whose adventures are dismissed as nothing more than a dream.

Most notably, *The Wiz*’s Dorothy also discovers that home is not confined to the space of Aunt Em’s Harlem apartment. Instead, as the good witch Glinda explains to Dorothy before sending the girl back, “[h]ome is a place we all must find, child. It’s not just a place where you eat or sleep. Home is knowing. Knowing your mind, knowing your heart, knowing your courage. If we know ourselves, we’re always home, anywhere.” Lumet’s film continues to privilege family and friendship, following the tradition established by earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. However, Glinda’s pronouncement frees the notion of home from the confining space previously demarcated. Rather than home being the only place where Dorothy can feel safe and find happiness, *The Wiz*’s Dorothy is encouraged to venture beyond the domestic boundaries established by home and family. Home is equated with identity, internalized, and therefore unfixed from a single, spatial position. As a result, when Dorothy goes home,
she does not encounter the sacrifices that are frequently demanded of the returning heroine; she does not have to choose between establishing herself as an independent individual or rejecting her adventures to in order to successfully reassume her traditional role within the family. Dorothy’s return is instead marked by a sense of potential, rather than one of loss. She has returned from Oz more confident and more self-assured than she was before she left; this new Dorothy can take on anything, from a new job to a home of her own. Dorothy does not have to negotiate her identity and her experiences to fit within the circumscribed domestic space of Aunt Em and Uncle Henry’s apartment. After finding home within herself, she can go wherever her dreams take her, confident in her sense of belonging and the unconditional love of her family.

The necessity of leaving home continues in Maguire’s *Wicked*, though here the domestic space of the nuclear family becomes a good deal more contentious. In addition, home remains portable and spatially unfixed, though in the case of Elphaba and her family, this disruption results in the dissipation of the sentimental idealization of home. Elpaba’s family lives on the limited means provided by her father’s meager minister’s salary; however, unlike the quaintness of Baum’s Dorothy or the Depression-era escapism posited in Fleming’s classic film, the poverty of Elphaba’s family is depicted as bleak drudgery, with little hope of change. When Elphaba is born, her father Frexspar is serving the citizens of Rush Margins in Wend Hardings, which is “filthy, depressed, and peasant-ridden” (Maguire 24). To add insult to discomfort, the people of Wend Hardings have little use for Frexspar’s religious instruction, instead following the magic-based, pagan pleasure faith. Elphaba is immediately marked as different by her green skin and is
further distinguished by her somber approach to the world around her. As her mother Melena thought to herself, considering the young Elphaba,

She’s about the business of learning like any child, but she takes no delight in the world: She pushes and breaks and nibbles on things without any pleasure. As if she has a mission to taste and measure all the disappointments of life. In which Rush Margins is amply supplied. (Maguire 33)

Elphaba’s difference structures her home and family, separating her from those around her. Her mother has no maternal feeling for the child, finding her own daughter monstrous. This feeling is echoed by Frexspar, who attempts an exorcism on the girl to try to make her appearance and temperament more docile. When these “cures” fail, Frexspar makes Elphaba a prop in his religious crusade, using the girl as a symbol of his own punishment and penance. Made to bear the burden of her parents’ guilt and shame, Elphaba’s place within the family is marginalized and painful; rather than the dutiful daughter, she rejects her father’s Unionist beliefs in her own agnosticism and forgoes an acceptably feminine domestic identity in order to pursue academic studies at Shiz University, devoted to reading and philosophy rather than fashionable and coquettish womanliness.

Home in Wicked is also shown as transient and unfixed, with Elphaba holding no sentimental significance for the idea. After his religious failure in Wend Hardings, Frexspar moves his family to Quadling country, a swampy region in the South of Oz. Telling Glinda of her childhood, Elphaba confesses of herself and her siblings, after their mother’s death, “Shell and Nessarose and I lived the lives of gypsy children, slopping around from Quadling settlement to settlement with Nanny and our father, Frex. He preached, and Nanny taught us and raised us up and kept house such as we ever had,
which wasn’t much” (Maguire 134-5). Reunited with her father and sister after several years of separation, Elphaba’s father asks her why she had never come home. As Maguire writes,

When he was through [crying], he asked her where she had gone, and what she had done, and why she had never come back … “I was not sure there was a back to come to,” she answered, realizing the truth of it as she spoke. “When you finished converting a town, Papa, you moved on to new fields. Your home was in the pasture of souls; mine never was.” (307)

Even the significance of home and family are dissonant between Elphaba and her father, separating them from one another and preventing the solidification of a fixed space of home as a place of safety, comfort, and return.

Elphaba finds herself moving almost nomadically from place to place well into her adulthood, never staying in one place for more than a few years at a time. She moves from Wend Hardings to Quadling country, to the university at Shiz, then a ramshackle apartment in Emerald City, the cloister of her religious devotion, and at long last, Kiamo Ko in the West of Oz. The only consistencies in the many homes she makes for herself over the course of her abbreviated life are the pain that ties her to these places and her refusal to sentimentalize the sense of “belonging” traditionally associated with ideas of home and family, so prevalent in earlier versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative. As Elphaba considers the idea of home, “[m]aybe the definition of home is the place where you are never forgiven, so you may always belong there, bound by guilt. And maybe the cost of belonging is worth it” (Maguire 377). The space of her nuclear family is plagued by Elphaba’s position as the punishment for her parents’ sins and her father’s favoritism for Nessarose; similarly, Elphaba is pulled ever-westward to Kiamo Ko by her feelings of guilt for the death of her lover Fiyero and her driving need to make amends to his widow
and orphaned children. From Elphaba’s first home to her last, the domestic space is driven by pain, guilt, and her own inadequacies.

As the returning heroine, Elphaba has no fixed space to return to. Briefly reunited with her family at the Colwen Grounds estate of her mother’s ancestors, Elphaba discovers only the distance and discord familiar from her childhood. This return, however incomplete, reestablishes Elphaba’s marginalized position within her family as her father reverts to his old pattern of affording Elphaba both grave responsibility and unbearable blame, while continuing to deny her his affection and approval. Her father’s initial joy at seeing his eldest daughter fills Elphaba with a mix of emotions; as Maguire writes, “Frex lowered himself cautiously to the sofa and patted the upholstery next to him. She sat down, wary, tired, astonished at the wealth of her own feeling for him. She was full of need. But, she reminded herself, you’re a grown woman” (307). However, Frexpar’s delight at being reunited with his daughter quickly sours, when it becomes evident that he wants her to stay in Colwen Grounds to aid and care for her sister Nessarose. Breaking away from the paternal approval she craves, Elphaba finds herself “trying to feel fondness toward her father, despite the exhaustion of being commandeered to be a second lieutenant once again, in service of dear, needy Nessarose” (Maguire 310). The conditions of Elphaba’s return and reincorporation into the family are clear and she chooses to reject this return altogether, leaving her sister to rule Munchkinland to the best of her ability. Rather than assuming the nurturing, domestic role her father demands of her, Elphaba returns to Kiamo Ko, forsaking her last chance to claim the position of the beloved daughter for which she has longed. Elphaba’s arrival in Kiamo Ko is problematized as well; as the “other woman,” she has disrupted the domestic space of the
home by her very existence and after the kidnapping and murder of the royal family, Elphaba ascends to the head of a home and family that were never her own. Elphaba is rejected there as well, with her companions Nanny and Liir siding with Dorothy and her friends to rally against her as the Wicked Witch of the West, who is killed within the traditionally protective space of home and family. However, even in death, the possibility of a return remains open for Elphaba, with Maguire’s final lines echoing the fairy tale which had earlier regaled the children:\textsuperscript{50}

“And there the wicked old Witch stayed for a good long time.”
“And did she ever come out?”
“Not yet.” (Maguire 406).

However, while Maguire’s “yet” hints at the potential of an impending return, Elphaba’s reincorporation would not be Dorothy’s grateful arrival back in Kansas or the wealth of new opportunities promised in \textit{The Wiz}. Elphaba’s return would likely be marked by the same pain, guilt, and marginalization that characterized her departure, revealing the futility and undesirability of the return stage of the heroic cycle, especially for the independent female hero.

Home becomes largely minimized in the Broadway version of \textit{Wicked} by Schwartz and Holzman, though when it appears it remains similarly contentious.

However, the return stage of the heroine’s journey is a bit more optimistic in this version

\textsuperscript{50} Sarima tells her children the tale of “the Witch and the fox babies,” which follows the structure of traditional fairy tales. As Maguire summarizes, this is the tale of how the three fox babies were kidnapped and caged and fed to fatness, in preparation for a cheese-and-foxling casserole, and how the Witch went to get fire from the sun to cook them. But when the Witch came back to her cave, exhausted and in possession of father flame, the foxlings outwitted her by singing a lullaby to make her sleep. When the Witch’s arm fell, the flame of the sun burned the door off the cage and out the foxlings ran. Then they howled down old mother moon to come and stand as an unmovable door in the entrance of the cave. (247)

Centered on young and vulnerable heroes, who escape through wit and magic, the witch remains traditionally wicked, with no redeeming qualities. Significantly, however, the tale of the witch and the fox babies ends with the witch’s entrapment, rather than her death, threatening the resurgence of this evil at any time.
of *Wicked*. The narrative of the stage production is focused almost exclusively around the two main characters of Elphaba and Glinda, with much of Elphaba’s background before the two girls’ first meeting summarily dismissed in the first few minutes of the show, in which the green girl is born. Other than the birth scene, only Elphaba’s sister Nessarose appears on stage, with her mother and father warranting only occasional mention aside from the introductory scene, in which Glinda announces to the Munchkinlanders of Elphaba that “[s]he had a father … And she had a mother. As so many do” (Cote 140).

The complexities surrounding Elphaba’s home life, her family’s nomadic ramblings of conversion, and her constant desire for her father’s approval and affection are excluded altogether. In fact, Elphaba’s paternity is called into question from the first scene as well, with Glinda’s pronouncement that “like every family they had their secrets” (Cote 143), while on-stage Elphaba’s mother is shown with a mysterious lover, who is later revealed to be the Wizard himself.51 This revelation, the clandestine connection of the Wizard and Elphaba as potentially father and daughter, takes the focus off of the closely-guarded boundaries of home and family, directing critical attention instead to larger social structures and the power of leadership, highlighting and dramatizing themes central to Maguire’s novel as well.

Elphaba’s relationship with Nessarose is the only familial connection developed at length in the stage version of *Wicked*, with Elphaba protective of her wheelchair-bound

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51 This possibility is alluded to in Maguire’s *Wicked* as well. After Elphaba’s death, Dorothy presents the Wizard with a “green glass bottle that said MIRACLE ELI— on the paper glued to the front” (405), the remains of the Miracle Elixir faulted with making Elphaba green and which may have been given to Melana by an unknown lover. As Maguire writes, “[i]t may be merely apocryphal that when the Wizard saw the glass bottle he gasped, and clutched his heart …. It is a matter of history, however, that shortly thereafter, the Wizard absconded from the palace” (406). Significantly, this revelation is only addressed in the concluding pages of Maguire’s narrative, though hints of it appear at both the beginning and end of Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, book-ending Elphaba’s story with these doubts surrounding her paternity. Notably, Elphaba is unaware of these uncertainties in both versions.
younger sister. However, even this familial relationship becomes marginalized as Elphaba and Glinda become closer. Elphaba devotes herself to caring for her sister while the two girls are at Shiz University, though as adults the two of them come into dangerous conflict over the use of magic. Elphaba is reunited with her sister by the death of their father and, to help her sister achieve independence, casts a spell on Nessarose’s shoes to allow her to stand on her own. Nessarose is magically-talented as well, though she chooses to use her powers to make Boq, who is a Munchkinlander and the object of Nessarose’s unrequited affections, love her. Nessarose’s love spell goes terribly wrong and she must call on Elphaba to save Boq’s life; however, in making Boq a being who can live without the heart that Nessarose has destroyed, Elphaba inadvertently turns the young Munchkinlander into the famous Tin Woodman (Cote 166). The monstrous outcome of Nessarose’s abusive spell-casting and what Elphaba perceives as her own failure in saving Boq separate the two sisters forever. Instead, Elphaba surrounds herself with a postmodern, non-nuclear family that consists of herself, her best friend Glinda, her lover Fiyero, and the flying monkey she has created, Chistery. This family, as well, is far from harmonious, with Fiyero throwing fiancé Glinda aside out of his love for Elphaba and Elphaba regarding the flying monkeys she has created with a volatile combination of love and anger at being tricked by the Wizard, as the physical manifestation of her magical powers, both their strength and their lack.

The negotiation of the return stage of the heroine’s journey in *Wicked* is one of the more hopeful conclusions of these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, though Elphaba’s return is bittersweet. Pursued to her castle at Kiamo Ko by the witch hunters, Elphaba prepares to make her final stand when Glinda appears, trying to talk Elphaba
into surrendering. After the two women reconcile their rift over Fiyero, the witch hunters storm the castle; Glinda hides and watches as Elphaba appears to melt before her very eyes. However, in the midst of Elphaba’s final scream, a trap door opens in the stage and Elphaba is reunited with Fiyero and together, the two of them escape.\footnote{Fiyero has been inadvertently transformed into a scarecrow by Elphaba’s spell of protection, in which she begs for her magical powers to “[l]et his bones never break / And however they try / To destroy him / Let him never die” (“No Good Deed”). Therefore, not only does this escape prevent Elphaba’s return, but it also excludes her from the normative domestic sphere altogether, in her love for a man whose body and masculinity have been disrupted.} In this case, the heroine’s return in negated altogether, not a viable option even if Elphaba were to choose it. However, with the possible exception of The Wiz’s Dorothy, Broadway’s Elphaba is provided a more viable chance for happiness and individuality than the Wizard of Oz heroines who have preceded her.

MONSTROUSITY AND THE MATERNAL: IMAGES OF MOTHERHOOD

Along with notions of home, images of motherhood remain points of conflict within these versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative. From absent mothers to disruptive surrogates and mothers who reject their maternal roles, the young heroines in these versions of the Wizard of Oz story often find themselves surrounded by conflicting figures of maternal guidance. The maternal figure has historically been measured by her adherence to the “angel in the home” ideal prominent in Victorian literature and further celebrated in twentieth-century America, where the “proper” role of women even garnered governmental sanction, in the form of Theodore Roosevelt’s address “On American Motherhood.”\footnote{Delivered before the National Congress of Mothers in Washington, D.C. on March 13, 1905.} By this ideal of femininity and motherhood, women were expected to keep a pleasant home, dutifully care for their husbands and children, and create the
domestic space of the home as an oasis of respite from the outside world. As Roosevelt charges, in raising her children with affection and firm guidance, “[t]he woman’s task is not easy … but in doing it, and when she has done it, there shall come to her the highest and holiest joy known to mankind.” As such, the duties of the mother are not only privileged as a feminine ideal within American culture, but wise and nurturing child-rearing is ordained as holy, governed by the laws of God as well as man. The romanticized image of the mother at the beginning of the twentieth century was that of a kind and nurturing woman, loving and wise, who could create a comfortable and peaceful home for her family. As a result, the domestic space of home has traditionally been gendered as feminine, the realm and responsibility of women.

