Abstract

Poisoned Poppies:
Popular Images of the Witch in the United States

By Jennifer Elaine Huck

This paper on the popular culture images of the witch in the United States focuses on the role of “The Wizard of Oz” in forming those images. Using gender analysis the history of L. Frank Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz will be traced. Comparisons will be made between the images in Baum’s literary and MGM’s film versions of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. The changes in the images of the witches will be explored and analyzed. The impact of MGM on the images of the witch in the United States and what that means for women will also be analyzed.
Poisoned Poppies:
Popular Images of the Witch in the United States

A Thesis

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Jennifer Elaine Huck

2005
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family for their love and support
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With the completion of “Poisoned Poppies: Popular Images of the Witch in the United States” I would like to acknowledge all of the individuals who helped make this possible. First, thank you to Judith P. Zinsser, Mary E. Frederickson, and David B. Wolcott who helped me by reading countless drafts and making constructive criticism. Thank you to Janet H. Stuckey who provided access to and assistance in Walter Havinghurst Special Collections. I would also like to express thanks to the librarians at King Library on Miami University’s campus for their assistance during the different stages of research on this project.
Reprinted from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
Published by George M. Hill, 1900
Illustration by W.W. Denslow
Courtesy Miami University Special Collections
Poisoned Poppies: Popular Images of the Witch in the United States

Introduction

The image of the witch within United States popular culture has a long-standing tradition in history, children’s literature and Hollywood. This thesis will examine the witches’ connection with all three of those areas. It will also be necessary to define what is meant by the term witch. When the term witch is used it refers to the concept of women’s access to magic. Women and men have had a love hate relationship with the image of the witch throughout history. On the one hand the image of the witch provides women with a certain sense of innate power over both their environment and fellow citizens. While on the other hand, there is a great deal of fear connected with the image of the witch. Women have been persecuted and even executed for their association with the witch. The image of the witch derives it power from the idea that women have the potential to use the power of the witch for good or evil.

The story of the Wizard of Oz is a prime example of this definition of a witch. Within the Wizard of Oz, there are examples of women who use their magic for both good and evil purposes. The character of Dorothy who, once she enters the Land of Oz, gains access to magic and then has to decide whether or not to use that magic and for what purpose. There is evidence within the Wizard of Oz that Dorothy uses her magic potential for both good and evil; she is a young woman caught in the middle of the struggle between good and evil.

Many works have examined the Wizard of Oz and connected it to a variety of different concepts. However, no work up until this point has extracted certain images from the Wizard of Oz and examined them over time in order to gage their impact on the American public. A brief historiography surrounding studies of the Wizard of Oz will help to illustrate this point.

An extensive amount of work has been done in order to connect the Wizard of Oz to other concepts within American culture and explain both its longevity and importance within the culture. There have been biographies written about the life of L. Frank Baum who created the original Oz story and the character that would eventually become an integral part of American popular culture. Katherine Roger’s work entitled L. Frank Baum: Creator of the Wizard of Oz clearly chronicles Baum’s complicated life. She
concisely chronicles many important events in his life including his many changes of employment. In addition to Baum, biographies have been written on some of the actors and actresses who took part in MGM’s famous portrayal of the” Wizard of Oz” in 1939. The most widely chronicled of these actresses is Judy Garland, who has several biographies chronicling her life, one of which is entitled *Get Happy*, by Joseph Clark. Although both Baum and Garland have several books that trace their lives and achievements, Margaret Hamilton, who played the Wicked Witch of the West within MGM’s film is a personality who has not been explored in any great depth. In spite of her famous portrayal as the Wicked Witch of the West authors have not seen fit to piece together her life or record her accomplishments. Like wise, Billy Burke who played Glinda in the now infamous film is another example of a life and character that has been untouched by authors. Both of these women and their lives remain an untapped source of information and intrigue for historians. The thesis will piece together the lives of these two actresses who helped to create the iconic images of the good and evil witch.

In addition to biographical works there are a variety of other works including Paul Natherson’s *Over the Rainbow* and Michael Riley’s *Oz and Beyond*. These authors attempt to connect MGM’s film with its roots that is they attempt to connect Baum’s literary classic with the film, which it gave life to. While these authors illustrate these strong connections between Baum’s work and MGM’s film they do very little to examine film and stage productions that occur after 1939, or to examine specific images within either the book or film. Both of these authors treat the Wizard of Oz as a cohesive unit, instead of examining the individual parts.

A third area of research that has been done on the “Wizard of Oz” involves the making of the 1939 film. Works that chronicle the making of the film and the decisions that went into the formation of theses now iconic images include two specific works, Janet Wascov’s *How Hollywood Works* and Aljean Harmetz *The Making of the Wizard of Oz*. Both of these books do a good job of accounting for factors that went into the making of MGM’s classic, however neither of these books focus’s on specific characters and images from the film.

The final area of work that has been done on the Wizard of Oz connects Baum’s classic to the Populist Movement in the early 20th century. Jean Clayton’s *Populism*, for
example, sees images from Baum’s book as metaphors for the historical time in which the book was written. Examples of these metaphorical connections include the scarecrow representing farmers, the tin-man representing industry and the cowardly lion, representing William Jennings Bryan. While this type of interpretation is both interesting and helpful for historians in explaining the popularity of the book it does little to explain either the female images or the impact of either the book or film on women.

This thesis fills this gap in the study of the “Wizard of Oz”; this work will focus specifically on the images of the witches both good and evil portrayed within the “Wizard of Oz”. It will explain the significance of these images in relation to women within American society. And it will also trace the evolution of these images from the historical witch trials to children’s literature, film and finally American popular culture. The “Wizard of Oz” will serve as a unique vehicle for this project, because it has connections with all of these areas.

When little girls decide they want to be a witch for Halloween, a second decision must be made before the costume can be put together, will she be a good witch or a bad witch? These two images, although they both access the magic held by a witch are two completely different images. When a little girl decides she wants to be a good witch, the costume often resembles Glinda from the Wizard of Oz, a mix between a fairy and a princess. The little girl will often carry a magic wand, much like a fairy godmother instead of a broom, which is often the prop for the wicked witch.

When the young girl decides she wants to be a bad or wicked witch the image into which she transforms herself closely resembles that of the wicked witch of the west in the Wizard of Oz. The child is often dressed in black with a black pointed hat, green face paint or a mask and sometimes even a crooked nose, as well as a broom, to carry which symbolizes the broom that the wicked witch flew on in MGM’s classic film. Both of the images briefly described above are not only popular costumes for Halloween, but the images they portray come directly from MGM’s 1939 film version of Baum’s classic MGM’s The Wizard of Oz. was released June 6, 1939. Major cities such as Los Angeles and in particular the Capital Theater in New York City were some of the first to screen the film for the American public. The continuing impact of this film is due in large part to the continuation of the viewing in American homes from year to year and generation to
generation. In order to understand the popular culture image of the witch and its impact on Americans, particularly women, *The Wizard of Oz* must be analyzed in various forms from literature to film and even stage productions, but the greatest emphasis needs to be applied to MGM’s version because of its lasting appeal and overwhelming impact.

The idea of witchcraft and the image of the witch began to be formulated and dealt with long before the L. Frank Baum’s *The Wizard of Oz* was ever written, published or sold within the United States. The idea and image of the witch was an ongoing formulation that began with the witch hunts in Europe that then spread to the United States in the late seventeenth century and finally became a part of children’s literature with fairy tales, such as *Snow White*, that originated in Europe and were brought to the United States with immigrants.

The European witch-hunts, which occurred from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, have been difficult for historians to unravel. Many of the records of these witch trials have been destroyed. In spite of the lack of evidence, historians in both Europe and the United States have attempted to reconstruct what happened as well as to explain why it happened. Many different theories have been advanced to try to explain the witchcraft hysteria. In order to understand the popular culture image of the witch within the United States it will be necessary to examine the historiography of the European and United States witch hysterias in order to ascertain what sort of images of witches were formed from these proceedings.

An area of interest to historical scholars has been to place the witch hunts within a gendered analysis. A prime example of this type of work comes from Anne Barstow. Barstow contends that the European witch-hunts were a result of the European elite imposing their fear of diabolical activity over contemporaneous mystical religious beliefs. Another theory states that the belief in witchcraft began with an ancient peasant cult of Diana that was exploited by elites. This theory’s main supporter was Carlo Ginzburg, whose work is entitled *The Night Battles*, published in 1983. Stewart Clark, whose work is entitled, *Thinking with Demons*, published in 1997, argues the opposite of Ginzburg, when he writes that the formation of the image of the witch has always been under the control of the elite or intellectual in society. His work is particularly interesting because although Clark does not overtly argue the importance of gender, he nonetheless
proves the importance of gender as an element in the witch persecutions by acknowledging that there was a gender gap within these persecutions.

While Ginzburg and Clark were studying the European witch hysteria and trying to offer explanations for its cause, Francis Hill, Mary Beth Norton, and Marion L. Starkey were doing the same thing with the major outbreak of witchcraft hysteria in the American colonies, which occurred in Salem Mass. The following three authors also put variations on the idea of a psychological component to the witchcraft hysteria: Frances Hill whose work is entitled *A Delusion of Satan*, published in 1997, Mary Beth Norton, whose work is entitled *In the Devil’s Snare*, published in 2003, and Marion L. Starkey whose work is entitled *The Devil in Massachusetts*, published in 1949. These authors argue that the mindsets of villagers and the fears and pressures they were under, caused them to imagine that harm had befallen them due to witchcraft.

The witch-hunts in the history of Europe and the United States have undergone many interpretations, some of which have nothing to do with gender or psychology. The most noted of these theories is the illness theory put forth by Laurie Winn Carlson in *A Fever in Salem*, 1999. This theory contends that the witch hysteria in Salem Massachusetts was initiated by biological factors.

Yet another area of thought and analysis concerning witchcraft beliefs involves looking at witchcraft through a social and cultural lens. Alan MacFarlane, whose work is entitled, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stewart England*, published in 1970, examined the components that constructed the image of the witch and witch hysteria in Essex County, England. He argued that different components of peasant culture converged to form a composite image of the evil witch. He further argued that the witch was a necessary construction that reflected social problems and pressures and created an easy scapegoat for these tribulations.

Paul Boyer and Steven Nissenbaum collaborated on a book that explores the witchcraft hysteria in Salem Massachusetts, entitled *Salem Possessed*, published in 1974. With this work, they also argued that social, culture and political factors combined to allow the hysteria to occur. These studies of the witchcraft hysteria focus on the evil images of the witch and do not even consider the possibility of a good witch. In contrast the story of the “Wizard of Oz” features images of both good and evil witches.
The witches within MGM’s version of “The Wizard of Oz” exemplify both good and evil. These women do not have warring components of themselves. Instead they are polar opposites of one another. Dorothy, a young girl from Kansas who enters Oz, represents the middle ground between the two witches of Oz. Dorothy cannot as easily be placed into a category. The young girl, while wishing to be helpful and loving as well as protective, which are all characteristics of the good witch, possesses hatred first toward Ms. Gulch and then toward the Wicked Witch herself. In addition to signs of ill feelings, Dorothy’s main goal in Oz is to get herself and her dog home to Kansas. While she encourages the Scarecrow, Tinman, and Cowardly Lion to reach for their dreams, her primary goal remains her own return home.
Reprinted from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
Published by George M. Hill, 1900
Illustration by W.W.Denslow
Courtesy Miami University Special Collections
Chapter 1
Children’s Literature Versions of the Wizard of Oz

The book of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, originally released in 1900, was widely read and well received. This work became the first truly American fairytale. The images of the witches contained within this story are crucial to tracing the evolution of the image of the witch within United States popular culture. In order to trace the evolution of the image of the witch, it will be necessary to examine several different editions of The Wizard of Oz. The versions of Baum’s Wizard of Oz include editions with illustrations by: Baum, Denslow and Copelman, Disney, Laiken, and Weisgard. The Disney version goes beyond simply reworking the illustrations within Baum’s original text. The Disney Corporation actually made significant changes within the text between Baum’s classic and the current edition. Subsequent reprints of Baum’s classic that will be dealt with in this chapter were produced in 1889, 1944, 1978, and 2002. This story, designed to entertain children, captured their imaginations with beloved characters that not only entertained them but also entertained adults as well. Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz introduced its audience to a little girl named Dorothy, who is trapped in a bizarre and magical land. In this land she encounters both good and evil witches, as well as three unique friends, the Scarecrow, Tin man and Cowardly Lion. Together they must work their way through the Land of Oz facing their fears in order to receive their hearts’ desires. “In the history of twentieth-century American literature and entertainment, there are no better-known or more indelible images than these.”

The characters that came to life in The Wonderful Wizard of Oz were loved by such a wide audience of children and adults that Baum continued creating fantasy worlds around various characters from the original book. “The original title was The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. It came out in 1900. Almost 100,000 copies were sold immediately at $1.50.”

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of which were written by Baum, included in this series are *Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz* and the *Tin Woodsman of Oz*. These books along with the others in the series place the beloved characters from the original in new fantasy-based situations. The fact that these books have been reprinted many times is a strong indication of how popular the original *Oz* book became after its publication.

Lynam Frank Baum was born May 15, 1856, a few miles outside of Syracuse, New York in the small town of Chittenango. He had many different jobs throughout his life including publishing newspapers. Then, in 1878 he entered into a professional acting career by joining the Albert M. Palmer’s Union Square Theater, and began writing original plays. In November of 1882, Baum married Maud Gage, daughter of the well-known suffragette Matilda Electra Joslyn Gage. Maud’s mother would spend the winters with them in Chicago, and it was his mother-in-law that encouraged him to write down the stories that he told his children, saying that you should have them published because other children would enjoy hearing them too. Baum passed away from a stroke on May 6, 1919 in Hollywood, California.

When the storybook character Dorothy, enters Baum’s *Wonderful World of Oz* for the first time, she lands squarely on the Wicked Witch of the East, accidentally killing her. The Wicked Witch of the East is never seen except for her feet with silver slippers sticking out from under Dorothy’s house. After killing the Wicked Witch of the East, Dorothy was proclaimed a sorceress by a “little old woman” who would be identified as the Good Witch of the North (illustrated in figure 1). Upon hearing that the elderly woman standing before her was a witch, Dorothy exclaimed, “I thought all witches were

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6 Ibid., 28-29.

wicked!"\(^8\) This sentiment of Dorothy was and still is widespread within American culture. The Witch of the North explains that there were four witches in the Land of Oz, two good and two evil. She explains that she and the Witch of the South are good, whereas the Witches of the East and West are wicked.\(^9\) While explaining witches and wizards to Dorothy, the Witch of the North says “Oz himself is a great wizard, sinking her voice to a whisper. He is more powerful than all the rest of us together.”\(^10\) For even though Dorothy was in a magical land that turned some of her ideas upside down, the witches, who were all women, were still subordinate in power to the one male wizard who reigned over the entire land. As was later discovered, Oz’s powers were nowhere near as strong as those of the witches but the witches still felt themselves subordinate to him because they believed he possessed powers he did not. The fact that the female witches and even Dorothy, who in the end unmask the Wizard as a fraud and discovers that she has the power or magic within herself to return home whenever she wishes, indicates that Baum is trying to send a message to women and young girls, that they possess more power than they realize.

The Witch of the North gives Dorothy the magical silver slippers (illustrated in figure 2) that grant her access to the magic that would eventually take her home and also gives her a kiss that has the power to protect her against the evils she will encounter. However, the Witch of the North feels she does not have the power to send Dorothy home. Instead, she sends her on her way to the Wizard of Oz. Early in her journey, Dorothy is under the mistaken impression that she does not possess any magic; she does not yet realize that she already possesses the magic necessary to return to Kansas. When the Great Oz finally admits the travelers several days later, he insists on seeing them separately. He appears to be something different to each of the travelers. He uses these illusions to make himself appear more powerful than he actually is. After seeing the Wizard of Oz, each of the main characters believes that the Wizard has the power to grant their individual requests. However, he has told each of them that he will not grant their requests until they have successfully killed the Wicked Witch of the West (illustrated in figure 3). The four friends decide to try to fulfill the Wizard’s request. The Wicked Witch

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\(^8\) Ibid., 11.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Ibid., 13.
of the West knew they were on the land she controlled because “the Wicked Witch of the West had but one eye, yet it was as powerful as a telescope, and could see everywhere.”

The Witch was so angry that she sent various magical animals to try and destroy them and capture the silver slippers because she wanted the power they contained. Attempts to capture Dorothy and her friends failed until the Witch sent the flying monkeys after them. Due to the magical kiss that had been bestowed upon Dorothy, the monkeys could not hurt her. She had to become a servant to the Wicked Witch while the Witch tried to figure a way to separate Dorothy from her slippers. Dorothy ends up melting the Wicked Witch of the West.

The Wizard of Oz has a different appearance for each visit by the four main characters. Dorothy and the female characters show a reverence for the male wizard, who notably “great” and “terrible” in the book and film versions of this classic story. The male wizard has the freedom to go back and forth between being harsh and frightening and kind and helpful. The witches never experience this same freedom. They are either “good” or “evil,” they do not have the option of crossing the line.

In the book an illustration by W.W. Denslow of the Wicked Witch melting before Dorothy’s eyes (illustrated in figure 4) depicts the Witch as an ugly old hag with spiked hair and a patch where one of her eyes should have been. It visually depicts evil as ugly. Later depictions of Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, visually tie together the idea of good as equaling beauty. An illustration of Glinda, The Good Witch of the South (seen in figure 5) shows her as both beautiful and much younger than the Good Witch of the North presented earlier in the book. Because of the illustration’s black and white nature, it is difficult to get a true sense of Glinda’s physical characteristics; however, the picture painted in words by the author makes up for any lacks in the illustration. The physical description of Glinda appears after the illustration and describes Glinda, as “she was both beautiful and young to their eyes Her hair was a rich red in color . . . but her eyes were blue and they looked kindly upon the little girl”.

In comparing the illustrations as well as the physical descriptions of the two witches from Oz, the link between good as either beautiful or kind and evil as ugly and wicked is strengthened.

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11 Ibid., 106.
12 Ibid., 191.
13 Ibid., 191, 192.
The character of Dorothy in this children’s story can be thought of as a representation of every American child. Her desire to return to Kansas and home can be thought of as a desire to return to safety and security as well as the known opposed to the unknown. The scarecrow, Woods Man, and Cowardly Lion in this story all lack certain elements of humanity that are crucial to one’s future. The fact that these three characters exemplify the absences of these traits and need Dorothy’s help to gain their brain, heart, and courage can be interpreted as the need for children to use their brain, heart, and courage as they develop and grow old. Dorothy is able to help her friends in the *Wizard of Oz* to gain their heart’s desires because she alone has the power of magic to destroy the Wicked Witch and to help convince them with the help of the unmasked Wizard that they already possessed the characteristics they sought. By the end of the story with the help of Glinda, one of the good witches, Dorothy also realizes that she has access to the magic that will take her home. She just has to look inside herself to find it.