Representations of motherhood in fairy tales, in contrast, are often images of discord and struggle. Surrounded by wicked queens and evil stepmothers, the young heroines of such traditional fairy tales as *Cinderella, Snow White,* and *Hansel and Gretel* are abused or put in danger by the maternal figures who are expected to protect them. As Cashdan points out, in the absence of a nurturing mother, the young heroine often encounters a monstrous stepmother: “[t]he Grimm brothers’ *Children’s and Household Tales* contains over a dozen stories … in which a stepmother makes the heroine’s life miserable by taunting her, withholding food from her, or forcing her to perform impossible tasks” (17). In addition, the heroine is also often terrorized by the figure of the witch, a magically-gifted woman bent on the heroine’s destruction. These witches come in a variety of forms, though their intent is always the same. As Cashdan writes of the witch,

> Whether she’s a black-hearted queen, an evil sorceress, or a vindictive stepmother, she is easily identified by the lethal threat she poses to the
The witch in *Hansel and Gretel* is not satisfied to merely scold Hansel for nibbling on her house—she plans to make a meal of him. The evil queen in *Snow White* will not rest until she sees Snow White dead. And the Wicked Witch of the West has one goal in mind: destroying Dorothy and her three companions. (ibid)

These witches are invariably characterized by their out-of-control appetites and unnatural desires. In addition, these wicked women are physically suspect because they have lost any beauty they once may have had, either through aging, the physical manifestations of their wickedness, or frequently a combination of the two. Beset by cruel stepmothers and evil witches dedicated to her destruction, the heroine is in danger in the wider world as well as within the presumably safe space of her own home, especially when the malignant stepmother and the wicked witch are one and the same. As Cashdan argues, in many cases “[t]he witchlike nature of the stepmother is compounded by her use of magic to perform her evil deeds” (17-8). The fairy tale heroine is seldom provided with a nurturing and protective maternal presence. As a result, the process of the young female hero’s journey of maturation and self-reliance is often marked by the rejection of the bad mother and the embrace of the good mother, whose characteristics become incorporated into the heroine’s own identity.

In Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, orphaned Dorothy turns to her Aunt Em as a maternal figure. Aunt Em is a somewhat brusque and cold mother, demonstrating little affection or playfulness; a hard life on the Kansas prairie has worn her down, leaving her little energy for coddling Dorothy. As Baum describes Aunt Em, when she came there [to Kansas] to live she was a young, pretty wife. The sun and wind had changed her … They had taken the sparkle from her eyes and left them a sober gray; they had also taken the red from her cheeks and lips, and they were gray also. She was thin and gaunt, and never smiled, now. (18)
Life on the frontier is not easy and Aunt Em is dedicated to ensuring Dorothy’s survival, making sure the girl has food to eat and a roof over her head; Em’s existence is made up of chores and endless labor, leaving no time for playing with young Dorothy. However, echoing Roosevelt’s edict that mothers should be simultaneously affectionate and sternly wise, Dorothy loves her Aunt Em dearly and is dedicated to returning back home. In addition, Dorothy’s return reveals Aunt Em’s affection as she welcomes Dorothy home by “folding the little girl into her arms and covering her face with kisses” (Baum 357). The singular maternal figure in Baum’s fairy tale, Aunt Em may be stern, but her strong work ethic has apparently rubbed off on Dorothy, who is able to make it through her adventures in Oz without faltering. In addition, Aunt Em and Uncle Henry have seemingly created a moral and virtuous home for the young girl, who helps others as she travels, knows the value of the positive personal characteristics her friends seek, and privileges home above all else. However, while the influence of Aunt Em’s maternal instruction on Dorothy is evident throughout Baum’s fairy tale, Aunt Em is largely missing from the narrative itself, an absent mother figure.

In Fleming’s *Wizard of Oz*, Aunt Em remains similarly absent for much of the film, appearing only in the introductory and concluding sections, with the exception of her unsettling appearance in the Wicked Witch’s magic ball, where Em’s face is eclipsed by that of the witch herself. However, Aunt Em becomes a more fully-developed character in the film than in Baum’s text, demonstrating her maternal nurturing in her feeding of Dorothy and the farmhands, as well as her anger, in her challenging of Almira Gulch. Aunt Em remains a stern maternal figure, chiding the farmhands to get back to work and admonishing Dorothy to get out from underfoot and “find a place where there
isn’t any trouble.” Baum’s Aunt Em was defined almost exclusively by her colorlessness and drudgery, giving Dorothy a prime motivation not to follow in Aunt Em’s footsteps. In contrast, the Aunt Em of the MGM film is depicted largely through her dedication to Dorothy. This devotion to Dorothy is demonstrated in momentary flashes of Aunt Em calling for Dorothy following the storm, her position at Dorothy’s bedside when the girl awakens following her adventures in Oz, and her willingness to fight for Dorothy and Toto when Almira Gulch appears at the farmhouse to take the dog. Aunt Em’s ability to protect Dorothy is far from infallible, however, largely because of the family’s working class status. Arguing with Gulch, Aunt Em must back down when she realizes they cannot afford to fight the wealthier woman; she cannot stop Gulch from taking Toto. But she can give Gulch a piece of her mind. As Aunt Em proclaims, “Almira Gulch, just because you own half the county doesn’t mean that you have the power to run the rest of us. For twenty-three years I’ve been dying to tell you what I thought of you! And now … well, being a Christian woman, I can’t say it!” In the end, Aunt Em is shown as capable of creating harmony within the home, comforting Dorothy, and eradicating forces which threaten to disrupt the home, whether the threat is Almira Gulch or the commotion of Dorothy’s adventures.

However, the most significant shift in representations of motherhood in MGM’s Wizard of Oz is the introduction of the dichotomous maternal figures Dorothy encounters in Oz: Glinda and the Wicked Witch of the West. Glinda appears shortly after Dorothy’s arrival in Oz and offers the girl guidance, though of a quite limited variety. Directing the girl to “follow the Yellow Brick Road” to find the Wizard of Oz and giving her the magical ruby slippers that will protect her on her journey, Glinda fails to mention the
power of the slippers to send Dorothy home. As Rushdie argues, “one can also see Glinda’s obliquities as proof that a good fairy or a good witch, when she sets out to be of assistance, never gives you everything. Glinda is not so unlike her description of the Wizard of Oz after all: *Oh, he’s very good, but very mysterious*” (43, emphasis original). The same could be argued of mothering: it is necessary for Dorothy to learn self-reliance and independence, to solve her problem for herself. Therefore, a good mother, like a good witch, never provides all the answers, instead protecting her child to the best of her abilities, while allowing the daughter to learn for herself.

In contrast, the Wicked Witch is a vision of monstrous motherhood, controlling and overbearing. Dorothy must decide between giving in to the Wicked Witch’s demands for the shoes or defying the witch in order to continue her own path of independence. Locked in the witch’s castle, Dorothy looks into the crystal ball and calls to her Aunt Em for help, perhaps looking for the maternal guidance and protection she has previously been denied. Aunt Em appears briefly in the crystal ball, searching for Dorothy; however, Em’s face is abruptly replaced by that of the Wicked Witch. This switch as Dorothy searches for motherly direction is no coincidence; as Friedman argues of Aunt Em and the Wicked Witch, “[i]n the crystal of the mind, the two are merged. The deathly witch is the other face of the nurturant Em; M is W from another angle” (25). The Wicked Witch is the monstrous inversion of the protection offered by Aunt Em and Glinda; Dorothy’s destruction of the Wicked Witch allows the girl to break free of maternal control without losing the comfort of the loving women in her life. Through the multiplication of maternal figures in MGM’s *Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy is able to assert her own
independence and individuality without sacrificing her privileged position within the
domestic space of home and family.

Aunt Em is the central maternal figure in Lumet’s *The Wiz* as well, though she
remains a largely absent mother figure throughout the film, echoing Baum’s initial
characterization. The key distinction of *The Wiz*’s Aunt Em is her deconstruction of the
daughter’s journey as centered on external control, as argued by Friedman. Previously, in
the works of Baum and Fleming, Aunt Em works to curtail Dorothy’s independence,
demanding the sacrifice of self-reliance as the cost of successful reincorporation into the
familial unit. In direct contrast, *The Wiz*’s Aunt Em is the key figure encouraging
Dorothy to get a place of her own, start a family, and work towards greater career
satisfaction. Significantly, Dorothy is encouraged to leave home by her Aunt Em, as well
as by Glinda. Leaving home is not traumatic, not a betrayal of the nurturing family;
instead, this departure becomes depicted as a natural part of life, expected and desirable.
While Dorothy clings with a sense of desperation to her home with Aunt Em and Uncle
Henry, Em insists to Dorothy that “[i]t’s time for you to make a home of your own.”
Dorothy is comfortable with the way her life is and is terrified of change; she remains
resistant to Aunt Em’s suggestions that she and Toto find their own apartment, that
Dorothy date, and that Dorothy might find more professional fulfillment in teaching high
school kids rather than kindergarteners. However, Aunt Em remains adamant, reassuring
Dorothy that home will not be lost when Dorothy leaves the apartment; her family will
always be there for Dorothy to lean on and come back to. As Aunt Em comforts Dorothy,
“I know getting’ out in that world ain’t easy, leaving Uncle Henry and me. But we’ll
always be here for you, Dorothy. And whatever your fears are, they’ll be defeated just by
facing up to ‘em.” In her adventures through Oz and her growing sense of self and independence, Dorothy does just that. Significantly, unlike Aunt Em’s prominent position in Baum’s book and Fleming’s film, Em is conspicuously absent at the conclusion of The Wiz, which ends with Dorothy outside of her aunt’s apartment building. Instead of Aunt Em serving as an agent of reincorporation to the family, the focus here remains on Dorothy and her newfound sense of confidence and self-reliance. Dorothy will not be excluded from the family, but her identity is no longer identified solely through her position within that domestic community.

Aunt Em’s encouragement of Dorothy’s independence marks a further departure from the white, middle-class “angel in the home” ideal, a position which is denied the Aunt Em of Baum and MGM by her working class status, though it seems a role to which Dorothy aspires in these two earlier versions. In The Wiz, however, the “angel in the home” ideal is dismissed with independence and self-actualization outside of the home encouraged by Aunt Em and eventually embraced by Dorothy. In terms of class, work outside the home is also likely more of a necessity than a choice, given the setting of The Wiz’s frame narrative in 1970s Harlem. If Dorothy intends to leave Aunt Em and Uncle Henry’s apartment and successfully establish a life and identity of her own, she must work outside of the home and gain financial, as well as personal, independence, a demand which distinguishes her from the Dorothy of previous versions. Aunt Em offers Dorothy an opportunity to balance her individuality, her financial independence, and her devotion to her family. As the holiday scene at the opening of The Wiz shows, Dorothy is part of an affectionate and closely-knit extended family. When Dorothy sets out on her own, it will not have to be at the complete sacrifice of her family. This balance is
significant and distinguishes The Wiz’s Aunt Em from the Wizard of Oz matriarchs who preceded her. In MGM’s Wizard of Oz, Dorothy’s journey was punctuated by her destruction of the bad mother and the internalization of the good mother, achieved through her killing of the Wicked Witch of the West and Dorothy’s promise to her Aunt Em to never leave home again. Within this dichotomy, Dorothy’s exiting of the domestic sphere would be a traumatic rejection of home and family, a negation of the characteristics of the good mother that she has worked so diligently to adopt. In contrast, The Wiz’s Aunt Em actively encourages her niece’s independence and her position within the work force, while providing the safety and comfort of home. Dorothy is not presented with familial love and self-reliance as an either/or proposition, in which she must give up either her own agency or her privileged position within the family; Dorothy can have it all, an opportunity facilitated through Aunt Em’s unconditional love and support.

In Maguire’s Wicked, mothering takes a central position in the narrative, with multiple layers of characterization addressing the theme of maternal monstrosity and responsibility, including Elphaba’s mother Melena, a caregiver known simply as Nanny, and even Elphaba herself. All of these women challenge the idealized image of the mother as the “angel in the home,” and are instead characterized by indulgence, neglect, surrogacy, and indifference. Melena struggles with her own addictions and has no idea who Elphaba’s father might truly be; Nanny even considers the possibility that Elphaba may have been fathered by a tree elf, because of her green skin. Nanny questions Melena about her extramarital encounters and Melena confesses that

Often she had sat, listless and lonely, while Frex was off preaching, and she had found comfort in giving passersby a simple meal and a buoyant conversation.

“And more?”
But on those boring days, Melena muttered, she had taken to chewing pinlobble leaves. When she would awake, because the sun was setting or Frex was there frowning or grinning at her, she remembered little.

“You mean you indulged in adultery and you don’t even have the benefit of a good saucy memory about it?” Nanny was scandalized.

“I don’t know that I did!” said Melena. (Maguire 29)

Melena has little control over herself and her passions, which makes even the status of her motherhood and its legitimacy questionable. Such extramarital affairs continue to shape Melena’s relationship with her husband and an itinerant glassblower from the Quadling country named Turtle Heart is suspected to be Nessarose’s biological father. Melena is freed from the constraints of her rural life as the wife of a minister by her sexual exploits and comes to see them as redemptive. As she considers in the midst of her affair with Turtle Heart, “[s]omehow Turtle Heart had saved her and restored her sense of grace, of hope in the world. Her belief in the goodness of things had been dashed into bits when little green Elphaba crawled into being. The child was extravagant punishment for a sin so minor she didn’t even know if she had committed it” (Maguire 47). Melena finds herself destroyed by motherhood, horrified at the very sight and strangeness of her own child. In fact, she is cast as a potentially inadequate mother even in her pregnancy; before Elphaba’s birth, Melena considers herself as “only a host for the parasite” (Maguire 6), engaging with pregnancy and motherhood outside of accepted tropes of sentimentality. Melena’s abilities as a nurturing mother are not validated after Elphaba’s birth either, though “[t]o her surprise, Melena sometimes found Elphaba endearing, the way a baby should be” (Maguire 32), though this maternal warmth is clearly the exception to the rule.

54 Significantly, Turtle Heart complicates Melena and Frexspar’s marriage and the structure of the nuclear family even further when he becomes sexually involved with Frexspar, as well. As Frexspar recalls in later years, “[w]e both were [in love with Turtle Heart], we shared him” (Maguire 320). As such, Frexspar considers Nessarose a child of their triple union, yet another reason he privileges Nessarose over Elphaba.
of Melena’s feelings toward her child. To save herself from the monstrousness that motherhood has come to signify for her, Melena reengages with her identity as a sexual woman, defining herself through passion and desperation rather than nurturing and maternal affection. Despite these seeming shortcomings, Elphaba reflects on her mother with indulgence and affection, telling Glinda, “[e]ven for a short time … we had a mother. Giddy, alcoholic, imaginative, uncertain, desperate, brave, stubborn, supportive woman. We had her” (Maguire 135-6). Rather than condemning her mother’s weakness, Elphaba highlights the multiplicity of the woman, accepting her strengths and her failures as one. Melena’s contentious enactments of femininity and motherhood are later echoed in her daughter as well, creating a legacy that, for better or worse, precludes Elphaba’s participation in the domestic sphere of traditional mothering.