As Baum’s story progresses, it becomes clear that the link between the good magic possessed by the Witch of the North and the Witch of the South allows them the power to safely guide Dorothy and her friends to Oz, and then at the end guide Dorothy home after she has learned the importance of facing her fears, persevering, and most importantly the importance of home. When Dorothy and her friends return to the Emerald City, they discover that Oz is a little magician with no real powers. In the end, Dorothy must go to Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, in order to discover the way back to Kansas. Although it was assumed that the Great Wizard of Oz was the most powerful magical being in Oz, it was discovered through Dorothy’s perseverance that it was not the man who held the power or even who was most helpful. Instead, Dorothy had to turn to women in the form of the Good Witches in order to gain the knowledge she needed to return home. In order to return home, Dorothy must recognize the importance of home for herself, and in that way she possesses power of her own. However, if it had not been for the Good Witch of the North and South, Dorothy would not have been protected in her journey through Oz and she would not have learned that the silver shoes had the power to carry her home.

The initial reception of Baum’s the *Wizard of Oz* by the general public can be illustrated through newspaper reviews and detailed accounts surrounding its publication.
In a New York Times article published in June of 1900 indicated that Baum received royalties of $10,000 with the stipulation that he produce one book a year for the next five years. The sum of $10,000, which in today’s value is equivalent to $221,556.05, indicated that the publishing company assumed that Baum’s work would be favorably received by the American public.\(^{14}\)

The reviews published in 1900 indicate that the *Wizard of Oz* was revolutionary and was different from all other children’s books published before. An article in the New York Times, calls the *Wizard of Oz* “an original departure from children’s literature, in every way novel and unique. The text is charming and will prove of interest to both young and old. The illustrations surpass anything of the idea hitherto attempted.” The success of the book is further indicated by the fact that on the date this newspaper was printed the first printing of Baum’s book, 10,000 copies, had been exhausted and further reprints that year were necessary to keep up with demand for the popular book.\(^{15}\) The books with which Baum’s work competed in 1900 include works by Hans Christian Andersen as well as the Grimm Brothers. Comparisons were also made between *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Baum’s own previous work *Father Goose*. The fantasy nature of this story was further compared to works such as *Alice in Wonderland*.\(^{16}\) The fact that the Wonderful Wizard of Oz eclipsed these and other titles indicates the successful creation of a fantasy world which was believable to children, an interesting plot and characters they could easily associate with. The Wizard of Oz was published in an era during which children’s literature seems to have catered to boys and largely excluded girls. Another explanation for the success of Baum’s work is the fact that it did not exclude girls, while much of the writing of the time targeted boys the Wizard of Oz contains strong female characters that little girls could easily identify with, while at the same time it also had characters that boys could relate to, such as the Scarecrow, Tin-man and Cowardly Lion.


The story of the *Wizard of Oz* has been re-published and re-illustrated by many different publishing companies and illustrators. In spite of the numerous republications, only that produced by the Walt Disney Company deviates significantly from Baum’s original story. Most of the differences within these various versions occur not in the storyline but in the illustrations that accompany the story. By tracing the evolution of the illustrations contained in several of the different versions, it is possible to chart one popular image of the witch in American culture. During the course of examining these various images, I will also analyze them and provide possible explanations for the changes between the images. In 1944, Bobbs Merrill Company released the story of *The Wizard of Oz* under the title of *The New Wizard of Oz*. The title page of this work indicates that Evelyn Copelman illustrated this work and that she adapted her illustrations by consulting those of W. W. Denslow, who illustrated the first two editions of *The Wizard of Oz*, first in 1900 and then in 1903. After comparing the illustrations present in the 1900 and 1944 versions of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* it is clear that the characters have undergone significant visual change. All of the characters in the 1944 version look more like the characters found in the MGM film instead of those originally created by Denslow. While all of the characters undergo change the most striking of these changes occurs in the image of the Wicked Witch of the West, who is transformed from a woman with one eye into a green skinned old hag with both eyes, dressed in black with a black pointed hat and a broom. This image is identical to the Wicked Witch of the West in the 1939 film. The illustrations produced for the 1944 edition were most likely made to resemble the images found in MGM’s film because it was thought audiences reading this story would immediately recognize and identify with these characters.

Examples of changes of the text in order to accommodate new illustrations from 1944 on include the description of the Good Witch of the North, which in the original version is described and subsequently depicted as a little, old woman. The 1900 illustration depicts her as a little, old grandmother. In the 1944 version, the good witch is described as simply a little woman. The 1944 illustration that depicts the Witch of the North portrays the good witch as much younger than in the original story. Her dress is

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covered with stars, which are apparently an outward sign of her magical powers. Her pretty features are kind but serious.

This first chapter has analyzed the physical descriptions both in text and in illustration of the witches in Baum’s literary classic. From this analysis, it is clear that MGM’s 1939 film version of the story transformed the visual images of the witches in the literary versions after its release. These visual images continue to eclipse the imagery associated with the story prior to 1939. Now that the widespread appeal of the classic has been suggested, it will be necessary to analyze how the film took these female characters and used and transformed them within the iconic film.
Figure 3

Reprinted from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
Published by George M. Hill, 1900
Illustration by W.W.Denslow
Courtesy Miami University Special Collections
Chapter 2
Images of the Witches in MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz*.

L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* had a profound impact on children’s literature within the United States. Most individuals within American culture are now introduced to Baum’s work, not through the original literary version, but instead through a 1939 Technicolor silver screen adaptation by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Many people would be surprised to learn, however, that MGM's 1939 film adaptation was not the first film produced claiming to be based on Baum’s fairytale. In 1925 a silent film was created under the direction of Larry Semon and produced by The Oz Film Company. This silent film, while it had the title of “The Wizard of Oz” shares almost nothing with either Baum’s original classic or the MGM production that would later become so famous. The 1925 adaptation has no witches. Instead, this film is built on the premise that Dorothy is the long lost princess of Oz. She enters Oz through the characteristic cyclone and then must defeat the evil rulers of Oz, a prime minister by the name of Kruel and his aid, Lady Vishuss. Dorothy must rely on the help of her new friends the Scarecrow, Tinman, and Cowardly Lion in order to defeat the evil rulers. With their defeat, she takes her rightful place as the princess of Oz. This film did not gain the wide support of the American public who for the most part had loved the original literary classic. Much of their disappointment with this film may have come from the fact that so little of it resembled the book that they had known and loved.

The MGM studios decided to produce a film version of “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” in the late 1930’s. This decision was made after witnessing the success of Disney’s film “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”. According to Aljean Harmetz “With the industry convinced that ‘Snow White’ will be a box office success, there is a wild search by producers for comparable fantasies.”

MGM studios decided to cash-in on excitement surrounding the first American folk tale. According to a 1939 *St. Nicholas* article written by Edith Mcginnis intricate special effects were an important part of the

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Oz magic. She gives details on several of the tricks explaining how they were performed. She also takes special care to mention the trained animals that portrayed roles such as Toto and the horse of many colors.20

“The Wizard of Oz”, which was released in 1939, was based on the Baum classic that had first appeared on American shelves in 1900. As of 1998, “there is hardly a child who is not intimately acquainted with Dorothy and her adventures in the Land of Oz. Media gurus estimate that more than one billion people have either seen the screen version of “The Wizard of Oz “or read L. Frank Baum’s book, and the number continues to grow everyday. Each year countless children and their parents gather in front of their TV sets to watch Dorothy set out on her journey down the yellow brick road”.21

In a Time article that appeared in 1939, it was indicated that a $ 3,000,000 budget was necessary to create this fantastic fantasy. In August of 1939, a Good Housekeeping article was devoted to MGM’s The Wizard of Oz. This particular article includes a short interview between the author Jane Hall and the producer Marvin Leroy of the famous film. This brief interview allowed the producer to explain his fascination with and determination to produce The Wizard of Oz. “Because I’ve wanted to do this story since I was fifteen years old. It just happens.” 22 After her brief interview with Leroy, Hall was able to gain access to the sets and some of the problems with some of the special effects but does not seem overly bothered by them. Hall indicates that those who worked on the film with costuming make up and special effects had every reason to be proud of what they had created. From this review, it can be inferred that this particular author enjoyed her trip into the fantasy world of Oz.