A matron named Nanny fills in as a surrogate mother in Melena’s distraction and later in her absence, following the other woman’s death. Nanny was Melena’s own nursemaid in the younger woman’s adolescence and is the keeper of the family secrets, as well as the children’s caregiver. Nanny remains the only constant maternal presence throughout Maguire’s novel, arriving at Elphaba’s birth, traveling with the family through Wend Hardings and Quadling country, accompanying Nessarose to the university at Shiz, and later appearing at Elphaba’s side at Kiamo Ko. While Nanny dotes on her young charges from time to time, fussing especially over Nessarose, she is a bit brutal in her mothering. As Nanny begins her campaign to get young Elphaba among

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55 Melena’s maternal lack foreshadows the indifference Elphaba feels toward Liir, but it is the over-sentimentalizing of children and childhood that seem to be most harshly critiqued, in the form of Sarima. Sarima’s children are cruel and generally left to their own devices; Manek, Sarima’s middle son, nearly kills Liir by tempting the young boy to hide in the fish well during a game of hide and seek and then forgetting him there for several days. When Elphaba criticizes Sarima’s children as “ungovernable,” Sarima argues that “children are good at heart … They are so innocent and gay” (Maguire 277). Elphaba and Liir may endure less than idealized mothers, but they lack the cruelty and malice of Sarima’s coddled children, who are spoiled by overindulgence and a blind belief in a goodness inherent with youth.
other children, she explains to Melena, “Elphaba must learn who she is and she must face
down cruelty early … I have a long-range view of your happiness as well as hers, and
believe me, if you don’t give her the weapons and armor with which she can defend
herself against scorn, she’ll make your life miserable as hers will be miserable” (Maguire
48). In insisting that Elphaba must learn to defend herself, Nanny shows no sentimental
protectiveness. Melena’s shame, and presumably some small measure of maternal desire
to shield her child, prevent Elphaba’s mother from introducing her daughter so painfully
to the world, though Nanny has no such compunctions. Like Fleming’s Dorothy, Elphaba
is surrounded by multiple maternal figures; however, instead of dichotomously-split good
and bad mothers, Elphaba encounters indifference and isolation, however well-intended.
Dorothy’s independence is achieved by rejecting the bad mother without the threat of
losing the good mother; in contrast, Elphaba must decide who she is as a person, a
woman, and a potential mother through a tumultuous negotiation of the ambivalence with
which she has been raised.

Echoing her mother’s uncertainty about paternity, Elphaba wakes from a long
illness following the death of Fiyero to find herself in a nunnery among maunts and
charged with caring for children, including a young boy named Liir.56 When Elphaba
leaves the mauntery, it is under the head maunt’s command that she take Liir with her
and the boy accompanies her to Kiamo Ko, though Elphaba continues to treat him as a
strange and not particularly welcome acquaintance. Elphaba remains ignorant of and
indifferent to Liir’s abuse by the other children and only when Nanny tracks Elphaba to

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56 Liir’s story is developed further in Maguire’s sequel to Wicked and the second book in his Wicked Years
series, Son of a Witch, which picks up Liir’s story after the death of the witch and following the young man
into adulthood.
Kiamo Ko does the boy receive any maternal affection. Asked if she is Liir’s mother,

Elphaba explains to Nanny,

“When I first went to the mauntery, under the kind offices of Mother Yackle, I was in no state to know what was happening to me, and I spent about a year in a deathly sleep. It’s just possible I brought a child to term and delivered it. I was another full year recovering. When I was first assigned duties, I worked with the sick and the dying, and also with abandoned children. I had no more congress with Liir than with any other of several dozen brats. When I left the mauntery to come here, it was under the condition that I would take Liir with me …. I have no motherly warmth toward the boy”—she gulped, in case this was no longer true—“and I don’t feel as if I’ve ever gone through the experience of bearing a child. I don’t quite believe myself capable, in fact, though I’m willing to concede that this may be simply ignorance and blindness. But that’s all there is to say about it. I’ll say no more, and no more will you.” (Maguire 291-2)

Significantly, Elphaba more than once thinks of Liir’s arrival at Kiamo Ko as his entering of the house of his father, seemingly indicating Fiyero’s paternity, though Elphaba continues to waver regarding her own maternal position. Nanny continues to force Elphaba on the question of Liir’s maternity, asking Elphaba, “[h]ave you an obligation to be motherly to him then, despite the mystery?” (292). Elphaba refuses this maternal duty, remaining indifferent in her reply to Nanny that “[t]he only other obligations I’m under are the ones I assign to myself. And that, Nanny, is that” (ibid). Nanny gives up questioning Elphaba about her maternal status and doesn’t argue that Elphaba has a responsibility to nurture the young boy, though Elphaba begins to suffer doubts and guilt of her own; as Nanny becomes a mother figure to Liir, “Elphaba registered it with shame, for she also saw how willingly Liir responded to Nanny’s attention” (ibid). Despite the self-reproach Elphaba feels, however, she never attempts to become a proper mother to Liir, finding him annoying and aggravating. This struggle comes to a destructive conclusion when Liir sides with Dorothy against the witch, playing a small though
significant role in Elphaba’s death, echoing the destruction of the bad mother enacted in MGM’s classic film.

Just as home and family become dramatically circumscribed in the stage production of *Wicked* in order to emphasize Elphaba and Glinda’s relationship, mother figures are all but absent in Schwartz and Holzman’s Broadway musical. Other than the introductory scene revealing the debauchery of Elphaba’s mother and the birth of the young witch, the only maternal character in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* is Madame Morrible, the headmistress of Shiz University, where the young women begin their education. Madame Morrible initially appears genuinely invested in the success of her girls and is thrilled at the first evidence of Elphaba’s power, encouraging the girl to “[n]ever apologize for talent! Talent is a gift! And that is my special talent, encouraging talent! Have you ever considered a career in sorcery?” (Cote 144). Morrible even offers to further Elphaba’s career and give her a chance at goodness; as she promises Elphaba, “[m]y dear, my dear / I’ll write at once to the Wizard— / Tell him of you in advance / With a talent like yours, dear / There is a defin-ish chance / If you work as you should— / You’ll be making good …” (“The Wizard and I”). Elphaba’s longing stems from her marginalized status and her deep desire to be accepted and acknowledged as officially “good,” which allows her to bend to the will of perceived maternal guidance offered by Madame Morrible.

However, the devotion and nurturance of Madame Morrible is called into question when Elphaba gains a fuller understanding of Morrible’s opinion of how Elphaba “should” use her powers, to suppress the uprising of sentient Animals and keep Ozians under the power of the Wizard. Madame Morrible sets up a meeting between Elphaba
and the Wizard, only to work with him to trick Elphaba into using her magic to fulfill his monomaniacal quest for control. When Elphaba refuses, Madame Morrible throws off the mask of the good mother, revealing herself as the manipulative and controlling bad mother she has been all along; rather than nurturing Elphaba’s talents out of a genuine feeling for the young witch, Morrible has encouraged Elphaba’s skills in order to harness their power for herself. When it becomes apparent that the Elphaba will not capitulate to Morrible’s command, Elphaba finds that the maternal figure has transformed into one of her most dangerous enemies. Promoted to the Wizard’s “press secretary” (Cote 159), Morrible sets out to destroy Elphaba through a campaign branding the young woman as the monstrous and dangerous Wicked Witch of the West. Like Maguire’s Elphaba, the young witch of Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* does not have the luxury of safely embracing the good mother while simultaneously jettisoning the bad mother; instead, the good mother has become the bad mother, and Elphaba finds herself relatively powerless in the face of Morrible’s attack. The maternal figure cannot be trusted and the only power in the face of Morrible’s destruction is Elphaba’s public and self-reflexive claiming of the Wicked Witch title on her own terms, intractable and rebellious to the end. In the end, Madame Morrible is defeated by Glinda, who imprisons the former headmistress. The maternal figure has been contained and perhaps even neutralized. However, with no other alternatives of mothering available to the witches of *Wicked*, they are left to decide the roles and responsibilities of identity, femininity, and motherhood, to build their homes and families on their own uncertain terms.
CONCLUSIONS

Home has always had a central position within mythic discourses and the *Wizard of Oz* narrative is no exception. Baum’s work romanticizes the Kansas prairie, engaging in the dual conversation of the frontier which balances the safety of home and the adventure of the frontier, an impulse now being fulfilled by the fantastical land of Oz. The representations of home found in MGM’s classic film continue the valorization of home as a place of security and the site of ideal femininity, couched in the ideology of the cult of domesticity; however, in its Depression-era setting and the pre-war uncertainly of the film’s 1939 release, home was precarious, with the family farm economically threatened and the looming fragmentation of the family. As such, the romanticization of home in MGM’s film carries the significance of the uncertain economic and sociopolitical realities of its historical moment, as well as serving as a cinematic framework for the validation of ideal femininity. The feminist movement challenged the idealization of the woman’s place within the home and this shift is reflected by the destabilization of home at the conclusion of Lumet’s *The Wiz*; like Dorothy, women of the latter third of the twentieth century began to balance desire and ambition with home and family and within this context, Dorothy’s realization that home is more than a place is both reassuring and liberating. Further unseated, home becomes problematized in Maguire’s *Wicked*, a place of pain and isolation rather than one of love and security, with Elphaba constructing her own notions of home around guilt and responsibility, an inescapable cycle of suffering. While Elphaba’s family remains peripheral in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, the emphasis shifts from the influence of home to a consideration of individual identity and
performativity, disrupting the idealization and sentimental emphasis on home that had preceded it in earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story.

Concurrent with these shifting representations of home at key moments in American history is a negotiation of the maternal figure in these multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* tale. Baum’s Aunt Em is listless and downtrodden, worn out by the demands of frontier life on her time and energy, though Dorothy is guided along her adventures in Oz by a pair of good witches. MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* complicates the notion of motherhood and dichotomous representations of femininity, with Aunt Em remaining a largely ineffectual maternal figure; however, in Oz Dorothy finds two types of mothering literally embodied before her, with Glinda serving as the coddling and protective mother, while the Wicked Witch of the West seeks control and dominance over the young girl. This doubling allows Dorothy to embrace the good mother and jettison the bad, defining herself through her rejection of the tyrannical mother; refusing the proxy allows Dorothy to make her own bid for independence while not risking the loving acceptance of her own Aunt Em. Echoing the negotiation of home in *The Wiz*, Dorothy’s Aunt Em here becomes a facilitator in helping Dorothy venture out into the wider world, rather than keeping her contained within the home. In Maguire’s *Wicked*, Elphaba struggles with distracted and ineffectual mother figures, becoming one herself in a flurry of denial and rejection. Finally, Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked* provides a substitute maternal figure in the form of Madame Morrible, echoing the role of the Wicked Witch of the West in MGM’s classic film. However, building on the emphasis of performativity and constructed identity central to Schwartz and Maguire’s production, Morrible is shown first as a potentially nurturing and empowering mother, and only later revealed as a manipulative
and domineering monster who must be rejected in order for Elphaba to choose her own path forward.

The conflicted nature of home and the contested sentimental discourse surrounding motherhood and children are reflected in these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story. This trajectory of shifting representations gestures toward the preoccupation with loss of home and family during the Depression era and preceding World War II reflected by MGM’s film, the empowerment offered by revolutions of race and gender contextualizing *The Wiz*, and the backlash against the sentimentality of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries explored in both versions of *Wicked*. Home is no longer the idealized space of warmth and family lauded by Baum and MGM but only one more space of struggle and contestation over individual identity, pointing toward contemporary sociocultural concerns about high divorce rates, domestic and child abuse, and heated debates over the state of the American family. However, echoing *The Wiz*’s argument that home is internal rather than external, both versions of *Wicked* suggest that though home and family are not the idealized Norman Rockwell tableau they were once romanticized as being, there are instead possibilities for creating an unconventional family of friends and loved ones.
Discourses of magic and witchcraft have shaped American national identity since the Puritan era and even earlier, preceding the formation of the nation, in the form of Native American spiritual beliefs and practices. Preoccupied with unexplainable phenomena, the curious have turned to supernatural explanations in their midst as early as Washington Irving’s tale of Sleepy Hollow’s headless horseman and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown,” or more recently, in popular culture as suggested by the abounding representations of magic and witchcraft in contemporary literature, film, and television.57 From J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* books to television series such as *Bewitched, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Charmed,* and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch,*58 the supernatural has been a constant theme in American popular culture over the past several decades, which multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative actively participate in reimagining.

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57 As Emily D. Edwards shows in *Metaphysical Media: The Occult Experience in Popular Culture* (2005), there were more representations of witchcraft in film and television in the 1990s than at any other point in American popular cultural history, with the exception of the 1960s, where representations coincided with female power in the aftermath of the women’s movement (81). The early twenty-first century shows every indication of continuing the plethora of magical representations established in the twentieth century and continue to be a significant site for the exploration of tensions and anxieties surrounding women’s intelligence, power, and agency.

58 In addition, works of literature focusing on magic and witchcraft include the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Anne Rice’s *Mayfair Witches* trilogy, the fantasy novels of C.S. Lewis and Phillip Pullman, John Updike’s *The Witches of Eastwick* (1984) and its much-anticipated sequel *The Widows of Eastwick* (2008), Stephen King’s *Dark Tower* series, and countless fairy tales, as well as animated and live-action adaptations of these children’s stories. Notable films centered around magic and witchcraft include *The Crucible* (1996), based on Arthur Miller’s generative play; *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968), adapted from Ira Levin’s novel of the same name; *I Married a Witch* (1942); *Bell, Book, and Candle* (1958); *Hocus Pocus* (1993); *The Craft* (1996); *Practical Magic* (1998); *Sleepy Hollow* (1999); *The Blair Witch Project* (1999); and *An American Haunting* (2005), to name but a few. In addition, many of these supernatural stories are being revisited, such as the remaking of *Bewitched* as a feature film (2005), with the postmodern perspective of a behind-the-scenes look at a television crew redoing the original *Bewitched,* with a real witch, Isabel Bigelow, cast in the role of Samantha.
Representations of magic and witchcraft in American history and popular culture fall into two distinct and contradictory discourses of deviance and empowerment. In the first of these, magical ability is viewed as dangerous and monstrous, an unnatural power to be destroyed; in conjunction with this approach to witchcraft as threat to the social order is the belief that such power should be domesticated, brought under forcible control if it cannot be utterly eliminated. In contrast, the second body of discourse addressing representations of witchcraft is one which views magic as a source of individual power and agency, usually feminine. From this perspective, witchcraft offers a means for expression of these aspects of identity negated by larger sociocultural structures, providing an alternative means of power, oftentimes for otherwise disenfranchised women. Notions of performativity are central to this sense of empowerment, with women self-reflexively constructing their magical identities as witches, as well as focusing on the physically and socially performative process of representing self and exercising change in the surrounding world. These two categories often overlap and regardless of readings of good or evil, power or performativity, both of these discourses meet in the representation of otherness; as Emily D. Edwards argues, “[t]he witch is someone strange, a curious ‘other’ who stands outside legitimate territories to intimidate the status quo” (130). Any representation of magic and witchcraft in American popular culture must necessarily negotiate the dual discourses of deviance and empowerment, as well as the engagement with Otherness, reconciling these differing perspectives either by critiquing or negating one of the two, or by highlighting the problematic nature of their intersection.