The film starred Judy Garland. She was born on June 10, 1922 in Grand Rapids Minnesota with the name Frances Ethel Gumm. Garland began performing at the age of two and a half. From 1924 to 1935, she was part of a singing trio with her sisters. Garland was always singled out as the little girl with the big voice. In September of 1935, she signed a contract with MGM and would eventually become their biggest female star. During her years at MGM, she made some of the biggest musicals of the

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time, such as *The Wizard of Oz* and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Between 1937 and 1950, her films grossed over $100 million. Judy Garland was nominated for two Academy Awards and one special Academy award for her performance in *The Wizard of Oz*. During her career, she also won five Grammy awards, a Tony award and was nominated for ten Emmy awards. Garland died on June 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1969 as a result of an accidental overdose. Her popularity with the American public can be further evidenced by the fact that 22,000 people filed past her coffin during a 24-hour wake, with 2,000 more having to be turned away. Out of all of the film roles that she portrayed over the years, she will forever be immortalized as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, a role for which she was not the first choice.\textsuperscript{23}

The role of Dorothy was by no means automatically hers. There were arguments within MGM as to whether Garland was enough of a star to fill such an important role. Some executives wanted to borrow Shirley Temple from the Twentieth Century Fox studios because they felt that she was enough of a rising star as well as being small and cute enough to carry out this role so dear to the hearts and minds of the American public. Even though Temple was seriously considered for the role of Dorothy, the idea was eventually discarded because “Shirley could not really sing and it was obvious that she would not be able to carry off the demanding musical numbers”.\textsuperscript{24} Garland was cast in the role for her vocal abilities, in spite of the fact that she was 16 and the character she was supposed to portray was 12. In order to make Garland appear believable in the role of a 12-year-old, the studio had to become creative in order to hide the fact that she was developing as a normal 16-year-old. She was forced to wear special undergarments to hide her maturity. According to Garland, “they decided my bosom was too big, so at first they tried to tape it down. Then a woman turned up who was called the Cellini of the corset world. She made me a corset of steel and I was laced up in that.”\textsuperscript{25} “It was during the filming of “The Wizard of Oz” that Judy was elevated from feature player to star status on the MGM roster”.\textsuperscript{26}

Garland’s vocal abilities were featured prominently within MGM’s *Wizard of Oz*. The music that was an integral part of the film helped to draw the audience deeper into the story. One of the most popular musical numbers in the film was put there specifically to showcase Garland’s talents. “Over the Rainbow” was written by E.Y. Harburg, and composed by Harold Arlen in 1938. Judy Garland in “The Wizard of Oz” first introduced the song to the public a year later. “Garland singing “Over the Rainbow” did something extraordinary in that moment she gave the film its heart, and the force of her rendition is strong, sweet and deep enough to carry us through the tomfoolery that follows, even to bestow upon it a touching quality, a vulnerable charm.”\(^{27}\) The song was so popular that it won best song in the Academy Awards in 1939. “The Wizard of Oz” soundtrack was popular enough to be re-released numerous times between 1956-1962. “Over the Rainbow” has been included as part of several Hollywood soundtracks including a CD entitled “The Hollywood Years” and “Judy Garland the Golden Years”, were both released in 1994.\(^{28}\) In June 2004 “Over the Rainbow” was picked as the top song in the United States cinema. This ranking was determined by the voting of about 1,500 actors, filmmakers, writers, critiques and others in Hollywood.\(^{29}\)

Billie Burke was selected by MGM executives to play Glinda the Good Witch of the North from a list of eight individuals under contract with MGM at the time. The decision was made to cast Burke because it was felt she would play well opposite the wicked witch portrayed by Margaret Hamilton. “She would lighten the menace by treating it as an incomprehensible annoyance”.\(^{30}\) A script from June of 1938 describes Burke’s role as that of a child’s idea of a good fairy. “Outside of her scripted lines, Burke concurred with this description, and referred to her character exclusively as a good fairy rather than use the term witch”.\(^{31}\)


Billie Burke was born August 7, 1885 in Washington D.C. Her given name was Mary William Ethelbert Appleton Burke. She was the only child of William Burke, a Barnum and Bailey Circus clown. After her family moved to London, she performed on the London stage until 1907. She returned to the United States and began performing on Broadway. She met her husband, famed producer Florence Ziegfeld. Before playing Glinda the good witch of the North in “The Wizard of Oz”, Burke had 44 film roles, most of them in silent films. This illustrious film career began occurred in 1916 in a movie entitled Peggy, where she played the lead role. For the most part, she played heroines and lead female roles. Burke, who would be best known for her role as Glinda, executed the role of a young beautiful witch at the age of 54.

At the age of 75, she made her final silver screen appearance in Sergeant Rutledge in 1960. In addition to a stage and film career, Burke also had small roles in television. She guest starred on several series including “77 Sunset Strip”, she also played Melinda on “Doc Corkle”. Burke retired to her home in Los Angeles, where she died of natural causes on May 14, 1970.

Margaret Hamilton, who was cast to play the wicked witch of the West in MGM’s Wizard of Oz, was born in 1902 in Cleveland, Ohio. She was the youngest of four children, and would eventually obtain a teaching certificate in 1923 from Wheelock Kindergarten Training School in Boston. Hamilton was first hired to play a part in a Broadway show by chance. She was trying to help a friend and ended up getting hired for the part herself. The play was a success and afterwards she made over 70 motion pictures and performed in at least that many stage productions. She took part in many projects that were geared for children. Margaret Hamilton often played roles in which she was a nosey neighbor or busy body, she often was also cast as a teacher, but she will be best remembered for her villainous character as the Wicked Witch of the West, a part she almost did not receive. In a book entitled “The Eighth Lively Art,” by Wesley Wehr asserts that the image of Margaret Hamilton’s wicked witch became a famous American Icon who is often depicted with her green skin shrieking and cackling malevolently. In 1957, Margaret Hamilton was quoted as saying “I’ve frightened more children than

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practically anyone else. It always seems so funny to me too, because I love children so much.”

During the production stages of “The Wizard of Oz”, Mervyn LeRoy had approached actress Gale Sondergaard to play the Wicked Witch of the West. Initially the two had thought the Wicked Witch of the West would be a glamorous witch clothed in black and covered in sequins. Individuals around LeRoy pressured him to create an ugly wicked witch instead of a glamorous one. Gale Sondergaard, an Oscar winning beauty wished to play the part of a glamorous evil witch, much like the one seen in Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. After a few weeks, she decided to leave the production because the part in *Oz* would be too degrading for her. With Sondergaard’s departure, Margaret Hamilton, who had no qualms about transforming herself into an ugly witch, stepped into the role.

Those individuals in charge of the film made a variety of decisions that may have seemed small at the time, but in the end determined the images that will forever be part of popular culture. For instance, their decision to mold the two good witches in Baum’s story into one whom they called Glinda, the Good Witch of the North is very significant. The molding of Baum’s Good Witch of the North and Good witch of the South into one beautiful Good Witch of the North served to strengthen the line between the idea of good as young and beautiful and evil as old and ugly, she became a stunning blonde haired, blue-eyed beauty. She was dressed in frilly, pink garb instead of the white of the story, which could have represented purity and virginity. Particularly within American society, pink has had a long-standing association with girls and women. Even though she states she is a witch, her physical appearance and clothing are more like that of a princess or fairy.

To make a sharp contrast, the executives at MGM also changed the Wicked Witch in order to portray the differences between good and evil so they would instantly be understood by the audience without any explanation. The producer, Mervyn LeRoy was pressured into making the Wicked Witch of the West ugly and hateful for the benefit of

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the children in the audience. The decision to make the Wicked Witch of the West green in color was made by individuals working on the MGM film. Margaret Hamilton who played the Wicked Witch of the West relates the story of the various decisions and tests that were done in order to come up with the final costume for her character. “There were primary decisions to be made about what the witch would look like . . . Black next to your skin seemed to give rise to a thin line of white on the edge of black which did not look like edging but rather like separation . . . Perhaps that was why they chose green make-up for my face, neck, and hands.” With the help of “Max Factor which provided Metro’s make-up department with any unusual color make-ups free of extra charge.” The films producers made the contrasts between the screenplay’s two witch characters clearer and reinforced the associations of beauty-equals-good and ugly-equals-evil.

The Wicked Witch appears much earlier in the film than in Baum’s literary version and takes a more active role. The witch appears soon after Dorothy’s arrival in Oz, demanding the magic slippers. The magic slippers serve as a symbol of the constant conflict between Dorothy and the Wicked Witch of the West, helping to move the plot along. Not only does the Wicked Witch of the West appear earlier in the film version, she also appears more often as Dorothy and her compatriots travel through Oz. When Dorothy meets the Scarecrow and the Tin Man, the Wicked Witch reappears. She tells them to “stay away from [Dorothy]! …or I’ll stuff a mattress with you! …and you, I’ll use you for a bee-hive!” The threat, while meant to scare the two, in fact has the opposite effect. They were more determined than ever to protect Dorothy and assist her in reaching the Emerald City. Yet another encounter between Dorothy and the Wicked Witch occurs in the Emerald City. The Witch flies her broomstick over the Emerald City and skywrites a message for Dorothy’s surrender, frightening the inhabitants of the city.

Although the previous incidents are the only times in which Dorothy and the Wicked Witch meet face to face before Dorothy’s capture, there are several other

36 Ibid, XXV.
instances where the Wicked Witch works behind the scenes to thwart Dorothy’s progress. The first of these instances occurs when the Wicked Witch casts some sort of spell on the apple orchard through which Dorothy and the Scarecrow are walking. The result of this spell is that the apple trees come to life and try to punish Dorothy and the Scarecrow for attempting to take apples. While this dark magic on the part of the evil Witch was probably meant to slow Dorothy’s progress toward the Emerald City and leave her open to further attack, it inadvertently leads to the discovery of the Tin Man and added security and protection for Dorothy. The next use of dark magic by the Witch occurs when she places a poison spell over a field of poppies. The Wicked Witch of the West intends to “take care of you now instead of later! Ha, when I gain those ruby slippers, my power will be the greatest in Oz! …Poppies! Poppies! Poppies!”.

The Wicked Witch’s magic spell makes Dorothy, Toto, and the Lion all fall asleep in the field of poppies. It takes a snowstorm, created by Glinda, to reverse the harmful magic and allow Dorothy and her friends to reach the Emerald City. This illustrates for the viewers that good magic is more powerful than evil.

Once “The Wizard of OZ” meets with them at the Emerald City he sends Dorothy and her friends to retrieve the broomstick of the Wicked Witch of the West. In both the book and the film versions, the Witch is able to observe the travelers through her crystal ball and sends winged monkeys in a last attempt to capture Dorothy. Once Dorothy reaches the castle of the Wicked Witch of the West, however, the film and book versions of this classic tale differ once again. In the book version, the Witch captures all of the travelers, but in the film, Toto, Dorothy’s little dog, is able to escape and lead the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion back to rescue Dorothy. Ultimately, though, it is not Dorothy’s friends who rescue her, but she who rescues them. The Wicked Witch of the West sets the Scarecrow on fire and Dorothy throws water on him, some of which accidentally splashes on the Wicked Witch causing her to melt. In the film, as in the book, the punishment for the dark magic and evil deeds of the Wicked Witch of the West is death.

Throughout the film, Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, intervenes at key moments to protect Dorothy on her journey throughout Oz. The first indication of this

39 Ibid., 105.
role happens right after Dorothy arrived in Oz. The frightened Munchkins send for Glinda to protect the small people from harm. Upon seeing that Dorothy’s house killed the Wicked Witch of the East, Glinda asks Dorothy, “Are you a good witch, or a bad witch?” Dorothy must confront her misconception that all witches are old and ugly when the Glinda reveals that she is a good witch. Realizing that Dorothy will need help, Glinda gives her the magical ruby slippers and a protective kiss before pointing her toward the Emerald City and the Wonderful Wizard of Oz who is powerful enough to help Dorothy return home to Kansas. While pointing the way to the Emerald City, Glinda too refers to the stereotypical image of a witch when she asks Dorothy “Did you bring your broomstick with you?”

Glinda continues to protect Dorothy throughout her journey, only stepping in when Dorothy gets in over her head. This protection allows Dorothy to reach the Emerald City find the Wizard of Oz. When Dorothy is left without a way to get home, Glinda must save the day once again. The flawless, blonde-haired beauty created by the film executives, re-enters the picture and Dorothy asks for Glinda’s help in finding her way home to Kansas. Dorothy says, “Oh will you help me? Can you help me?” Glinda responds “You don’t need help any longer.” With that, the Good Witch of the North shows Dorothy that “there’s no place like home” and that she can return any time she chooses. Glinda reveals that the ruby slippers Dorothy has been wearing throughout the film will take her home. The ironic truth is that Dorothy did not need anyone’s help to get home. She already had the power to make her own way home.

The first female character to which the audience comes into contact in this film is Dorothy. Her actions and desires propel the film forward. Because of this fact, it is vital to analyze the role or roles that she fulfills within the film. In addition to the roles of child, mother/caregiver, and protector, it can be argued that Dorothy was also a witch and that she appears to have magic from the beginning of the story. From the time she enters

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40 Ibid., 33.
41 Ibid., 54.
42 Ibid., 207
43 Ibid.
the cyclone until she returns home from Oz, Dorothy has access to powerful magic as well as a reputation as a powerful sorceress because of her ability to kill the Wicked Witch of the East, even if by accident. It is presumed from the beginning that Dorothy must possess very powerful magic because she was able to do something that neither the Good Witch of the North nor the Wizard of Oz was able to do by freeing the munchkins. Soon after killing the Wicked Witch of the East, Dorothy is presented with magical slippers, which, although she does not have to use them in the beginning, protect her from harm because of their reputation and the magic they possess. Once Dorothy enters the Emerald City, she is sent on another seemingly impossible task to kill the Wicked Witch of the West. Again, she is able to accomplish this feat, accidentally, and in so doing is able to perform a feat no other sorcerer in Oz has been able to perform, ridding the Land of Oz of the Wicked Witch of the West. Dorothy’s magic, however, does not end there. Upon her return once again to the Emerald City, she unmasks the great and powerful Wizard of Oz for the fraud that he is. In so doing, she strips him of his magic powers, something no other magic being thought possible. Dorothy’s final act of magic occurs when she leaves Oz by clicking her heels three times, thus giving up her claim to magic and returning to her previous life in Kansas.

While Dorothy is in the cyclone, Ms. Gulch is transformed into the Wicked Witch of the West before her eyes. “Ms. Gulch moves in closer to the window. Her bicycle changes to broomstick, her clothes into the flying robes and pointed hat.” This is the first instance of Dorothy’s access to magic. As with most instances with Dorothy’s use of magic, she does not intend to, nor does she even know that she is using magic, however the transformation of Ms. Gulch into the Wicked Witch is a clear example of what happens with the transformation of one person into another indicates Dorothy’s magical strength. No other witch within the story is actually able to transform one individual into another. With the transformation of Ms. Gulch into the Wicked Witch, Dorothy is actually responsible for giving shape and, in fact, life to her nemeses in Oz. Upon meeting Dorothy, all the Wicked Witch wants to do is cause her harm because she
believes Dorothy killed her sister. “Well, my little pretty, I can cause accidents, too and this is how I do it!”

The changes in the images of the witches between Baum’s book and MGM film helped to endear the fantasy world to its audience. First, they strengthened the line between good and evil and also supported the notion of good as beautiful and bad as ugly. Glinda, the good witch, was portrayed as blonde and beautiful whereas the Wicked Witch was an ugly, green, crone. Second, the Technicolor of this film helped to crystallize the difference between the drabness of ordinary life and the intrigue of fantasy. This film allowed its audience, who were in the midst of the Great Depression, to experience a fantasy world. While escaping their own problems for a while, the audience was left with the message that home was the best place to be, no matter the circumstances.

The Wicked Witch of the West as well as her counterpart Ms. Gulch can be seen as dramatic manifestations of all that is wicked and harmful. These two women cause pain to Dorothy and the rest of the characters. This is why the Wicked Witch of the West must be destroyed before good can triumph and Dorothy and her friends are able to gain their hearts desires. By eliminating the Wicked Witch of the West, Dorothy rids herself of the evil components of her own nature. She not only frees herself from what can be viewed as wicked desires, but in destroying the evil witch, she frees her friends and the audience as well. After the wicked elements of human nature are gone, Glinda the good witch of the North, who represents all that is good within the human spirit, can help Dorothy realize that she has the power to reach her goals and desires. In this case, Dorothy’s goal is to return to home and family. With this ending to the famous film Dorothy is able to access the parts of herself that allow her to reach her goal and she also shows the audience that they too can conquer the wicked/evil parts of themselves and allow their goodness to prevail.

Film reviews written at the time MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz* was released are one of the best ways to gauge how the American public received the film. Most of the reviews were positive. These reviews focus on elements ranging from the entertainment value to the technical ingenuity needed to create it. While the reviews were, for the most

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46 Ibid., 47.
part, positive and indicated a wide audience reception, some of the reviews did point out problems with the film, such as problems that had occurred during the filming of this movie or portions of the movie itself that they found to be poorly constructed.

The first review, which appeared in August of 1939, marvels at how real the special effects appeared. In Edith McGinnis’ article, published in *St. Nicholas*, she states that “Perhaps you read the book ‘The Wizard of Oz.’ Perhaps you had the fun of seeing it played on stage. But in making this favorite old story into a picture, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio has been able to give reality to the fantastic peoples and cities that words or the limitations of the theater could only suggest.”

Reviews that appeared in *New York Times, Commonweal, Variety* magazine, *Time* and *Good Housekeeping* in 1939, all gave positive reviews. These were magazines and newspapers that targeted middle class men and women. They drew parallels between MGM’s “Wizard of Oz” and Disney’s “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”, which had appeared two years earlier. Reviewers said, “not since Disney’s *Snow White* has anything quite so fantastic succeeded half so well.”*" The author of the *Commonweal* predicted, “Youngsters and oldsters, all the young at heart will go into raptures of *The Wizard of Oz*. “ This review indicates the uniqueness and attraction of each of the characters and the costumes. The reviewer indicates the possibility that the Wicked Witch of the West may frighten the young who view the film. Towards the end of the review, however, the author singles out a young boy who watched the film at the same time he did noting, “He bit off all of his nails, but was gleeful most of the time.”

In 1939 a review for “The Wizard of Oz” appeared in *Variety Magazine*. The author of this review had a great many positive things to say about the film. He begins: “The Wizard of Oz . . . is likely to perform some record-breaking feats of box-office magic. Given a sufficient period of pre-release showings in selected major spots, favorable word-of-mouth on the unique and highly entertaining features of the film should spread rapidly. It’s a pushover for the children and family biz. There’s an

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50 Ibid.
The author indicates the power of the musical score associated with the film: “Of the half dozen musical numbers by E. Y. Harburg and Harold Arlen, ‘Over the Rainbow’ already is prominent on the air.” This positive review indicates not only the possibility for wide and generous reception of the film, but also the fact that music from the film’s soundtrack was released on the radio and was well received before the film’s release.

In stark contrast to previous reviews, a 1939 review that appeared in *Scholastic Magazine* had a negative view of “The Wizard of Oz”. This magazine targeted educators. The reviewer enjoyed the special effects and sets, but felt that “Unfortunately, the magic in this case, never weaves its spell over the characters, except for Dorothy, who is wonderfully wide-eyed through it all… Dorothy (Judy Garland) is really the only one who could begin to make us believe in this Land of Oz.” This largely negative and obviously disappointed review indicates that not all of the audiences who viewed this film were mesmerized by it.