59 Edwards divides representations of witches into the further subcategories of historical, dubious, satanic, fairy tale, shamanic, enchantress, ingénue, and New Age witches. As Edwards demonstrates, the most commonly represented is the fairy tale witch (83). This figure can be productively read as “emphasizing the singular witch with legendary magic, usually with the benefactor or adversary of a youthful protagonist” (81); this is the category into which the witches of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative tradition fall.
The witchcraft trials of Salem, Massachusetts of 1692 and 1693 remain the historical prototype of discourses of witchcraft in America, with this sociocultural episode, hysteria, and attendant executions epitomizing the construction of the witch as a dangerous entity, to be brought under control by whatever means necessary. As Widdowson points out, the horrific witch has a number of common characteristics, including “malevolent powers through which they may cast spells, bewitch and use the evil eye, cause disease and plague, raise storms and harm cattle and crops, among other things” (203), a pattern of belief followed in the Salem accusations. During the Salem outbreak, 185 individuals were accused of witchcraft, 31 were convicted, and 19 were executed; of these totals, 141 of the accused, 26 of the convicted, and 14 of the executed were women, a staggering gender disparity (Karlsen 51). As Carol F. Karlsen notes in *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, “[t]he story of witchcraft is primarily the story of women … Especially in its Western incarnation, witchcraft confronts us with ideas about women, with fears about women, with the place of women in society, and with women themselves. It confronts us too with systematic violence against women” (xii). However, closer sociohistorical inspection reveals that some women were much more likely to be accused that others, belying a fear not of fearsome magical powers, but rather of women who wield too much power through the possession of property, often gained through

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60 This is not to suggest that men are entirely absent in histories and narratives of witchcraft. As Karlsen notes, during the Salem hysteria, forty-four men were accused of witchcraft, seven were tried, and five were convicted and hanged, comprising just under a quarter of those accused and approximately one-third of those executed (51). Men also play a more prominent role in international witchcraft narratives, a phenomenon which is explored elsewhere, including in Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1983), where Ginzburg explores “the region of the Friuli, where German, Italian, and Slav customs meet” (ix). In his work, Ginzburg discusses a tradition in which witches and warlocks, as well as the “benandanti” who fought against this magical influence were “both men and women” (28). While men have a historical presence within witchcraft narratives, however, the contemporary figure of the witch is predominantly female, with special focus on the woman of power and agency, and it is this figure my project works to address.
inheritance, which positioned these women outside of the officially-sanctioned roles of femininity (Karlsen 101). As Karlsen points out, close examination of demographic and economic records reveals that women over forty and women able to live in economic independence of men were those most likely to be charged and prosecuted for witchcraft (64, 74). In the 1880s, Matilda Joslyn Gage\(^6\) addressed the repressive aims of the witchcraft hysteria, arguing that through these accusations and executions, structures of patriarchal power “degraded women, disposed of knowledgeable and powerful women as ‘witches,’ and imported this evil to America in the seventeenth century” (qtd. in Gibson 117). Those accused as witches, therefore, were singled out because they threatened the hierarchical and male-gendered power structure of the new nation, with those in power shaping ideologies of country and citizenship through those they excluded as well as those they welcomed.

The vilification of the witch remains pervasive in contemporary popular cultural representations, even though the historical trials and executions of Salem are now hundreds of years in the past. In addition to the narrative of the witch who must be punished or destroyed, as epitomized in the events of Salem, lies a connected discourse of domestication, perhaps most clearly realized in the television series *Bewitched* and its main character, Samantha Stephens. Subverting the violence of the previous call for destruction, this narrative of domestication shows magic being brought under control, often for the benefit of home and family, reasserting traditional and accepted feminine roles. In *Bewitched*, for example, Samantha is a powerful witch with a long magical heritage; her position within the magical community is one of privilege and prestige.

\(^6\) Interestingly, Matilda Joslyn Gage would become L. Frank Baum’s mother-in-law when he married her daughter Maud in 1882.
Samantha was “chosen at birth to be queen” of the witches and assumes this position in the first episode of Season Four (Pilato 160). In spite of her elevated position within the magical world, however, Samantha chooses to marry Darrin, a mortal, and agrees to run their home and raise their children in “the everyday mortal way.” Occupying approved feminine positions of wife, mother, and homemaker, the dangerous potential of Samantha’s power is diffused and through her entrance into the domestic sphere shifts from dangerous to comedic. As Linda Baughman, Allison Burr-Miller, and Linda Manning point out, “[l]ike any good witch, Samantha is in charge of everyday life. She is a witch, but a domestic one, and knows how to live in the world of mortals. She accomplishes tasks from the mundane to the almost impossible with grace and wit” (111). Though Samantha uses magic in almost every episode of the series, despite her promise to Darrin, her valuation of her role as wife and mother keeps her witchcraft within a manageble scope; while magic may come naturally to her, Samantha wouldn’t use her powers in any way that would jeopardize her mortal lifestyle. In short, Samantha’s domestication limits her use of her magic to within circumscribed boundaries; her actions have consequences that they would not necessarily have in the magical world and she curtails her use of magic accordingly, diffusing any real danger that might otherwise be posed by her witchcraft. As Marion Gibson points out in Witchcraft Myths in American Culture, “[t]he problem with undomesticated ones [witches] is the threat they pose to the omnipotence of the American male, and women are particularly dangerous because they are so ‘fascinating,’ ‘bewitching,’ and ‘enchanting’” (197). By bringing witchcraft under

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62 Since Samantha continues to use witchcraft on a regular basis throughout Bewitched, the series works as an active negotiation of the two contradictory discourses of deviance and empowerment, an issue I have discussed at length in a presentation entitled “‘What Would Samantha Do?’: Gender Representations in Two Versions of Bewitched” at the Charming and Crafty Conference, held at Harvard University May 18-21, 2006.
control through domestication of magic and the witch, the threat to patriarchal power is diffused.

Simultaneous with this dialogue of witchcraft as deviant and threatening is a contradictory discourse which approaches magic as an empowering and performative identification, especially for women. Increasingly positive representations of witches began to emerge in concurrence with the historical development of Wiccan as a legitimate, if contested, religion. As Tanice G. Foltz argues, since the development of Wiccan in America, “which coincided with the women’s movement, witches frequently appear in books, films, and television programs, and they are often characterized as attractive, youthful, strong, and independent females who openly use their magical powers to fight against evil for the greater good” (137). Witchcraft, then, empowers its users to exercise their agency and better the world around them through alternative and non-patriarchal avenues. For example, Hermione Granger, the central female character of J.K. Rowling’s immensely popular *Harry Potter* series, grows increasingly confident, powerful, and independent as the series progresses, in direct correlation with the development of her magical powers.63 In addition, the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Charmed* both feature powerful and positive witch figures, elevated to action figure status, women who fight the forces of evil and look great doing it.64 These

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63 I have explored Hermione’s complex negotiations between her magical education and her mortal heritage at length elsewhere in my article on “Magical Learning and Loss: Hermione Granger, Female Intellectualism, and J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* Series” in the collection *A Dragon Wrecked My Prom: Teen Wizards, Mutants, and Heroes* (Lexington Press, forthcoming).

64 In a thought-provoking cycle, these witches are acceptable, in part, because of their beauty, a physical embodiment made possible by the gradual acceptance of a positive representation of witches, a reception that is furthered by the attractiveness of the good witches on the big and small screens. Concurrent with this embrace of the witch as potentially beautiful, a romantic narrative with witch as love interest begins to develop, which can be traced back to *The Passionate Witch* (1942), a novel by Thorne Smith and Norman Matson, who completed the work following Smith’s death; the story was adapted into the film *I Married a Witch* (1942), starring Veronica Lake as the magical woman in question.
discourses of the new witch center on notions of the magically-gifted woman as
independent, competent, and almost always in complete control of her powers, using
them to her own advantage. These positive representations of strong witches are
significant because they highlight the intelligence and agency of these young women; as
Baughman, Burr-Miller, and Manning argue, “[d]epictions of witches are a way by which
our culture thinks about and grapples with the idea of brilliant women. After all, at some
points in our history, intelligent women were thought to be as unlikely (and as potentially
dangerous) as witches” (104). But this intelligence and power are still simultaneously
shown as empowering and threatening, situating popular cultural representations of
witches as key figures in the negotiation of meanings surrounding powerful women.

Though the witches of Harry Potter, Buffy, and Charmed use their magic as a
form of agency, a dichotomy of good and evil continues to influence these
representations, making even the empowered witch suspect. The omnipresent danger of
the benevolent witch gone bad is most clearly illustrated in the transformation of Willow
Rosenberg in Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Willow is a powerful witch who becomes
dangerous and uncontainable through her addiction to spell-casting, which distances her
from her friends, positions her beyond the possibility of being controlled, and nearly
results in global destruction.65 As this example shows, even the witch as heroine is not
above reproach. No matter how benevolent and socially-integrated the witch may be, she
is to be feared unless and until her body, and therefore her power, can be effectively
contained. The tension surrounding the witch’s power, and the dual discourse of this
female figure as simultaneously empowered and dangerous, creates a conflicting and

65 In the case of Willow, the possibility for patriarchal domestication is always already forestalled by the
mid-series revelation of Willow as a lesbian, the discourse surrounding same-sex desire here
foreshadowing similar anxieties in Schwartz and Holzman’s Wicked.
contested space around the witch. Representations of magic and witchcraft in the *Wizard of Oz* narrative engage with and reflect key shifts in these dual discourses of magic in American culture. While witches in the early versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story, such as those of Baum and MGM, are clearly divided into categories of good and evil magical power, later adaptations, such as *Wicked*, work to more fully realize these simultaneous and contradictory discourses of the witch as a figure of agency and threat.

The discourse of women using witchcraft as a source of power and agency has also been retroactively turned back to focus on those accused and executed in the witchcraft hysteria of seventeenth-century America. These accused women were rarely, if ever, responsible for the failure of crops, complications in pregnancy and childbirth, destructive storms, illnesses, or epidemics of which they were accused. However, the identification of these women as witches acts as an indicator of their individual power, a fact that has caused many to look back on the accused from a new perspective: rather than being villainous women in league with the devil, they are now discussed as strong and independent women within a largely restrictive society. While this new perspective does woefully little to comfort the descendents of wrongly-accused and executed women, it does create a new and dynamic space for exploring images of the witch as intelligent, powerful, and full of agency. The versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman participate actively in this revisionist process of recasting the familiar discourse and revealing a previously untold story by assuming a narrative position privileging female strength, independence, and empowerment.

Drawing on these multiple discourses of magic and witchcraft in American culture, the magical characters that populate Oz in these versions of the classic children’s
story can be critically examined in terms of their individual identities, as well as their position within the larger cultures which surround them. In addition, through an examination of the trajectory of representations of magical women in American history and popular culture, the negotiations and transformations provided by these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative can be highlighted and their appeal more concisely explored, including the increasing sympathy and attraction of the witch figures most profoundly realized in both versions of *Wicked*. In addition, the central magical object throughout these many versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative is Dorothy’s magic slippers, the significance of which comes under negotiation with each new reinvention. Finally, the reclaiming of agency for Elphaba in *Wicked* prompts a dynamic re-reading of the magical women who have preceded her in these multiple retellings of the *Wizard of Oz* tale.

**DOWN THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD: THE MAGIC OF OZ**

One of the reasons readers, viewers, and theatre-goers keep jumping at the chance to return to Oz again and again throughout these various versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story is the magical nature of the land itself. Oz offers an escape from reality, an invitation to delve into a world of fantasy, mystery, and magic. Populated by powerful witches, strange creatures, and magical beings of all shapes and sizes, Oz is unpredictable and exciting: one never knows what might lie beyond the next curve in the Yellow Brick Road. However, as the *Wizard of Oz* tale has been made and remade over the past century, Oz has taken on an increasingly complex landscape. Baum had intended *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to be “a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy
are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out” (4). Oz has become more complicated and, in some cases, more frightening as it has taken on new and different forms: generations of children have been terrified by Hamilton’s shrill cackling as the Wicked Witch of the West in the classic MGM film and The Wiz achieves a fair amount of surreal fear through the juxtaposition of the everyday and the magical. Finally, the political intrigue, tyranny, and even genocide addressed in Maguire’s Wicked, and more tangentially, in the stage version by Schwartz and Holzman, add plenty of “heart-aches and nightmares,” especially given their reflection of contemporary American and global cultures. As representations of Oz have become increasingly problematic, in some cases turning Baum’s dream into a nightmare, magic has begun to carry more weight in this fantastical world, shifting from a position of whimsy and entertainment to one of life-or-death consequences.

In The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Dorothy encounters magic in her first moments after arriving and is even mistaken as a witch herself. The Good Witch greets Dorothy with a warm welcome, telling the young girl, “[y]ou are welcome, most noble Sorceress, to the land of the Munchkins” (Baum 36). Through this simple misunderstanding, Dorothy not only enters a magical land but is almost unconsciously co-opted, a member of the magical community rather than a lost girl just passing through. Dorothy is celebrated for her assumed magical power, as well as for killing the Wicked Witch of the East and while she is intrigued by the magical world in which she finds herself, Dorothy

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66 Many have argued that Baum failed in this goal, citing violent and unsettling episodes in the story to support their argument, such as the Wicked Witch’s attempt to kill Dorothy and her companions with wolves, crows, and bees (Baum 212). In fact, the lingering “heart-aches and nightmares” may be responsible for some of the book’s success. As the New Republic’s James Thurber wrote in 1934, “I am glad that in spite of his high determination, Mr. Baum failed to keep them out … Children love a lot of nightmare and at least a little heartache in their books. I know I went through excruciatingly lovely nightmares when the Scarecrow lost his straw, [and] when the Tin Woodman was taken apart” (qtd. in Hearn 7).
resists wholesale incorporation by explaining to the Good Witch that “there must be some mistake. I have not killed anything” (Baum 38). In this claim, Dorothy rejects both her own agency and her own responsibility, situating herself as a temporary traveler rather than the great sorceress the Munchkins mistake her for; repositioning herself as a child, she sacrifices a measure of the power she was perceived to hold, but she also ensures her protection by the Good Witch and her privileged status within Oz, which will enable her to successfully navigate her path back to Kansas. Dorothy subjects herself to the magic of Oz in her first moments as well; in addition to gratefully accepting the shielding kiss of the Good Witch, Dorothy also receives a message through the sorceress’s magic slate, which instructs the witch to “LET DOROTHY GO TO THE CITY OF EMERALDS” (Baum 49), a command which Dorothy dutifully and unquestioningly follows.

However, not all of the magic in Baum’s Oz is quite so benevolent. Take, for example, the story of the Tin Woodman, formerly an all-too-human woodcutter named Nick Chopper. In love with a beautiful Munchkin girl, Chopper intended to marry; however, the girl was in servitude to an old woman, who did not wish to lose her servant. To prevent the marriage, the old woman turned to the Wicked Witch of the East, who enchanted the man’s axe. As the Tin Woodman recounts to Dorothy and the Scarecrow, “I was chopping away at my best one day … [when] the axe slipped and cut off my left leg” (Baum 98). The Woodman has his leg replaced by a tinsmith and returns to his work. Not to be deterred, the Wicked Witch causes the axe to cut off his other leg, this pattern of dismemberment and replacement repeating until the woodcutter has lost both legs, both arms, and his head (ibid). However, even though Nick Chopper is now almost entirely made of tin, he still loves his Munchkin maiden and is determined to marry her.
But the Wicked Witch of the East will not be bested and makes the axe slip one last time, “so that it cut right through my body, splitting me into two halves. Once more the tinner came to my help and made me a body of tin … But, alas! I now had no heart, so that I had lost all my love for the Munchkin girl, and did not care whether I married her or not” (Baum 100). So even though no one in Oz can ever die, they can be physically destroyed by magic, as the Tin Woodman has been. However, in Baum’s story, this grisly process is told with humor, bloodless and matter-of-fact; the Tin Woodman seems very happy as he is, with the exception of his desire for a heart, and he is quite proud of his shiny appearance.\(^{67}\) Therefore, though magic can be used for good or evil in the land of Oz, even the wicked uses of witchcraft seem to have little lasting effect on those under its spell,\(^{68}\) with the exception of the Wicked Witch of the West, who is magically destroyed by water.

The most influential magical artifact introduced in Baum’s story, and one which would resurface in one form or another in every version to follow, is inarguably the pair of enchanted silver shoes with the power to send Dorothy home to Kansas. As the Good Witch explains to Dorothy near the story’s end, “[t]he Silver Shoes … have wonderful powers. And one of the most curious things about them is that they can carry you to any place in the world in three steps, and each step will be made in the wink of an eye. All you have to do is knock the heels together three times and command the shoes to carry you wherever you wish to go” (Baum 351). While Dorothy’s friends have always had the characteristics they wish for, Dorothy needs magical intervention to get her home to

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\(^{67}\) In later Oz books, this pride escalates almost to the point of vanity, when the Tin Woodman gets himself “nickel-plated” (The Marvelous Land of Oz 123) and becomes preoccupied with polishing his shiny metal body.

\(^{68}\) Significantly, in later Oz books, magic is tightly controlled, with only Princess Ozma, Glinda the Good, and the Wizard himself allowed its use.
Kansas, though the fantastic properties of these shoes are only revealed to the young girl at the end of her journey. Significantly, the same shoes that give Dorothy great power also put her in terrible danger: the Wicked Witch wants Dorothy’s shoes because “if she could only get hold of the Silver Shoes they would give her more power than all the other things she had lost” (Baum 223). The Wicked Witch’s power is dangerous, both in her use of magic to try and get Dorothy’s shoes and even more significantly, in the threat her abilities pose to the patriarchal authority of the Wizard, who must have her destroyed to maintain the farce of his own supremacy. Dorothy does not know the full extent of the magical shoes’ power and therefore, never thinks to use the magic for her own gain; she has to be told by the Good Witch of the shoes’ ability to take her home. Therefore, while Dorothy is surrounded by magic and witchcraft as she moves through Oz, she remains separate from it, with magic done on her behalf because she herself has no mystical powers.

The magical land of Oz is constructed similarly in MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz*, with Dorothy surrounded by its power, but separate from it. Dorothy’s position within this context of magic and witchcraft are highlighted upon her arrival in Oz, when Glinda asks the girl “[a]re you a good witch or a bad witch?” As Dorothy replies, “I’m not a witch at all. I’m Dorothy Gale from Kansas.” In this response, Dorothy situates herself as a visitor in Oz, lacking the magical power that structures the world around her and again

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69 The explanation for this remains unclear, though perhaps reflection on the fairy tale tradition may explain the seemingly temperamental power of the shoes. In *The Muppets’ Wizard of Oz*, yet another retelling of the classic tale, the good witch Tattypoo (played by Miss Piggy) tells Dorothy, “[h]ere’s how things work in enchanted lands: Shoes have magical powers. If you get the shoes, you get the powers. But if you’re going to question every little detail, the whole thing’s gonna fall apart and we might as well call it a day, okay?” In short, following fairy tale logic, magic shoes work the way they do because they’re magic.

70 Dorothy and her friends have destroyed the bees, crows, and wolves the witch had sent to destroy them; in addition, the voracious witch has also used up all the power of her other magical talisman, an enchanted Golden Cap (Baum 223).
making her dependent upon Glinda’s assistance. Like the magic in Baum’s book, the powers of the Wicked Witch seem significantly, if mysteriously, limited. For example, when she arrives in Munchkinland to threaten Dorothy, Glinda dismisses her, telling the Wicked Witch “[y]ou have no power here— now be gone, before somebody drops a house on you!” Glinda’s threat resonates and the Wicked Witch looks fearfully at the sky above before disappearing in a plume of red smoke. The Wicked Witch continues to menace Dorothy and her companions as they travel across Oz, though her power seems to grow to full strength only as they near her castle in the west of Oz, raising the question of geographical seats of magical power, an issue unaddressed by the film itself.

While the powers of the Wicked Witch of the West are inexplicably curtailed, when they are fully exploited, they are fearsome indeed: she attempts to destroy both Dorothy and the Scarecrow, using a magical hourglass on the former and fire on the latter. While Dorothy and her friends were frequently in danger in Baum’s original children’s tale, perhaps in his attempt to make a fairy tale without horror, his heroine’s life is never in danger, nor is that of any of her companions. MGM’s Wicked Witch raises the stakes in this respect, using destructive magic to threaten the very lives of those who refuse her. In addition, Hamilton’s embodiment of the green-faced witch adds a visual, performative element of fear that was lacking in Baum’s generative text; her cackle alone still sends chills down the spine of many a viewer. While malevolent magic in Baum’s text was established in connection with the witch’s deformed physical appearance, in the MGM film, Hamilton’s character is not disfigured, but powerfully Othered nonetheless, through her green skin and abnormally sharp features. As Glinda explains to Dorothy, “[o]nly bad witches are ugly.” Therefore, where Baum equated dangerous magical power
with the incomplete or fractured body, the MGM film casts good and evil power in terms of the deviant, though physically whole, body. Through this shift, the form of the witch moves away from the stigmatization of bodily lack, though she must remain immediately recognizable, a visible warning to those she threatens. Therefore, the Wicked Witch’s greenness allows her presence as a complete and mature woman, though an uncontrollable and deviant one, situating the figure of the Wicked Witch of the West explicitly at the intersection of discourses of the monstrous feminine and the exotic Other, her danger further heightened by her magical volubility.

Dorothy’s magical shoes are central to the story in MGM’s *Wizard of Oz*, as well, though with this film, they are the ruby slippers which would become an American icon. While Dorothy only discovers the power of the shoes to take her home at her journey’s end, Glinda tells Dorothy that the shoes are magical the moment they appear on the heroine’s feet, though the nature of their power remains unclear. Significantly, the magic invested in the shoes here becomes, for the first time, coupled with Dorothy’s journey of self-discovery. As Glinda tells Dorothy, “[y]ou’ve always had the power to go back to Kansas.” However, the magic of the shoes and Dorothy’s return to Kansas is contingent upon the young girl realizing that “there’s no place like home” and embracing her position within the home and family of the Kansas farm. Once Dorothy has learned this lesson, she is instantly transported back home. In this case, magic facilitates

71 Judy Garland’s ruby slippers have developed a mythical status all their own, with the artifacts being auctioned amid much fanfare and for staggering amounts of money. On May 24, 2000, the ruby slippers were bought at auction by collector David Elkouby for $600,000 (Jarrett). The ruby slippers are also one of the only pieces of clothing to have their own base of devoted fans, members of “The Ruby Slipper Fan Club,” which has a website, maintained by Stephen Jarrett, devoted to pictures of the authentic shoes, stories about them, and images of fan reproductions of their very own ruby slippers.
Dorothy’s self-actualization, though this power is necessarily simultaneous with Dorothy’s sacrifice of her own potential, both real and magical.

Oz and its magic undergo another transformation with Lumet’s *The Wiz*, shifting from fantasy to surrealism though the director’s conflation of the everyday and the magical. Where Baum and MGM featured fantastic creatures and animated apple trees, the enchantment of Lumet’s Oz takes the form of carnivorous garbage cans, mobile electrical wires, embodied graffiti figures, and other artifacts of day-to-day life in New York City, a construct which garnered *The Wiz* Oscar nominations for Art Direction and Cinematography (Parish and Pitts 763). The combination of realism and the magical created the sense of a surreal New York City, where anything was possible; however, Lumet never strays far from very real, everyday issues, such as the discrimination evinced in Dorothy’s inability to get a taxi cab. As Lumet explains, “we wanted to create the urban-musical-fantasy, on location, with realism as the recognizable factor, but then moving everything realistic into fantasy” (Applebaum 79). As a result, the use of magic and witchcraft in *The Wiz* blurs the lines between the real and the fantastic, drawing on non-descript items like subway garbage cans and the animated camera and microphone in the Emerald City, to carry the unfamiliarity of their actions to the extreme. Most of the land she traverses on her adventures is new to Dorothy nonetheless; as Aunt Em chides her, “you’ve never been south of 125th Street.” Therefore, Lumet blends the real with a fantastic journey which has a real-life counterpart and significant ramifications for Dorothy when she returns to the New York of her everyday life, lending some realism to Oz and a bit of magic to New York City, as well as adding a layer of self-reflexive social commentary absent in earlier versions.
The witches of *The Wiz*, like the Wizard himself, seem largely ineffectual. The first good witch, Miss One (Thelma Carpenter), is scatter-brained and of little help; as she tells Dorothy, “my powers don’t amount to much.” On the other hand, Glinda remains ephemeral, if inspiring. Rather than the intimacy established in the conclusion of MGM’s classic film, when Dorothy and Glinda are framed side-by-side, in *The Wiz*, Dorothy and Glinda remain inexorably separated. Glinda arrives with little forewarning or narrative explanation, in a dark corner of the fraudulent Wizard’s hideout; in fact, Glinda seems to hardly be there at all, instead occupying a separate astral plane that surrounds her with the darkness of a seeming night sky, complete with the shimmer of numerous stars. Glinda is well beyond the realm of the mortal as well, at one with the mysterious space surrounding her, a connection established by her black sequined gown and headpiece, which blend almost indistinguishably with the cosmos behind her. In contrast to the intimate framing of Glinda and Dorothy side by side in MGM’s film, in *The Wiz* Dorothy and Glinda can only be captured by means of a shot-reverse shot pattern, further underscoring their separation. This distancing is audibly echoed as well, with each woman singing a distinct solo rather than communicating or engaging one another in a traditional duet; instead, Glinda sings “Believe in Yourself” and Dorothy responds with her rendition of “Home.” Glinda does give Dorothy the secret of the shoes that she needs to get back to Harlem. However, Glinda gives the young woman a good deal more as well. Dorothy leaves Oz with a new conception of home as more than a place, telling Dorothy that “[i]f we know ourselves, we’re always home anywhere.” The critique of traditional feminine roles in favor of furthering the theme of self-discovery and empowerment is echoed in both the minimization of the significance of home, as well as through the emphasis on Dorothy’s
independence. However, lamentably missing is a sense of female community beyond the family structure, a possibility that was at least hinted at in the recurring relationship between Dorothy and Glinda in preceding versions. Therefore, while *The Wiz* includes representations of magic and witchcraft in significant narrative moments, instead choosing to focus on Dorothy’s growth and agency, few magical ramifications are suggested beyond her return home, though Dorothy’s journey of self-discovery remains of central significance.

In addition, while the MGM version of *The Wizard of Oz* had Dorothy’s adventures book-ended by her conversations with Glinda, *The Wiz* uses two separate witches to occupy these roles: Miss One sends Dorothy along the Yellow Brick Road and Glinda is the only one with the power to send the young woman home. As a result, the sense of the previous film’s Glinda as a teacher or guardian angel of sorts who follows Dorothy’s progress through Oz and the girl’s simultaneous journey of self-discovery, is lost in Lumet’s version; this lack of guidance is further accentuated by the absence of the witch’s magical intervention when Dorothy and her friends are led astray by the Poppy Fields. The doubling of the “good witch” figure in *The Wiz* results in a heightened focus on Ross’s Dorothy as the heroine and the singular main female character of the film. As such, the magical nature of Oz and the necessity of witchcraft is partially demystified, once more underscoring the surreal nature of an Oz grounded in familiar New York City landmarks, as opposed to the fantastical land of Oz described by Baum and depicted by MGM. Therefore, while earlier versions foregrounded the magical nature of Oz in tandem with Dorothy’s personal journey, *The Wiz* highlights Dorothy and her quest, presenting magic as an obstacle to be overcome, with the witches who attempt to help her
along the way proving of limited practical use and the film privileging individual agency over the mystical discourses of witchcraft and magical power.

The Wicked Witch, Evillene, gains the majority of her power through tyranny and torture, rather than through any magical abilities of her own. Evillene is granted a single sequence, in which Dorothy and her friends are brought to the Wicked Witch’s sweatshop, prisoners of the witch, who wants her sister’s shoes. Rather than simply threatening torture of Dorothy’s companions, as in previous versions, Evillene actually carries out this terrible attack, menacing Dorothy’s friends in an attempt to make the young woman relent and give up the silver shoes. This is the only image of the witch using her magical powers in the entire film and, significantly, she arguably does not use witchcraft at all. While her commanding gestures toward each of Dorothy’s companions are made with an audio flourish, as well as a visual one, her motions themselves have no direct effect. Instead, much like a musical conductor, her gesticulations signal her underlings to do her bidding, with these slaves performing the actual destruction of Dorothy’s friends. The only exception to this magical impotence is when Evillene’s spell backfires, maiming her own hand, though this may be situated more in the power of Dorothy’s silver shoes, rather than in the witch herself; therefore, the one time Evillene demonstrates clear magical power, it becomes horrifically self-destructive. Significantly, the de-emphasis of magic in the case of Evillene works to resituate focus once more upon social inequality, with Evillene tyrannically abusing her disenfranchised sweatshop workers, though Evillene herself finds her own power and agency limited, with Lumet once more blending fantasy with the realism of inequitable differences of class and race. Evillene is mean and domineering, but arguably demonstrates no actual magical power
throughout the film, relying instead on fear and tyranny to ensure her wishes are carried out, rather than on witchcraft.

The magic of the slippers remains, though they are once more silver in Lumet’s film version, and when Evillene attempts to remove them from Dorothy’s feet with magic, the Wicked Witch finds her witchcraft repelled and her spell backfires, literally attacking the hand that has cast it, problematizing her control of her own assumed powers. The magic of the shoes remains inexplicable; Miss One’s only advice to Dorothy about the slippers is to not “discount those shoes, honey, and don’t ever take ‘em off until you do get home.” The shoes seem to offer Dorothy a measure of protection from the Wicked Witch’s, albeit limited, power. Significantly, *The Wiz* marks a discourse surrounding the slippers that would be picked up and furthered by later versions: the Wicked Witch’s motivation in seeking the shoes. As Evillene tells Dorothy, a crime has been committed: “you murdered my sister … and stole her shoes.” Rather than wanting the shoes for the magical power they might afford her or for possession for the sake of itself, Evillene’s claim marks a shift in the representation of the shoes and the witch who wants them, shedding light on her motivation and obsession with retrieving the magic slippers. However, Evillene is shown as monstrous and is killed by Dorothy, as all bad witches must be, and Dorothy travels back to the Emerald City to see the Wizard once more. As in preceding versions, the Wizard’s magic is a sham, but the shoes themselves have the power to send Dorothy home with three clicks of her heels.

However, the magic of Oz becomes increasingly complicated and complex in Maguire’s *Wicked*, with characters putting varying amounts of faith in sorcery and mysticism, from full-fledged devotion to critical skepticism. Maguire’s novel is the only
place within the discourse of magic in the *Wizard of Oz* narrative where the elements and significance of its power are explicitly considered, warranting an in-depth consideration of these multiple conversations surrounding magic and supernatural power in *Wicked*. The citizens of Oz make sense of the wonder and cruelty of the world around them through a multiplicity of philosophies and faiths. However, there are three centrally conflicting and contested discourses of belief: the pleasure faith, based on magic; a mysticism referred to as Lurlinism, after the fairy queen Lurline; and unionism, closely related to modern Christianity and built upon worship of the Unnamed God.