In a 1955 version entitled *The New Wizard of Oz*, written by Baum and illustrated by Leonard Weisgard, the storyline follows Baum’s original classic, but the illustrations differ greatly. Most of the illustrations were done in black and white, again detracting from the magical image of the Land of Oz. The Good Witch of the North appears as an elaborate stick figure with little detail. She is elderly, her clothes are covered in stars, and she wears a pointed hat, which identifies her as a witch. One of this version’s few visual depictions of the Wicked Witch of the West shows her with two eyes, a crooked nose, and a tall pointed hat. She wears long flowing robes of indeterminate color. This depiction of the Wicked Witch of the West does not follow Baum’s text nor look anything like the MGM depiction of the Wicked Witch. It appears that Weisgard simply used his imagination to come up with an original illustration. In this adaptation of Baum’s work, Glinda the Good Witch of the South appears as a young lady in a ball

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52 Ibid.
54 Ibid., 112.
gown without any indication of color. It appears that Weisgard, along with many other illustrators, ignored the text altogether when illustrating Baum’s classic.

With the success of MGM’s “The Wizard of Oz”, the children’s literature version of the story was reinvigorated. Due to the film’s continuing success, several publishers decided to release different versions of Baum’s original classic. With all the success of the *Wizard of Oz* both in children’s literature and film versions, in the 1970’s the Walt Disney Company decided to put out their own storybook version of “The Wizard of Oz”. This storybook largely follows Baum’s original story, although it is condensed considerably.

In spite of the many similarities between Baum’s original work and Disney’s, there are several important differences. The first important difference is that Glinda never appears in the Disney version. The Good Witch of the North is present in the story, but Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, is noticeably absent. The Great Wizard of Oz possesses the secret to the silver slippers and is able to provide Dorothy with her exit home.

The remaining differences between Disney and Baum’s versions can be seen in the illustrations throughout the Disney work. One difference the reader encounters is that Disney’s Good Witch of the North resembles Cinderella’s fairy godmother more than Baum’s depiction of the witch. Disney’s good witch is dressed in a white hooded robe and holds a magic wand. Her elderly, cheery face is almost identical to that of Cinderella’s godmother. The most striking visual inconsistency, however, relates to the Wicked Witch of the West. The visual depictions of Disney’s evil witch show her with an eye patch, which is consistent with Baum’s storyline; however that is the only similarity. Unlike Baum’s evil witch, Disney’s version has a hooked nose with warts and is dressed in black with a black witch’s hat. Disney’s Wicked Witch of the West very closely resembles Snow White’s evil queen in her witch disguise. Even while trying to cash in on the success of a non-Disney fairytale, the Disney Company attempts to make the tale

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55 Ibid., 185.
their own by reusing illustrations from other animated Disney productions. These illustrations were likely chosen because of their success and recognizable features.56

Baronet Books reprint of The Wizard of Oz, written and illustrated by Deidre Laiken, published 1989 mixes inspiration from Baum’s original and the MGM film in order to create the visual representations of the characters. For instance, although she is still dressed from head to toe in a robe covered with stars, the Good Witch of the North is depicted as much younger than she appears in previous versions. This particular illustration also adds a pointed hat that was absent from other versions. The good witch also has a long pointed nose that visually defines her as a witch.57 The imagery of the Wicked Witch of the West deviates from Baum’s original work as well. In Laiken’s illustration, the Wicked Witch has two eyes, while in Baum’s story she has only one. Laiken dressed her evil witch in dark robes with a dark pointed hat, also missing from Baum’s original version. This contemporary illustration portrays the Witch’s anger as well as her ugliness, equating her looks to those of a man.58 Glinda, the Witch of the South, appears to resemble a queen more than a witch. She is dressed from head-to-toe in white colored robes covered with flowers. She wears a crown on the top of her head and holds a magic wand. The differences in her appearance from that of the Good Witch of the North may be that Glinda possesses stronger magic than the Good Witch of the North and is therefore able to send Dorothy home.59 Since all of the illustrations from Laiken’s work were done in black and white, the reader loses much of the colorful magic associated with Oz.

MGM’s “Wizard of Oz” appears to have had the most profound impact on children’s literature versions produced after 1939. Its popularity lives on in the way in which it influenced other forms of the story. The next chapter will examine and analyze the effect of both the literary and MGM versions of the story on subsequent images of the witch.

58 Ibid., 99.
59 Ibid., 227.
Figure 4

Reprinted from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
Published by George M. Hill, 1900
Illustration by W.W. Denslow
Courtesy Miami University Special Collections
Chapter 3
The Impact of “The Wizard of Oz” on American Society

The story “The Wizard of Oz” has become an integral part of American popular culture. The number of subsequent versions and sequels written and produced will help to gauge the impact of the story of “The Wizard of Oz”. Another indication of the popularity of this story is the fact that it has been transformed into stage and musical productions. The ongoing use of this tale in various modes of production reveals the fact that “The Wizard of Oz” still holds a great deal of entertainment value in the eyes of the American public.

In addition to reissues of the original book, the popularity of MGM’s “Wizard of Oz” translated into a large commercial success. Evidence of this market can be seen in the fact that in 1956 CBS made a deal with MGM to televise “The Wizard of Oz” and “Gone with the Wind”. CBS wanted the film and the audiences it would provide badly enough to pay $225,000 for each of two broadcasts.60 “Oz has cast a long shadow. Spokespeople for the post World War II baby boom generation have assured us that when Oz entered their lives through televised re-runs in the 1950s, it was greeted as an annual milestone”.61 Further evidence of the widespread appeal of MGM’s “Wizard of Oz” within the popular market can be illustrated through the fact that limited prints as well as commemorative plates were produced in 1977.

In 1985, the Walt Disney Company decided to try to cash in on the excitement surrounding “The Wizard of Oz” in another way. Disney obtained the rights to make another of Baum’s classic books in the Oz series into a movie. The decision was made to produce “Return to Oz”. The television ads from the time of the movie’s release indicate that this film will pick up where the original left off. Within this film, Dorothy is transported back to Oz with the help of Ozma, the princess of Oz who has some magical powers, but needs Dorothy’s help in order to free herself from her prison behind a mirror and take back the throne of Oz. Within this story, the wicked witch, Princess Mombi

searches for the heads of beautiful women to put on her body. She seems as obsessed with beauty as Disney’s wicked queen in “Snow White”. In this particular film, Dorothy has most of the magic. It is she who saves her friends, restores the Emerald City and all of Oz, and frees Princess Ozma from her looking glass prison. Even with all of this power, Dorothy again decides to give up her magic and return once again to her life and family in Kansas.

This film has closer ties with Disney’s “Snow White” than it does with the original “Wizard of Oz”. For instance, the use of a looking glass and the fact that the evil witch is beautiful instead of a hag are elements in “Snow White” as well. In spite of the Disney Corporation’s hope that this film would become part of the allure surrounding the “Wizard of Oz”, this film failed to gain the popular support of the original. Very little has been written about this film and little merchandise was created to advertise its release. Both of these factors indicate that the American public lacked the interest in this film that the Disney Corporation had anticipated. One possible explanation for the lack of interest in this film is that none of the characters were recognizable from the original. The witches from “The Wizard of Oz” had vanished and the scarecrow, tin woodsman and cowardly lion had minimal roles in this film and barely resembled their predecessors from the original film. Even though this film was set six months after the end of the original, the actress portraying Dorothy was much younger than Judy Garland. The lack of any recognizable characters may have served to disassociate the two films.

In 1987, Hi-Tops Video produced an animated version of “The Wizard of Oz”. This particular interpretation combined elements of Baum’s literary classic with images from the famous 1939 film. In this rendition, Dorothy appears very young, while the evil witch looks similar to the image in the MGM film. She also relies on a crystal ball, as did MGM’s Wicked Witch of the West. The rest of the characters also closely resemble the illustrations found in Baum’s books. The fact that these images were reused in a little-known animated remake indicates that the producers of the film felt they were classics in American popular culture and it would be necessary to use these images in order to insure an audience for their product. Furthermore, this video through the use of the 1939 imagery helps to reinforce the idea of an evil witch as being an ugly old crone while the good witch continues to be young and beautiful.
In addition to the film remakes of the classic “The Wizard of Oz”, the story and images also invaded the television medium. In 1961, Rankin and Bass produced nine episodes of an animated series entitled “The Tales of the Wizard of Oz”. Each of these episodes focused on a different character from the popular story or placed all of the characters into situations that extended the Oz story. The animated characters looked and acted much like those from the 1939 film, once again reinforcing the impact of MGM’s film and popularity of the story with the American public.

In addition to film and television, there are also stage adaptations of “The Wizard of Oz”. These interpretations attempt to bring the famous story alive for audiences who require visual stimulation to enter a fantasy world. One of these stage adaptations closely resembles Baum’s original story. Copyrighted in 1982, this production’s audiences would have been more familiar with MGM’s classic film than Baum’s written work. This adaptation provided the audience with a very different picture of the Land of Oz and its characters than the one they found familiar. By relying heavily on imagery from the storybook version, the stage production reintroduced the audience to the fact that “The Wizard of Oz” had been a children’s story long before it had been transformed into the classic film that they knew and loved. The witches in Baum’s story are unable to escape the confines of their physical appearance. In some instances it seems that the strength of their magic is connected in some way to their physical appearance. The best example of this is Glenda, the Good Witch of the South, who appears near the end of the story to assist Dorothy’s return to Kansas. Glenda is described as “extremely old… but she gives the illusion of being both beautiful and young to the eye of the beholder which is where beauty is.”⁶² She describes herself as “the most powerful of all witches.”⁶³ Glenda is able to help Dorothy realize that she has the power to go home whenever she wishes. She is able to fulfill Dorothy’s heart’s desire whereas the great male Wizard has failed.

Glenda is not the only witch presented in the children’s theatrical production. Dorothy has contact with two other witches before meeting Glenda. Once in Oz, Dorothy meets the Good Witch of the North, who is described as being “wonderfully old and

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⁶³ Ibid.
Although this charming little old woman says she does not have the power to send Dorothy back to Kansas, she does start Dorothy on her adventure through Oz. 

Even though the Witch of the North and her counterpart in the south are good, their magical powers are quite different in strength. This can be inferred from Glenda’s earlier assertion that she is more powerful than the Good Witch of the North. Since both of these women use their magical powers for the benefit of others, the strength of these powers is not affected by the intrinsic natures of these witches. The strongest explanation for the difference in magical strength lies in their physical appearance.

The one wicked witch that Dorothy has to contend with, by order of the Wizard of Oz, is the Wicked Witch of the West. Dorothy and her friends are told to kill the wicked witch in order to receive the things they most desire. The Wizard of Oz, who at the very most only has parlor tricks for magic, sends the girl and her friends on the quest to get rid of them. As in the film and written versions, The Wizard does not think he will ever see Dorothy or her friends again and therefore he will not have to grant the wishes that he is incapable of granting.

The Wicked Witch of the West is described as “as evil as they come”. In the stage production, the witch uses a whistle to control her various slaves whom she then uses to attempt to capture or kill Dorothy and the others. There is not a physical description of this witch. She is defined by her actions and attitude instead of her appearance. Her end is the same in both the literary and film versions, she melts. Dorothy and her friends return to the Wizard only to discover that he does not have the great magical powers they believe he possesses. The witches also believe the Wizard to be more powerful than anyone else, but in the end the only powers he possesses are the abilities not to be judged by physical appearance and to make people assume that he is more powerful than he actually is. However, the symbolism connected this misconception is much more powerful. It illustrates, once again, that men are able to escape the confines of physicality because they are not defined solely by their physical appearance. Women, on the other hand, are generally defined by physical appearance. Initially the witches/women in this story allow themselves to be subservient to the

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64 Ibid., 13.
65 Ibid., 14-22.
66 Ibid., 50.
Wizard even though their power is greater. It is only at the end, when the Wizard is revealed to be a powerless sham, the true depth of their magical strength is revealed.

A second children’s theatrical version of the “Wizard of Oz”, copyrighted in 1963 and again in 1991, deviates widely from Baum’s original classic. Glenda, the Good Witch of the South, is the only recognizable character in the play. All of the characters in this production have a first name that humanizes them. They are not as secretive as they seemed when they were called the Good Witch of the North or the Wicked Witch of the West. Before the play even begins there are physical descriptions of each witch.

“Melinda is a kindly little old woman with white hair, and she wears the color of all the good witches—white. Silver stars glitter on her hair and on her floor length gown. As a bad witch, Belinda wears a voluminous black robe and a tall black hat. Her facial make-up indicates age and ill temper. Glenda wears a beautiful and sparkling white gown, and is in every way as kind and lovely as a young witch should be.”

During the course of an exchange between Melinda and Dorothy, Dorothy again learns that there were two evil and two good witches in Oz before Lucinda was killed by Dorothy’s house. Before the Good Witch of the North departs, she gives Dorothy advice and direction, telling her to go to the Wizard of Oz in the Emerald City. She must follow the yellow brick road as in previous versions. Melinda takes on a parental/motherly role by giving Dorothy directions and advice about the Wicked Witch.

Belinda, the Wicked Witch of the West, deviates from Baum’s original story as well as from the MGM film and previous stage characterizations. She has cats in this version, which are a common form of familiar or animal that helps a witch do evil magic. Cats have not appeared in any previous version of “The Wizard of Oz”. This adaptation was probably necessary because of the difficulty in staging winged monkeys. Also, the audience was likely familiar with the image of cats and witches together. When Belinda first meets Dorothy, she pretends to be good so Dorothy and her friends will trust her long enough to enslave them. As in other versions, she wants Dorothy’s silver slippers. However, the false act of goodness from the Wicked Witch of the West is something completely different from any other version. This scene may have been added to the play.

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to illustrate to the audience how easy it is to be fooled. The Wicked Witch foreshadows her own demise when she tells Dorothy she does not like the rain. In her attempts to steal the silver slippers, Belinda angers Dorothy to the point that she throws a bucket of water on her and Belinda melts away. Belinda, as with other versions of the Wicked Witch of the West, is concerned only with power and control. Her greed for power led to her demise. It was critical that the Wicked Witch be completely eliminated. In destroying the evil witch, Dorothy also eliminated the greed and desire that drove her, freeing herself, her friends, and the audience as well.

Glenda, the Good Witch of the South not only provides Dorothy with a way home but also, in an element unique to this story, a way to return to Oz. The ruby ring that serves as Dorothy’s return mechanism is a reference to the ruby slippers that appeared in MGM’s film version. This connection with the 1939 film helps reinforce how popular and widespread the imagery from this beloved film is within United States popular culture. Glenda, as Melinda before, acts a mother figure to Dorothy when she provides her with her heart’s desire, a way to return to Kansas.

The Broadway musical “The Wiz” made its debut in 1975. It was a theatrical production with an African American cast and a script based on MGM’s 1939 film adaptation of “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz”. In the musical Dorothy enjoys the Land of Oz, but wants to return to Kansas. Through her access to magic, she is able to obtain her ultimate goal of returning home. But before doing so, she defeats the evil that exists in Oz in the form of the Wicked Witch of the West. Her good magic helps to provide her three unique friends, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion, with their hearts deepest desires as well. Through the destruction of the Wicked Witch of the West they are given the opportunity to receive these gifts. The Good Witch of the North is the magical entity that started Dorothy’s trip through Oz by giving her the magic slippers whereas Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, helps Dorothy realize that she has the power to return home within herself. Even though Dorothy rejects her access to magic by returning to Kansas, she takes a valuable lesson away from Oz, “living here in this brand-new world might be a fantasy, but it taught me to love, so it’s real to me. And I’ve
learned that we must look inside our hearts to find a world of love like yours, like mine, like home!"  

The image of MGM’s 1939 version of “The Wizard of Oz” as a movie classic with indelible characters and images is further reinforced by the making of “The Wiz” into a film in 1978. The story was updated with an African American cast and other significant changes in the name of modernization. Unlike the MGM version, in the play and film versions of “The Wiz”, Dorothy is brought to Oz by Glenda’s magic. Like the 1939 version, however, Glenda will eventually show Dorothy that she has the power to go home. “The Wiz’s” Dorothy encounters the munchkins and the Good Witch of the North who provides access to magic through the silver slippers much like in Baum’s written version. In the beginning of “The Wiz”, Dorothy appears shy, reserved and submissive. However, once she is in Oz she takes a dominant role, helping her friends to realize their dreams. In this version, Dorothy is the central witch. She is the one who unmasks the Wizard and saves her friends from the Wicked Witch of the West, destroying her evil magic. Dorothy requires assistance from Glenda at important points throughout both the play and film. Glenda, from behind the scenes, helps protect Dorothy from the poisoned poppies, just as in the 1939 film. At the end of the “The Wiz” Glenda must convince Dorothy she has the magic within herself to make her dreams come true.

While the MGM version of “The Wizard of Oz” had Dorothy convinced that she would not leave home again, “The Wiz” uses Dorothy’s trip to convince her to leave home and embrace change and opportunity. These strikingly different conclusions have a great deal to do with the times in which the films were produced. The 1978 version is heavily influenced by both the civil rights and women’s movements, which helps to explain Dorothy’s dominant role in the film and her willingness to embrace the changes in her life. While “The Wiz” does not concentrate on the image of the witch as much as the 1939 film and the early literary versions, this interpretation is still significant because it illustrates that the original story and previous movies were culturally significant enough to warrant another retelling with social updates to illustrate the ways that society had changed between 1939 and 1978.

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The Broadway play “Wicked”, which is a musical and performance adaptation of a 1995 book written by Gregory Maguire of the same title, turns the story of “The Wizard of Oz” upside-down. This play, which has been performed on New York’s Broadway, tells the story of the witches of Oz before Dorothy’s arrival in the magical land. Even though the play focuses on the witches’ early years, it does include Dorothy and her unique friends from Baum’s original books and makes strong references to the 1939 film. The green skin of Elphaba is a direct result of the MGM film’s portrayal of the Wicked Witch of the West as green. “Wicked” illustrates how pervasive and popular the story and images of “The Wizard of Oz” continue to be. Even though this version turns the original upside-down, it still stands as a testament to the influence of the first.

“Wicked” begins with a celebration over the death of the Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba. As the play unfolds, with its wonderful staging and costumes, the audience realizes that Elphaba is actually a sweet girl who is mistreated because of her green skin, while her friend Glinda, who becomes the Good Witch, possesses a mean and self-serving streak. Elphaba is one of the only people in Oz who possesses magical powers. She is able to perform feats of magic that even her teachers and the Wizard cannot match. This misunderstood, mistreated girl is labeled “wicked” because she takes a firm stand against the Wizard regarding the cruel treatment of animals. Because she is unwilling to work with the Wizard, she is branded as a traitor and wicked. This play has a surprise ending. It is revealed that Elphaba does not actually melt to death; she escapes through a trap door when everyone thinks she perishes. It is also revealed that the Wizard is actually Elphaba’s father.