The central tenants of the pleasure faith lay largely in showmanship and “spectacle” (Maguire 41), overlapping with the mechanistic cult of “tiktokism” and bringing machine and magic into one complex belief system. As unionist minister Frex raves, those who follow the pleasure faith are “[h]edonists, anarchists, solipsists! Individual freedom and amusement is all! As if sorcery had any moral component! Charms, alley magic, industrial-strength sound and light displays, fake shape-changers! Charlatans, nabobs of necromancy, chemical and herbal wisdoms, humbug hedonists!” (ibid). However, many of the citizens of Oz, including the uneducated and isolated of Oz’s backcountries clamor over the pleasure faith as though the circus has literally come to town, eager for the comfort of spiritualism and the entertainment of the titillatingly absurd. Elphaba’s birth coincides with the arrival of the Clock of the Time Dragon, a pleasure faith and tiktok amusement. As word of the clock comes to Frex from a fellow clergyman, “featured in the dozens of doorways, windows, and porches, are puppets, marionettes, figures …. The figures move on sprockets. They wheel in and out of doorways. They bend at the waist, they dance and dawdle and dally with each other”
(Maguire 12). The marionettes play out the townspeople’s deepest, darkest secrets, turning them violently against one another, a dangerous magical entertainment. Frex attempts to turn the people of Rush Margins from the Time Dragon but is rebuffed by the clock itself, which caricaturizes the minister as “a small, yapping puppet dog, its hair dark and as tightly curled as Frex’s own. The dog bounced on a spring and the pitch of its chatter was annoyingly high” (Maguire 16). Incensed by Frex’s sanctimonious piety, the townspeople seek to beat and kill the man. As his laboring wife and her midwives seek a safe hiding place, they shelter within the clock itself, where Elphaba is born, the warring discourses of truth and illusion, as well as the potentially threatening nature of magic embodied by the Time Dragon hanging over her from the very moment of her birth.

Sorcery is a more refined version of the pleasure faith and is one of the main courses of education at Shiz University which, over time, becomes young Glinda’s specialty. Asking her instructor Miss Greyling the difference between science and sorcery, Glinda is told that science

is the systematic dissection of nature, to reduce it to working parts that more or less obey universal laws. Sorcery moves in the opposite direction. It doesn’t rend, it repairs. It is synthesis rather than analysis. It builds anew rather than revealing the old. In the hands of someone truly skilled … it is Art. One might in fact call it the Superior, or the Finest, Art. It bypasses the Fine Arts of painting and drama and recitation. It doesn’t pose or represent the world. It becomes. A very noble calling …. Can there be a higher desire than to change the world? Not to draw Utopian blueprints, but really to order change? To revise the misshapen, reshape the mistaken, to justify the margins of this ragged error of a universe? Through sorcery to survive? (Maguire 142-3, emphasis original)

Miss Greyling’s definition of sorcery poses a critique of rationality itself, tangentially aligned with the empiricism of scientific inquiry, though working at cross-purposes. Given the imperfect formulae of sorcery, the discourse of science and rationality, here
framed here in companionship with magic, is open to question and criticism. Furthering this critique, Glinda finds her newfound magical talent of little use as she matures, despite Miss Greyling’s lofty philosophical musings. Dismissing the practicality of her sorcery to her friends, Glinda confesses, “I can sign a hundred greeting cards for a holiday season at one go. But it’s a very minor talent, I tell you. Sorcery is vastly overrated in the popular press” (Maguire 209, emphasis original). In contrast, Elphaba is able to make better use of her magical powers, however accidentally aquired. After Sarima’s children attack Liir, Elphaba exacts her revenge through the focus of her anger alone. Staring out the window at a hanging icicle, Elphaba’s rage takes form; as Maguire writes, “Liir survived, but Manek did not. The icicle that Elphaba trained her gaze on, thinking of the weapons one needed to fight such abuse—it broke like a lance from the eaves, and drove whistling downward, and caught him in the skull as he went out to find some new way of beleaguering Liir” (286). However, Elphaba continues to have only sporadic control over her powers, unable to consciously command them to her will, continually questioning the theoretical alliance between sorcery, science, and rationality. As such, the public construction and performance of identity continue to play a more profound role in Elphaba’s labeling as a Wicked Witch, rather than the limited and unpredictable powers of sorcery at her disposal.

Despite this dynamic discourse of magic, however, the Oz of Wicked is also simultaneously built upon a dialogue of mysticism, the site of one of Oz’s earliest creationist stories, surfacing in the tale of the fairy Lurline. In this pagan version of creation, the “dear putative Fairy Queen Lurline [was] on a voyage. She was tired of travel in the air. She stopped and called from the desert sands a font of water hidden deep
beneath the earth’s dry dunes. The water obeyed, in such abundance that the land of Oz in all its febrile variety sprang up almost instantly” (Maguire 114). The discourse of Lurlinism, practiced in folk circles and by older citizens of Oz, like Elphaba’s Nanny, also promises a return to matriarchal rule and the privileging of women’s power. As Nanny reverently explains to the Quadling Turtleheart, Lurline “left her daughter Ozma to rule the country in her absence and she promised to return to Oz in its darkest hour” (Maguire 42). Ozma often appears in these tales as a kind but powerful girl ruler, building on the staple character of the same name in Baum’s later Oz books. In Maguire’s account, the Wizard in fact wrested power from Ozma upon his arrival, supplanting her as ruler of Oz. The discourse surrounding Lurline in Maguire’s Wicked indicates two tensions against which the Wizard positions his power. The first of these is the draw of a goddess-based spiritualism celebrating a long line of powerful and uncontrollable women, of which Elphaba is but the latest incarnation. Secondly, Lurlinism is a paganist faith grounded in pleasure, nature, and the body. In Shiz, Glinda and her companions witness a forbidden celebration in which a group of young men “had gone down to dance together under the willow trees, wearing nothing but their clinging cotton drawers and their school scarves. It was deliciously pagan, as they had set an old chipped statue of Lurline the Fairy Queen on a three-legged stool, and she seemed to smile at their loose-limbed gaiety” (Maguire 76). This celebration in quickly put to an end because “[n]ear-nudity was one thing, but public Lurlinism—even as a joke—bordered on being intolerably retrograde, even royalist. And that did not do in the Wizard’s reign” (ibid, emphasis original). Combining discourses of pleasurable paganism and the validated strength of the female ruler, Lurlinism is a direct and immediate threat to the Wizard’s
eminence and as such, is a taboo, though one that remains alive and well throughout Oz, despite the danger.

Finally, the goddess-based narrative of Lurlinism is countered by a more canonically religious one, which tells a creationist tale wherein the generative flood was “the sea of tears wept by the Unnamed God on the god’s only visit to Oz. The Unnamed God perceived the sorrow that would overwhelm the land throughout time, and bawled in pain” (Maguire 115). Elphaba’s father Frex is a beleaguered unionist minister and the embodiment of this religious discourse within *Wicked*. However, the popularity of the faith seems to be waning considerably since the Wizard’s arrival in Oz, replaced by the illusory attractions of tiktokism and the pleasure faith, though even these are subsumed to the tyrannical rule of the Wizard, characterized by discipline and fear. In fact, Frex’s brand of unionism seems to be the ineffectual last gasp of the dispossessed, a conversion which promises meaning and salvation without changing any of the day-to-day sufferings and hardships of its followers. As Elphaba reflects on her father’s missionary work in Oz’s Quadling country, “[t]he Quadlings struggled against the Wizard with ill-argued proclamations, they resorted to totems, but their only military weapons were sling-shots. So they rallied around my father. He converted them, they went into the struggle with the zeal of the newly chastised. They were dispossessed and disappeared. All with the benefit of unionist grace” (Maguire 194). Though an agnostic, Elphaba spends her early days at Shiz exploring the sermons of the early unionists, dedicated to lying in figuring out how the world works, rather than in belief. A constant concern of the clergymen remains the nature and location of evil. However, as Elphaba tells Glinda, on this question, “they didn’t agree, did they? Or else what would they have to write sermons arguing about?”
Echoing Frex’s work among the Quadlings, motivation plays a central role in this discourse, with the unionist ministers working to create a cohesive understanding of the world around them and their place within it. The notion of good and evil which preoccupies Elphaba resonates throughout the other discourses of magic and spirituality, as well as in Maguire’s Oz as a whole, creating a complex and contradictory world in which Elphaba must decide who she is: daughter, sister, student, lover, religious devotee, noble social activist, and Wicked Witch of the West.

Given the skepticism about magic and witchcraft, in *Wicked* these powers are addressed as either partially or almost wholly performative. After being put under a spell in which they are forbidden to speak of their council with Madame Morrible, Glinda and Elphaba try years later to figure out if it was real magic, a form of hypnosis, or simply the suggestion of adult power on the adolescent mind. As Elphaba asks her friend, “is it possible we could be living our entire lives under someone’s spell? How could we tell if we were the pawns of someone’s darker game?” (Maguire 345). In the end, the women are unable to reach a conclusion: Morrible’s predictions for their futures have arguably come true, but they do not feel they are being controlled by a power beyond themselves. Elphaba self-consciously constructs her public identity as a powerful witch, though her magical powers are shaky and suspect at best throughout much of the novel. Elphaba constructs and has her identity publicly constructed as a means to an end: either to claim power for herself or to situate her outside of validated spheres of culture and community, as achieved by the Wizard. However, there are magical feats in Oz that are undeniable, making the case for Oz as a world of magic and mysticism akin to those of similar fairy tales. For example, there is a remarkable magical text called a Grimmerie, “a sort of
encyclopedia of things numinous. Magic; and of the spirit world; and of things seen and unseen; and of things once and future” (Maguire 265), which rearranges itself before the reader’s eyes. Elphaba can freeze water in an instant (Maguire 241) and her broomstick can fly. Despite the predominance of performativity and the conscious construction of identity, magic has real and central power in Oz, some of which Elphaba is able to claim in her own agency and empowerment.

The role of the magic shoes becomes similarly complicated in *Wicked*, with the significance of actual power and its cultural constructions under frequent contestation. The shoes begin as nothing more than a lovely gift of a father to his daughter, Nessarose. Negotiating the discourses of both the Baum and MGM versions which have preceded him, Maguire unfixes the very color of the shoes. As Elphaba looks at them, she wonders “[w]ere they silver? —or blue?—or now red?—lacquered with a candy shell brilliance of polish? It was hard to tell and it didn’t matter; the effect was dazzling” (149). The shoes are sent to Nessarose with her father’s love and for much of the story, they are little more than a pair of shoes, beautiful though they may be. Later, however, Glinda enchants the shoes to allow Nessarose to stand on her own, which her lack of balance caused by her armless-ness had previously prevented. The cultural significance of the shoes quickly surpasses their real power; as Frex, Elphaba and Nessarose’s father, reflects, “Nessa now thinks she needs no one, to help her stand or to help her govern …. In some ways, I think those shoes are dangerous” (Maguire 309). Nessarose’s authoritarian use of the shoes to claim sociopolitical power, which she wields with tyranny, is a direct contrast to Dorothy’s use of the shoes and their significance in earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, where they symbolize Dorothy’s agency and self-actualization, seeing her
safely home. In Nessarose’s possession, the shoes instead become an instrument of fear and repression, suggesting what could happen if the shoes fell into the wrong hands; after all, in earlier versions of the story the shoes are passed on to Dorothy after she has killed the Wicked Witch from whom they are taken. Magical power improperly used can be destructive and repressive, a sentiment echoed upon Nessarose’s death, when the mistreated Munchkinlanders draw on shoe-based rhetoric in their revolt as they cover the dead sorceress’s home with graffitied missives like “NOW THE SHOE’S ON THE OTHER FOOT” (Maguire 346). Glinda gives Dorothy the shoes, not because of any magical power to protect the girl, but rather to get rid of them. As Glinda explains to Elphaba, the Munchkinlanders “had put too much credit in those silly shoes …. I had to get them out of Munchkinland” (Maguire 347). The shoes are little more than an artifact, a representation of power, though this belief proves as significant as magic itself.

Finally, the Broadway version of *Wicked* follows the conflicted discourse of magic laid out by Maguire, highlighting the constructed and performative nature of magic and public power even more dramatically than its predecessor. Much like Maguire’s novel, in the stage production of *Wicked* there are isolated moments of straightforward magic, challenging the potential reading of all witchcraft as self-reflexively and publicly constructed: Elphaba magically powers Nessarose’s wheelchair upon their arrival at Shiz University and in the central defining moment of “Defying Gravity,” Elphaba flies upon her broomstick. However, despite these flashes of actual magic, much of the witchcraft featured, as well as attendant exercises of power and identity, are of a dynamically performative nature, with good and wicked foregrounded in this respect. As Madame Morrible tells Elphaba upon her arrival and the headmistress’s first glimpse of the young
witch’s power, “[m]any years I have waited / For a gift like yours to appear / Why, I predict the Wizard could make you his / Magic Grand Vizier!” (“The Wizard and I”). From this moment forward, Elphaba constructs her self-worth in terms of her acceptance by the Wizard, rather than by her own notions of good and evil. As such, magic in Oz, and Elphaba’s relationship to it become scripted through the value judgment of those in power: namely, the Wizard. In fact, Elphaba considers this promised recognition as the moment that will change her life forever; as she sings, “once you’re with the Wizard / No one thinks you’re strange / No father is not proud of you / No sister acts ashamed / And all of Oz has to love you when by the Wizard you’re acclaimed” (ibid). Her anticipated future as one of the Wizard’s chosen cohorts will seemingly lift her out of her life of difference and rejection; Elphaba even fantasizes that this connection may alter her physical appearance, through her daydreams of the Wizard’s offer to “de-greenify” her (ibid). Elphaba continues to study magic, growing in power, and endeavoring unfailingly toward her final goal of working with the Wizard and gaining his patriarchal approval.

The clear dichotomy of this representation of magic is toppled, however, when the Wizard finally offers Elphaba the acceptance for which she has been longing. First, the Wizard confesses his complete lack of magical power, identifying himself as just “[o]ne of your dime-a-dozen / Mediocrities” (“Wonderful”). As such, rather than respecting Elphaba for her abilities, the Wizard needs the witch in order to lend him the seeming legitimacy of power, carrying out his orders to prove his sovereignty to the disenfranchised citizens of Oz and keep them under the control of his tyranny. This marks the fallen innocence of Elphaba’s understanding of good and evil, as well as her newfound devotion to fighting the injustices and misrepresentations propagated by the
Wizard. However, even though she has been violently disillusioned, Elphaba’s enduring dream of personal success and social inclusion almost allows her to be won over by the Wizard’s slick showmanship and moral relativism. As the Wizard attempts to draw Elphaba into complicity, he tells her that

> Where I’m from, we believe all sorts of things that aren’t true. We call it –
> “history” …
> A man’s called a “traitor”—or “liberator” /
> A rich man’s a “thief”—or “philanthropist” /
> Is one a “crusader”—or “ruthless invader?” /
> It’s all in which label /
> Is able to persist /
> There are precious few at ease /
> With moral ambiguities /
> So we act as though they don’t exist /
> They call me “wonderful” /
> So I am wonderful! (“Wonderful”)

Elphaba momentarily relents, admitting that “[i]t does sound wonderful” (ibid). However, this euphoria is short-lived. The Wizard’s rumored violations against the rights of sentient Animals have appalled Elphaba and given her pause throughout the narrative; in this optimistic moment, Elphaba wants to believe the best of the Wizard and dismiss the dark rumblings as no more than rumors. But the performative illusions of good and evil are revealed as malignant posturing moments later, when Elphaba discovers her mentor, the Goat Dr. Dillamond, captive and abused in the Wizard’s keep, with her formerly brilliant teacher now deprived of language and cultural consciousness.