While her friend is branded an evil traitor and supposedly killed for her crimes, Glinda the Good is the exact opposite of Elphaba. She is beautiful and willing to submit to the authority of the Wizard without question. For these traits, she is rewarded by becoming one of the most important people in all of Oz. With the Wizard’s help, she fools the people of Oz into thinking that she too possesses strong magical gifts and can protect them. In the end, with Elphaba gone, Glinda gains the assertiveness necessary to punish those who hurt Elphaba, primarily the Wizard. The friendship forged between the two young witches ultimately transforms them both, giving them characteristics initially possessed by the other.
Thus “Wicked” reinvents the beloved story of Oz. It creates an atmosphere in which the witch perceived as wicked is actually kind. Her character is both the victim and heroine of the story. Audiences end up identifying with a character that they have grown up despising through the MGM film “The Wizard of Oz”. Although this play is able to deconstruct many of the assumptions about wicked and good witches, at least one vital assumption could not be destroyed, namely that even though the wicked witch was not so wicked, she was ostracized by her community because of her unusual physical appearance as well as her unwillingness to play by society’s rules. In contrast, Glinda’s beauty, along with her ability to conform to the rules of society, propelled her to the top of that society hierarchy. The fates of these two young witches illustrate that the labels of wicked and good are too often applied based upon whether an individual meets both the physical and societal expectations. Those who do not meet these expectations are ostracized and labeled as “wicked”, while those who do meet these expectations become full members of society and are labeled as “good”.

Another adaptation of “The Wizard of Oz”, directed by Louis J. Horvitz and released in 1995, is a film format of a stage production. This particular version has various actors and actresses fulfilling the principle roles. However, it is obvious that while this particular version is on film, the characters were originally on stage. This version opens with a few words to put “The Wizard of Oz” and its role within society into context. “For nearly 100 years this story has given faithful service to the young and to the young at heart and time has been powerless to put its kindly philosophy out of fashion. To those of you who’ve been faithful to it in return and to the young at heart we dedicate this concert.” In this unique version Natalie Cole played Glenda the Good Witch of the North and Debra Winger portrayed the Wicked Witch of the West. This production’s ties with MGM’s famous 1939 film are evident. For example, the role of Glenda is still the compilation of two literary roles. The costuming for the Good Witch is also very similar to that found within the famous film. The portrayal of the Wicked Witch of the West is also similar to the MGM film. Instead of painting the actor green and making her face hideous, though, she was dressed from head to toe in green. This

was probably done to make staging the production easier. In spite of this change, the green clothing of the Wicked Witch along with her evil cackle reminded the audience immediately of the 1939 Wicked Witch.

The similarities between the 1995 stage/film production and the 1939 film production illustrate what a profound impact the MGM film has had not only on society, but also on “The Wizard of Oz” story itself. Later versions become instantly recognizable by connecting themselves with this most famous and widely shown version. Audiences feel comfortable with the portrayal of the witches as well as the other characters in the MGM film and relate to later adaptations more easily if there are similarities between them and this adaptation.

The story *The Wizard of Oz* has been told in numerous ways from books to movies and television to plays. This story has had a profound impact on American popular culture and its longevity and popular appeal will ensure that it will continue to have an impact on generations to come. The images of the witches contained within this story, films, and plays have become an integral part of popular culture, not only in the United States but worldwide. This tale was made popular in large part by the 1939 MGM film and the images contained in this particular film have had, and will continue to have, the largest impact on the American public. The fact that this film was later re-released by MGM and also remade by other companies using images that were very similar, in some cases almost identical, pays testament to the lasting impact of the original film. As long as this story and popular films continue to be shown to successive generations, the impact of the images of the witch on women within society will continue to be felt.
Reprinted from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
Published by George M. Hill, 1900
Illustration by W.W. Denslow
Courtesy Miami University Special Collections
Conclusion

*The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum has gone through many adaptations each of which changed the original story. However, in spite of these transformations, or maybe because of them, this story remains central to American popular culture. This American fairytale has enjoyed a longevity not equaled by many other fictional works. This story has been transformed from book to stage to film and to television. Various authors such Geoff Ryman and Gregory Maguire have written original works which take Baum’s beloved characters and twist the story lines into completely new adventures and these works also place the beloved characters into different context within society. The fact that works such as these have been created and then transformed into theatrical versions stands testament to the beloved nature of Baum’s fairytale.

While L. Frank Baum originally set the *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* down in print at the urging of this mother-in-law, once the story appeared on shelves and was available to the American public, it took on a life of its own that Baum did not expect. Matilda Gage felt that the stories Baum told his children and their friends would be loved by all youngsters and a successful source of income for her struggling son-in-law. The *Oz* story was largely influenced by the outlook of Gage, a vocal member of the suffrage movement. The fact that Baum centered his fairytale on a female character and placed female witches in important supporting roles is evidence of the influence that his wife and mother-in-law, both active in the feminist movement, had on Baum. Placing female characters in positions of power and authority is one of the elements that make this story so unique.

At the time of its release in September of 1900 the book quickly exhausted several printings of 10,000 or more copies each. The success of this work aimed at a youthful audience encouraged Baum to expand the book into a series, where the beloved characters and the magical world he created could live on forever. At the time of his death in 1919, Baum had written a total of 14 *Oz* related books. In spite of the popularity of the series, which lead to at least one stage production in 1902 Baum could never have comprehended the extent to which his original story and characters would indeed live on forever.
After Baum’s death in 1919 his beloved characters continued to live on entertaining both old and young alike. While film versions before 1939 do exist, it was MGM’s Technicolor masterpiece that brought new life to Baum’s fairytale. This particular version made significant changes to the story, in particular to the physical images of the witches. These changes helped a visually stimulated audience to reinforce the connection between the idea that good equals beauty and youth, while evil equals ugly and old. This connection is strikingly obvious when comparing the physical images of the Good witch of the North and the Wicked Witch of West, within MGM’s classic. This connection is evident in spite of the fact that the actress playing the beautiful Glinda was in her fifties when that movie was filmed.

Once MGM’s beloved film began to be aired on television it was able to reach an even wider and larger audience than it had on the silver screen. Once the television rights to the movie had been obtained by major networks the Wizard of Oz began appearing on an annual basis in American homes. This annual airing of the Wizard of Oz became an event to be shared by families around the nation, as well as throughout the world. Generation after generation continues to be introduced to these characters and images. These images particularly of the female characters, such as Dorothy, Glinda and the Wicked Witch of the West have thoroughly invaded American popular culture.

The images contained within the Wizard of Oz have undergone change in each reappearance. Through the years in the form of television series, film spin-offs and stage productions, however, these later versions often pay tribute to MGM’s version, by modeling their characters after the images present in that iconic film. More often than not, the witches are the characters that most closely resemble those present in MGM’s version. Producers of these spin-offs realize the pervasive nature of MGM’s classic and in an attempt to cash in on the popularity created by the film continue to create green evil witches and good witches that resemble a fairy or princess.

While American society has made a connection with the story the Wizard of Oz and with the witches of that story in particular few individuals have thought about the ways in which the female characters within the story fulfill societal roles that are associated with women, such as mother, caregiver and even child. These rules are exemplified by Aunt Em, Dorothy and Glinda, the good women of the story and film.
While the Wicked Witch and her counterpart Ms. Gulch step outside of those roles and even attempt to destroy them, in the end these roles prescribed by society prevail, and the danger to those roles, in the form of the Wicked Witch is destroyed.

Another element of this story analyzed in this thesis, but overlooked by other authors, is the fact that Dorothy can be viewed as a witch. If one defines a witch as an individual with access to magic, then Dorothy can easily be put in the category of witch. From the time that she enters the Land of Oz, Dorothy has access to magic through the magical shoes given to her by the Good Witch of the North. Throughout the story she encounters magic in the form of the Good Witch of the North, the Wicked Witch of the West and the Wizard of Oz. Even though she has access to magic, and seems to be able to perform feats unobtainable by the other characters, such as destroying both evil witches of Oz, Dorothy chooses to reject magic and return to her normal non-magical life. Before she leaves Oz however, through her final use of magic she unmasks the Wizard of Oz as a fraud and thus rejects and removes his magic. This rejection of the Wizard is a further rejection of the magic that Dorothy knows is all around her in the Land of Oz.

Dorothy’s return to Kansas, through the use of her own magic shoes is a final and permanent break with magic. This break is illustrated by not only the disappearance of the characters and surroundings in Oz but also the disappearance of the magical slippers that provided Dorothy’s access to magic. With this rejection of magic Dorothy rejects both the good and the evil images of the witches, portrayed in Oz. In spite of the possibility of good magic that exists in Oz Dorothy appears more comfortable in a world where magic does not exist.

In addition to the story of the Wonderful Wizard of Oz there are many other children’s fairytales that contain images of witches. Analysis needs to be completed on some of these other stories in order to compare and contrast the images that can now be found within American popular culture. In particular the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs has repeatedly surfaced during this research as a story with which the Wonderful Wizard of Oz, has parallels. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is a story that, like the Wonderful Wizard of Oz has gone through many adaptations over the years from children’s literature to film and stage productions. More research needs to be
completed on the image of the witch within this story in order to compare it with images contained within this thesis.
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