Elphaba’s magic has been co-opted by the Wizard and even when she is able to wrest it back, her power is not up to the task of saving Dr. Dillamond or exposing the Wizard as the fraud and tyrant he is. Though Elphaba has seen the complexities of power and morality at play in the ruling of Oz, she is alone in her revelation, and when she attempts to publicly decry the Wizard, the same dichotomy of good and evil used to build
and maintain the Wizard’s power is mobilized to destroy Elphaba’s. The Wizard and Madame Morrible begin a concerted fear-mongering campaign, with Elphaba as their target, spreading malicious and outrageous rumors about her powers and her wickedness. As Glinda and Fiyero celebrate their engagement, Oz is abuzz with talk of Elphaba, with citizens weighing in on the latest stories demonizing Elphaba, backed by the Ozians’ full-fledged belief and their attendant pleas for the Wizard, Morrible, and Glinda to protect them with their “goodness.” Rumors abound, including claims that “I hear she has an extra eye that always remains awake / I hear that she can shed her skin as easily as a snake …[and] I hear her soul is so unclean, pure water can melt her” (“Thank Goodness”). The Wizard’s smear campaign is highly successful, Glinda remains complicit to ensure her privileged position, and the Ozians live in fear of a villainous Wicked Witch of the West, one who exists nowhere but in the propaganda of the Wizard. Therefore, while Elphaba’s magic is a personal source of agency, it remains no match for the Wizard’s patriarchal authority.

The role of the magic shoes is dramatically marginalized in Schwartz and Holzman’s Wicked and Dorothy never appears on-stage at all, instead seen only as a dark silhouette being bid farewell by Glinda. As in Maguire’s novel, the shoes are a gift to Nessarose, but in this version, Elphaba is the one responsible for enchanting the shoes and giving her sister horrific power. Elphaba casts a spell on the slippers that allows formerly wheelchair-bound Nessarose to stand on her own; as Elphaba rejoices, “at last / I’ve done what long ago I should / And finally from these powers, something good / Finally, something good!” (Cote 166). However, echoing her downfall in Maguire’s novel, Nessarose immediately abuses her newfound abilities, taking Elphaba’s spellbook
and using witchcraft on Boq, the object of her unrequited love: when Boq confesses his love for Glinda, telling Nessarose that “I lost my heart to Glinda the moment I first saw her” (ibid), Nessarose literalizes the Munchkinlander’s claim, nearly killing him in the process. Only Elphaba is able to save Boq’s life, turning him into “a creature who can live without a heart” (ibid, emphasis original), the Tin Woodman made famous in preceding versions. The magical shoes and her abuse of their power make Nessarose monstrous and in the aftermath of her disastrous spell, she becomes the Wicked Witch of the East, echoing Maguire’s novel.

Complicating the dual discourses of deviance and empowerment surrounding traditional representations of witchcraft, these five versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative provide a range of enchanted lands and magical women. The versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story by Baum, MGM, and Lumet present readers and viewers with an undeniably, and largely unexplainable, magical world. The witches in these tellings of Oz have amazing powers that they use to help or hinder Dorothy, though the use of magic is often inexplicably limited, such as when the Wicked Witch is unable to attack Dorothy in Munchkinland in MGM’s *Wizard of Oz*. However, Maguire’s *Wicked* is the turning point in this narrative tradition, with representations of magic combined with multiple discourses of supernatural power and belief. Finally, in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, magic and performativity are simultaneously engaged, building upon a preoccupation with identity construction and self-identification central to Maguire’s novel, bringing intersections of magic, reality, and illusion to the forefront of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative.
ELPHABA OR THE WICKED WITCH OF THE WEST?:
REREADING THE MAGICAL WOMAN

One of the most significant repercussions of the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman is that these works prompt a multi-textual rereading of the versions which have preceded them, through their dynamic reimagining of magic and witchcraft, as well as the figure of the witch. Unlike discourses of gender, race, and home, the role of magic in American culture has not varied dramatically from one historical moment to the next. The dual conversations regarding witchcraft as either deviant or empowering have remained largely consistent in their representations, though the discourses of power have gradually superceded those of danger. As the stigmatization of magical women in popular culture has been challenged and interrogated in texts such as *Wicked*, their readers and viewers are invited to reflect upon earlier representations, reconsidering the silenced voices of the contemporary witch’s predecessors. Therefore, the literary and theatrical versions of *Wicked* play an important role in negotiating and reimagining the mythology surrounding the figure of the witch in the traditional *Wizard of Oz* narrative, prompting a revisionist reading of those which have come before and creating a complex and multiply-layered understanding of the witches of Oz, especially the character alternately referred to as Elphaba or the Wicked Witch of the West.

The versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman are remarkable in their positioning at the intersection of the dual discourses of magic and witchcraft in American culture. While earlier *Wizard of Oz* tales, including Baum’s children’s book, MGM’s classic film, and Lumet’s *The Wiz* present dichotomous representations of good and evil witches set dramatically against one another, beginning with Maguire’s *Wicked,*
good and evil intersect in the character of Elphaba, her agency, and the public
construction of her identity. This intersection results in a dynamic and multidimensional
heroine, giving the Wicked Witch an identity and plausible motivation that she has lacked
in previous versions.

While both versions of *Wicked* present Elphaba as a well-rounded heroine rather
than a flat caricature, like earlier wicked witches of Oz, this development has little
influence on the trajectory of the plot itself. In the end, Elphaba is as disenfranchised as
any of her predecessors. The evil witches presented by Baum, MGM, and Lumet are
destroyed without a second thought: after all, given their wickedness, they deserve
destruction. Elphaba is destined for the same fate, though in both the novel and the
Broadway production, the process of her public vilification is demystified. In
understanding the reasons and means through which Elphaba has been labeled “wicked,”
the reader and theatre-goer are required to engage with the narrative from a new
perspective and a heightened critical level.

Maguire’s *Wicked* follows Elphaba’s story from the moment of her birth and
readers’ affinity is clearly intended to lay with the green-skinned heroine, an
identification compounded by the third-person narrative voice which addresses Elphaba’s
position, as well as her joys, sorrows, and uncertainties. Elphaba’s identification is most
fully realized in the novel’s only first-person section, blended as it is with third-person
narration lending perspective as well as autonomy, when Elphaba reflects on her life in a
fevered dream-state, while she waits for Dorothy to arrive at Kiamo Ko. As Elphaba
reflects,

I see myself there: the girl witness, wide-eyed as Dorothy. Staring at a
world too horrible to comprehend, believing—by dint of ignorance and
innocence—that beneath this unbreakable contract of guilt and blame there is always an older contract that may bind and release in a more salutary way. A more ancient precedent of ransom, that we may not always be tormented by our shame. Neither Dorothy nor young Elphaba can speak of this, but the belief of it is in both our faces … (Maguire 383)

This unique narrative position and presentation is briefly carried over as Elphaba realizes the impending nature of her own death, told from a disconnected third-person perspective that is nevertheless powerfully situated with Elphaba herself, seeing those she loves who have passed on before her. As Maguire writes, “[a]n instant of short pain before numbness. The world was floods above and fires below. If there was such a thing as a soul, the soul gambled on a sort of baptism, and had it won? …. A ring of expectant faces before the light dims; they move in the shadows like ghouls” (Maguire 402-3). Maguire’s Elphaba escapes easy categorization and narrative vilification because she cannot understand herself or her position within Oz; she fights warring responses of guilt and joy, searching for an identity that is never validated. Elphaba’s confusion and Maguire’s embrace of the muddled state that is the witch’s dreaming and dying mind are integral in situating the narrative powerfully with Elphaba’s position, demanding consideration, if not acceptance or even conclusive resolution.

In addition, the development of Elphaba’s identity, as well as her magic and its manipulation by outside sources, such as Madame Morrible, is foregrounded, highlighting the constructed nature of her identity and inviting readers to look beyond the clear-cut dichotomies of good and evil furthered by earlier versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative, such as those by Baum, MGM, and Lumet. The attempted conscription of Elphaba’s power by Madame Morrible and the Wizard’s regime leaves the young woman even more confused about her own identity and the scope of her magical powers. Lulling
Glinda, Nessarose, and Elphaba into a semi-hypnotic state, Morrible tells the girls of her intention to make them “a trio of Adept[s]” (Maguire 159). As Morrible explains, “[i]n the long run I would like to assign you behind-the-scenes ministerial duties in different parts of the country …. Let us say you will be secret partners of the highest level of government. You will be anonymous ambassadors of peace, helping to restrain the unruly element among our less civilized populations” (ibid). Despite their resistance, Morrible’s prediction arguably comes true and Elphaba looks back on this as a turning point, a defining moment in her life, and wonders just how in control of her own actions she has been, whether free will has been her own.

As with Maguire’s complication of Elphaba herself, the construction of her identity and the manipulation of her power make her position within Oz and her designation as wicked, which comes after all as a result of her resistance to Morrible and the Wizard, increasingly complex, defying easy categorization and moving her beyond representations of good and evil. The struggle between Elphaba and Morrible epitomizes the conflicting discourses of the witch in American culture as either empowering or threatening, with Madame Morrible coming out on top, using the validated power of patriarchy to crush Elphaba, the strong woman of magical agency. Elphaba consciously adopts the title of “witch,” claiming strength and independence through the fear of others: because she is seen as a witch, she is able to follow her own desires and is relatively unbothered in her movement through Oz. However, Elphaba’s engagement with this discourse of witchcraft as empowering is dramatically countered by Morrible and, by extension, the Wizard himself. Drawing on the rhetoric of the witch as dangerous, Morrible and the Wizard are able to turn most of the citizens of Oz against Elphaba,
dehumanizing her in the eyes of those who fear her and scripting her body and actions as aberrant and uncontrollable. The contradictory discourses surrounding the witch as simultaneously a figure of agency and destruction come into direct contestation in Maguire’s *Wicked*, a struggle which ends with the witch outcast and marginalized, effectively stripped of the empowerment she had once claimed from her title and magical self-identification.

In addition, Maguire complicates notions of magic in general, situating such occurrences within the context of larger social and political realities of Oz,72 prompting readers to critically consider Elphaba’s position within this world where reality is often eclipsed by illusion. For example, when Dorothy’s house arrives in Oz, Ozians immediately begin working to spin the situation to their advantage. As Maguire writes of the tornado, “[s]uch a maelstrom had not been known in Oz before. Various terrorist groups claimed credit, especially when news got around that the Wicked Witch of the East—also known as the Eminent Thropp, depending on your political stripe—had been snuffed out” (333). Rather than situating characters as good or evil, Maguire explores how they came to gain such a reputation and highlights the ways in which the citizens of Oz, whatever their beliefs or values, are fighting for power and a voice through which their experiences can be heard. In the midst of this fight, however, Elphaba is largely silenced. While the Wizard stops short of the public vilification of Elphaba played out in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*, she is kept powerless to fight against the Wizard and his tyranny by his kidnapping and murder of those she cares about, including her lover

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72 The critical social engagement of Maguire’s *Wicked* echoes the earlier investment of Lumet’s *The Wiz*, though while Lumet remained grounded in social inequities contemporary to the making of the film, Maguire takes a more metaphorical approach, addressing inequalities and differences of race and class within Oz that can be symbolically read through interpretations of several varieties of lived discrimination and marginalization within American and global cultures.
Fiyero. Within the context of the manipulation of reality and the “official” story, Elphaba is robbed of her agency and, at times, even finds her magic limited. Unable to make out the words of the Grimmerie, a magic spell book she has found, the Wizard chides her, “[o]f course. You must have a hard time making this out … You see, it doesn’t come from this world. It comes from my world” (Maguire 352). After being marginalized in Oz because of her green skin and activism, Elphaba is finally rendered impotent by virtue of being from the wrong world altogether. Power meets limitation, frustration, and self-doubt, giving readers a multi-dimensional witch who is scripted and devastatingly circumscribed by the world of illusions which surrounds her. Just as Elphaba was unable to use her magic to save Dr. Dillamond, she finds herself limited once again, unable to even make sense of the Grimmerie, which could potentially give her the power to fight back against the Wizard.

This revelation of the concerted campaign against Elphaba is further developed in Schwartz and Holzman’s *Wicked*. In this stage production, the two discourses of witchcraft as dangerous or empowering come into direct contestation, conflicting and interacting throughout the musical. Viewers see Elphaba’s responses to her own magic, ranging from intimidation and her inability to control her powers early in the show to her whole-hearted claiming of them to fight against the Wizard and all the odds that have been stacked against her. As Sharon D. Kruse and Sandra Spickeyard Prettyman explain,

In an effort to sanction Elphaba, Morrible labels her a ‘Witch’. In this act, Elphaba ceases to be, replaced by a label, linked to all that is evil and wicked. Yet as we all know, witches are creative, magical people who have power to change the world around them. Morrible (and western society) has co-opted the term and taken away the power associated with it. By naming Elphaba a witch and portraying witches as wicked, they are devalued and made less powerful. (9)
Kruse and Prettyman’s phrase “as we all know” gestures toward the shifting assumptions surrounding discourses of magic and witchcraft in American culture. *Wicked* participates in a contemporary conversation in which the agency and strength of powerful women is acknowledged and even embraced, though this valuation continues to be problematized by the real challenges facing women, including discrimination, objectification, and violence. This new perspective, which however imperfectly creates spaces for the validation of strong women, is in direct conversation with the reflexive sociohistorical critique through which earlier “witches” have been revealed as independent women who often did not fit within the constraints of patriarchal society and therefore had to be reprimanded and contained. However, despite contemporary feminist reclaiming of the “witch” label to celebrate rather than ostracize strong women, the vestiges of stigma still remain when employed within the framework of patriarchal power, such as that used by the Wizard against Elphaba.

In addition to the complication of representations of witchcraft and magic, which here facilitate a reading of Elphaba as simultaneously wonderful and wicked, the construction of Elphaba’s identity in *Wicked* is significant because of its visibility, echoing Maguire’s novel. The Wizard’s aim is the same as those of preceding societies who have challenged and vilified independent women: by devaluing the power of these women, the dominant cultural values and structures, such as patriarchy, are upheld. Elphaba knows of the Wizard’s tyranny, his Animal rights violations, and violent marginalization of the Other, as well as his ultimate powerlessness. This awareness results in an engaged critique of wrongly-seized power and the perceived clarity of truth and illusion, of good and evil furthered by previous versions of the *Wizard of Oz*. 
narrative, this time with the erstwhile Wicked Witch holding legitimate power. In short, Elphaba has the power to destroy him, to reveal his manipulations, and to bring the façade of his power crashing down. To prevent that, the Wizard must publicly demonize Elphaba, framing her testimony as “lies” and her attempts at activism as dangerous. In terms of the way the Wizard excludes Elphaba from the privileged space of social power and identity, his tactics differ little from the vilification of “witches” throughout history. However, in *Wicked*, the process of Elphaba’s public demonization is demystified, with the Wizard and Madame Morrible overtly working to destroy Elphaba and her credibility. As Kruse and Prettyman point out, “[b]y making Elphaba the enemy, the Wizard and Morrible deflect attention from their own deficiencies and in doing so reinforce their own power” (11). The key difference between sympathetic Elphaba and the vilification of the Wicked Witches of Oz in earlier versions of the story is not in their positions, but in the explanation of how Elphaba “became” wicked, an explanation that implicates the Wizard more than the witch.

In addition to the revelation of the campaign against Elphaba, which encourages empathy for the character as well as critical reception of the musical itself, the central position of Elphaba and the encouragement of viewer self-identification with the green girl also results in a highly invested reading of magic and witchcraft as positive expressions of individual agency. In fact, this process of fan engagement is echoed in audience responses to the musical, especially in its overwhelming fan base of teen girls. As Wolf points out in “*Wicked* Divas, Musical Theater, and Internet Girl Fans,” “[b]ecause fans interpret characters through the lens of contemporary assumptions about acting, psychology, and interiority (even in musical theatre), they value the diva who
(like them) grows and changes” (49). Through their critical approaches to musical theatre and popular culture in general, young women imagine bonds with the onstage characters, establishing a powerful empathy with the heroines of *Wicked*, elevating Elphaba and skeptically viewing the Wizard in a direct inversion of previous productions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. As Wolf theorizes the fan culture surrounding *Wicked*, she draws on Jackie Stacey’s theories of female fandom laid out in *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*. Building on Stacey’s theory, Wolf describes four increasingly intense stages of fan attachment: emotional affinity (“a loose attachment to the star”), imitation (using stars as role models for appearance or behavior), projection (“processes whereby the audiences’ identities become bound up” with those of the stars outside of the performance context), and identification (“intense pleasure of taking on the identity of the star” while watching the performance … These young fans use the diva to navigate daily life, to understand themselves better, and to feel confident in themselves. (50-1)

Further emphasizing the role of self-identification in reimagining the erstwhile Wicked Witch of the West is the sheer number of girls who critically and actively align themselves with Elphaba’s position in *Wicked*. As Wolf explains, “most girls identify with Elphaba, naming similarities to themselves such as being a good student, a bookworm, an outsider, being insecure, sarcastic, realistic, outspoken, fatalistic, dorky, into animal and social rights, and not being pretty” (51). While these young women are relating to Elphaba’s outsider status and marginalization, they are also participating in discourses of confidence and empowerment; as Wolf continues, in relating to Elphaba’s exclusion, “[a]t the same time, these girls are well aware that identifying with the character who has a hard time also aligns them with the quintessential diva, the singer of
big, belting songs of self-determination and self-celebration” (ibid). The identification of young female viewers with Elphaba positions them to critically read representations of magic and witchcraft in *Wicked* within a context of power, identity, and agency, prompting a reevaluation of likewise marginalized or vilified women in literature, film, and theatre.

The demystification of Elphaba’s publicly-constructed wickedness in the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman, as well as the dynamic self-identification of young women with Schwartz and Holzman’s Elphaba, enables a dramatic rereading of the wicked witches who have preceded her. In this respect, these two versions of *Wicked* are actively revisionist texts, not only retelling the familiar *Wizard of Oz* story from a new perspective, but prompting readers, viewers, and theatre audiences to look back to the versions of Baum, MGM, and Lumet from a new perspective and, in some cases, even reinvesting previous characters with an agency and depth they may not have had in their original incarnations. As Gossy’s theory of the untold story suggests, realizing what has been left out of preceding mainstream versions necessitates a rereading which looks toward absence as well as presence, creating a desire to know what has gone untold and why (6). In the context of reading or viewing either version of *Wicked*, for example, it becomes impossible to look MGM’s Wicked Witch of the West the same way again: the brilliance of Hamilton’s characterization begins to assert itself even more powerfully and the viewer finds herself speculating on the witch’s motivations, perhaps even wondering whether she was really all that wicked after all. The MGM narrative upholds the Wicked Witch of the West as a clearly monstrous antagonist, but the intervention of *Wicked*

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73 While Wolf’s study focuses predominantly on young women’s Internet communities surrounding *Wicked*, the issue of self-identification is foregrounded by general audiences as well, evidenced by the inclusion of a detailed “Are You More Glinda or More Elphaba?” quiz in Cote’s *Grimmerie* (68).
creates an alternative reading position, highlights the lack inherent in the representation of the Wicked Witch, and invites a critical perspective foreshadowed by Rushdie’s embrace of the Wicked Witch, who he argues is the stronger and more compelling of MGM’s two witches (42-3). The versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman intervene in the traditional *Wizard of Oz* narrative, reclaiming the figure of the Wicked Witch of the West and providing her with a name and a backstory. While earlier versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative are not fundamentally changed in the slightest by this revisionist approach and the elevation of Elphaba to heroine position, Maguire’s novel and Schwartz and Holzman’s musical dynamically create a new position of reading and identification, challenging preceding discourses of magic and witchcraft throughout the *Wizard of Oz* tale.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Representations of magic and witchcraft in multiple versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative reveal a shifting balance between the dual discourses of magic as either destructive or empowering, though the dualism itself remains constant throughout these retellings of the familiar tale. In Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the magical woman is monstrous and excessive, destructive in her desire and power, which threatens to destroy all of Oz, an image of danger and potential devastation that is undisturbed in MGM’s classic film. In Lumet’s *The Wiz*, the threat of magic becomes more grounded in the mundane, through surreal combination of the fantastic with the everyday, such as the monstrous subway garbage cans that attack Dorothy and her friends. In addition, *The Wiz* is the first of these versions of the *Wizard of Oz* story to implicitly address the Wicked
Witch’s power as largely performative, through foregrounding the abuse of her tyrannical authority, as opposed to magical prowess, over others. The versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman highlight the tension between the dual discourses of threat and agency surrounding representations of magic and witchcraft in American popular culture, recasting Elphaba as the magical heroine with whom readers and theatre-goers empathize and self-identify. These versions of *Wicked* also complicate absolute readings of good and evil, magical power and performativity. Elphaba undoubtedly has some measure of true magical skill, though much of her identity as a witch is scripted instead through her publicly performed and constructed identity, both that which she herself claims and that which is thrust upon her by the Wizard and his campaign against her.

The only magical element of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative that remains relatively constant throughout are the magical shoes, worn by Dorothy and, in later versions, Nessarose, the Wicked Witch of the East, though their significance is also negotiated through revision and reinvention. While the shoes magically transport Dorothy home in Baum’s version, as well as many of those which followed, in both MGM’s *Wizard of Oz* and Lumet’s *The Wiz*, Dorothy’s homecoming is predicated on a process of self-discovery and independence, making the shoes doubly significant in these films of Dorothy’s growth as well as passage back home. In both versions of *Wicked*, the shoes continue to have magical powers, allowing Nessarose to walk, though they also assume a more political purpose as well, signifying Nessarose’s tyrannical and wrongly-seized power and complicating their previous signification of knowledge and self-actualization.
Finally, the figure of the Wicked Witch of the West is remade as Elphaba by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman in a dynamic act of rereading the magical woman. Discourses of magic in American popular culture have not undergone significant shifts such as those experienced by those surrounding gender, race, and home: representations of magic and witchcraft continue to be informed by a strict dualism of the threat of destruction and the potential for personal empowerment, especially for women. Though the nature of this discourse has not changed, the struggle between these two approaches is evident in many versions of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative and is especially significant in Maguire’s novel and Schwartz and Holzman’s Broadway production. One remarkable result of the reclaiming of the monstrous Wicked Witch of the West as Elphaba, a multi-faceted and compelling female hero, is the reconsideration of versions which have come before, highlighting the significance of earlier representations of strong women as aberrant and dangerous. This reframing of a recognizable villainess as a heroine in her own right creates a new position for reading earlier representations from a unique vantage point, with the possibility for reading against the grain of the text to create spaces for empowerment and self-identification that had been previously impossible. This new position remains problematic, however, in *Wicked* as well as in its predecessors, because in the end, Elphaba is still destroyed, as in Maguire’s novel, or marginalized through exile, as in Schwartz and Holzman’s musical. Therefore, while both versions of *Wicked* create new spaces for power and empathy for Elphaba, the concurrent discourse of magic and witchcraft as dangerous proves inescapable, curtailing the celebration of the strong and independent woman with her familiar and seemingly inevitable destruction.
CONCLUSION

Over the past one hundred years, the *Wizard of Oz* narrative has been revised and reinvented, with each new imagining reflecting shifting notions of American identity. Baum’s *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* espoused the adventurous spirit of the frontier, while establishing the proper place of the “good” girl as firmly situated within home and family. MGM’s film classic *The Wizard of Oz* created the stunning visual Technicolor image that is now synonymous with Oz, added music and glamour to the familiar story, and underscored the significance of home in the midst of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Sidney Lumet’s *The Wiz* appropriated the tale of Oz for an African American audience, revealing and displacing the always already white identity of young Dorothy, as well as adding a new, urban look and sound to the story. Gregory Maguire’s novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* disrupted dichotomies of good and evil femininity, reclaiming the Wicked Witch—here named Elphaba—and developing her into a compelling three-dimensional heroine in her own right, while challenging the previously idyllic image of Oz. Finally, Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *Wicked* took Elphaba’s story to the stage, further exploring her activism and Otherness, as well as highlighting an intense friendship between Elphaba and Glinda, which has created space for reading same-sex desire within the *Oz* narrative. As these five representative versions demonstrate, the *Wizard of Oz* story has been—and will continue to be—a touchstone narrative for considering the evolution of American identity. The unquestioned patriarchal power of the Wizard in early versions of Baum and MGM became troubled in *The Wiz* and
explicitly challenged in both versions of *Wicked*. The African American appropriation of *The Wiz*, Elphaba’s greenness in both versions of *Wicked*, and the racial Otherness of many of Oz’s inhabitants, including MGM’s Munchkins and the Animals of Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman have challenged the hegemony of Oz, increasing the multicultural range of this narrative discourse, while both versions of *Wicked* work to create space for queer readings of this familiar story. The on-going reinventions and reimaginings of this uniquely American fairy tale continue expanding the bounds of who counts as an “American” and the available range of possible embodiments of national identity on offer.

The enduring resonance of the *Wizard of Oz* story with contemporary audiences and continuing appeal that keeps drawing authors, filmmakers, and theatrical producers back to this familiar narrative can be found in the fairy tale’s engagement with the contested meanings surrounding American identity and its role in revising and recasting discourses of American myth. Baum’s children’s book occupies the moment of Westward Expansion, when the nation and its citizens had a relatively tenuous hold upon their environment and found themselves challenged by Native Americans and the landscape of the frontier. As a result, the image of ideal American identity created by Baum was largely prescriptive, focusing as much on who was excluded as who was included, marginalizing non-whites and firmly situating the proper place of the woman as within the domestic sphere of the home. In doing so, the myth-making imperative was to reinforce patriarchal power, make sense of the struggle of settlement, and underscore a sense of nationalistic exceptionalism, at which Baum succeeded with his *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Over the past century, the *Wizard of Oz* story has been reengaged and
reimagined on innumerable occasions, used to critique and consider shifting notions of American values and identity from the Great Depression and World War II to the Civil Rights and feminist movements, and beyond.

As the most recent reinvention addressed here, Schwartz and Holzman’s Broadway musical *Wicked* provides insight on the current state of American identity as explored through the *Wizard of Oz* narrative. Building on Maguire’ characterization of Elphaba, Schwartz and Holzman offer a representation of American identity as providing a range of opportunities outside of the domestic space of home and family for strong women, in which their power can achieve a measure of validation. However, in the end, the aberrant female hero and the racialized Other must be contained, if not altogether destroyed. Therefore, while the range of representations, perspectives, and positions have been expanded over the past one hundred years through continual engagement with the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, discourses of American identity still remain contested and problematic, especially in regard to gender, race, home, and magic.

The *Wizard of Oz* narrative has resonated with audiences for more than a century and looks as though it will continue to do so well into the foreseeable future. As I have been working on this project, yet another series of *Wizard of Oz* reinventions have come out, attesting to continued engagement with this familiar narrative. In 2007, the Sci-Fi Channel aired the Emmy-nominated*74* original miniseries *Tin Man*. Starring Zooey Deschanel as D.G., a modern-day descendent of Dorothy Gale, and spanning three evenings, *Tin Man* added a stylized twist to Baum’s fairy tale, combing the genres of

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* Tin Man received Emmy nominations in several categories, including outstanding visual effects, sound mixing and editing, art direction, hairstyling, costuming, and makeup, as well as a nomination in the “Outstanding Miniseries” category; *Tin Man* won the Emmy for “Outstanding Makeup for a Miniseries or Movie (Non-Prosthetic)” (“Awards for Tin Man”).
science fiction, fantasy, and the western. Marvel Comics has released an eight-issue series of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, with story by Eric Shanower and art by Skottie Young. While the narrative remains almost identical to Baum’s original, the graphic reinvention emphasizes the dynamically visual reimagining achieved by Shanower and Young. The Pillsbury® Company even uses allusions to the *Wizard of Oz* tale to associate their product identity with the warmth and comfort of home, in a series of recent commercials that shows far-flung family members closing their eyes and clicking their heels three times, then finding themselves magically gathered around the dinner table with, of course, a steaming basket of fresh Pillsbury® crescent rolls. This idyllic image is underscored with the tagline, “[h]ome is calling,” relying on the cultural memory of the *Wizard of Oz* story to create recognition, positive association, and presumably, increased sales. Given this recent proliferation of continued negotiation of the *Wizard of Oz* narrative, as well as the multiple versions over the past one hundred years, it seems safe to say that the fascination with and reinvention of the *Wizard of Oz* tale will continue well into the foreseeable future.

What it means to be American and the role of these thematic concerns within the construction of that meaning will continue to be negotiated and struggled over, and the ongoing reinvention of the *Wizard of Oz* story will remain at the center of this discourse. With political unrest at home and abroad, economic crisis looming, and Barack Obama taking his historic place as America’s first African-American president, what form will these new representations and reimaginings take? How will they adapt to reflect the changing nature of the American people? While the form of the next transformation of
the *Wizard of Oz* narrative remains to be seen, one thing is certain: Americans can’t wait to see where the Yellow Brick Road will take us next.


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“No One Mourns the Wicked.” Perf. Kristin Chenoweth.


“What Is This Feeling?” Perf. Idina Menzel, Kristin Chenoweth.


“Ease on Down the Road.” Perf. Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Nipsey Russell, Ted Ross.

“The Feeling That We Have.” Perf. Theresa Merritt, Diana Ross.


“No Bad News.” Perf. Mabel King.

“You Can’t Win.” Perf. Michael Jackson, Derrick Bell, Roderick-Spencer
Sibert, Kashka Banjoko, Ronald Stevens.


“Follow the Yellow Brick Road.” Perf. Billie Burke, Judy Garland, Munchkins.

“Off to See the Wizard.” Perf. Billie Burke, Judy Garland, Munchkins.


*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.* Dir. Otis Turner. Written by L. Frank Baum and Otis


---. “The Liberating Potential of the Fantastic Projection in Fairy Tales for Children.”