Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 132

Volume 132

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights, Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers Who Lived between 1900 and 1999, from the First Published Critical Appraisals to Current Evaluations

Janet Witalec
Project Editor

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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 132

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Preface

Since its inception more than fifteen years ago, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (*TCLC*) has been purchased and used by nearly 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 500 authors, representing 58 nationalities and over 25,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as *TCLC*. In the words of one reviewer, "there is nothing comparable available." *TCLC* "is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own."

Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, *TCLC* helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in *TCLC* presents a comprehensive survey on an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of *TCLC* is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism,* (*CLC*) which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between *CLC* and *TCLC*.

Organization of the Book

A *TCLC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author's actual name given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the original date of composition.

- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.

- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.

- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.

- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.

- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism.

- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.

- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by the Gale Group, including *TCLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

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A **Cumulative Topic Index** lists the literary themes and topics treated in the series as well as in *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism, Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800, Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism,* and the *Contemporary Literary Criticism* Yearbook, which was discontinued in 1998.

An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale also produces an annual paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," *Partisan Review* 6 (Winter 1949): 85-92; reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism,* vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Gariepy (Detroit: The Gale Group, 1995), 40-3.

William H. Slavick, "Going to School to DuBose Heyward," *The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined,* ed. Victor A. Kramer (AMS, 1987), 65- 91; reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism,* vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Gariepy (Detroit: The Gale Group, 1995), 94-105.

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Contents

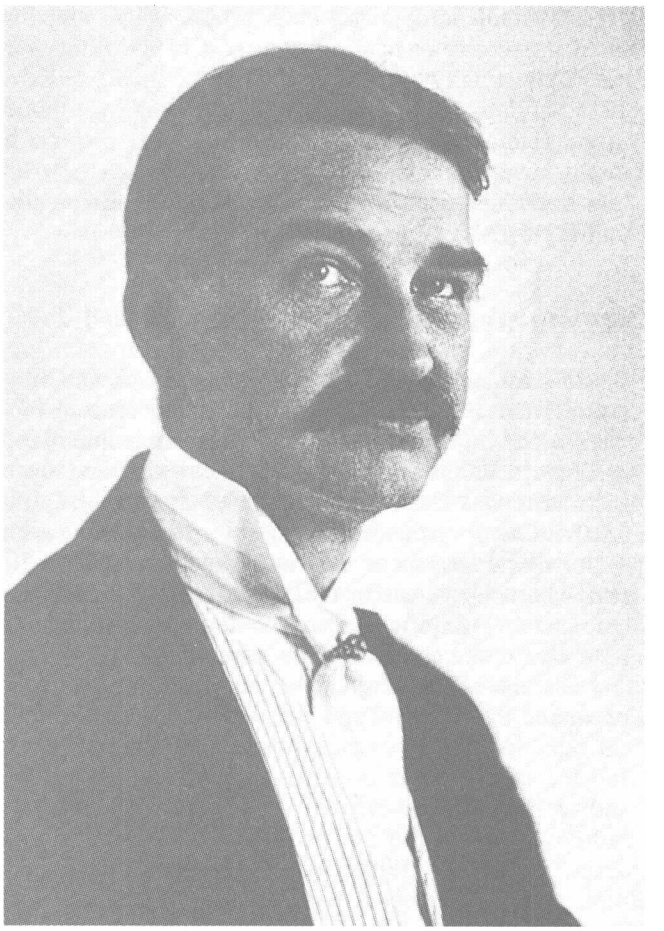
Frank Baum
1856-1919

(Full name Lyman Frank Baum; also wrote under the pseudonyms Louis F. Baum, Schuyler Staunton, Floyd Akers, Laura Bancroft, John Estes Cooke, Edith Van Dyne, Captain Hugh Fitzgerald, and Suzanne Metcalf) American novelist, short story writer, playwright, journalist, and librettist.

The following entry provides criticism on Baum's works from 1984 through 1998. For criticism prior to 1984, see *TCLC,* Volume 7.

INTRODUCTION

Baum was a prolific author who achieved lasting fame with his Land of Oz fantasy-adventure series. The series' first book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), is considered a classic of children's literature; its sequels, though uneven in quality, are popular favorites. The Land of Oz also appeals to adults who enjoy Baum's unsentimental and mildly satiric approach to his characters and their dilemmas. Oz so captivated the public's fancy that a succession of writers continued the series long after Baum's death.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Baum was born in Chittenango, New York, on May 15, 1856, to Benjamin Ward and Cynthia Stanton Baum. He was privately tutored at home as a child and later attended Peekskill Military Academy and Syracuse Classical School. Baum assumed a number of professions before becoming a children's writer. As an actor he toured the eastern states in several productions, including his own play *The Maid of Arran* (1881). Upon his marriage to Maud Gage in 1882, Baum left the theater and embarked on a series of business ventures that proved unsuccessful. In connection with these enterprises he traveled throughout the United States, and his impressions of his country's varied landscapes and lifestyles are recorded in his Land of Oz books. Baum eventually settled in Chicago, where he worked as a reporter and salesman, and founded the National Association of Window Trimmers, whose trade magazine, *The Show Window,* he edited and published. But his earnings did not meet the needs of his growing family. To further supplement his income, Baum, whose flair for storytelling was then admired only by friends and family, wrote *Mother Goose in Prose* (1897). This book and its sequel, *Father Goose* (1899), attempt to decipher the nonsense verse of nursery rhymes. Both books were well received, but their success did not prepare the author for the response to his next effort, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.* In 1902 Baum adapted *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* for the stage. The production, which took liberties with Baum's original characters and plot, included astonishing technical effects for its time and ran for a record 293 performances. Baum never intended *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to be the first of a series, but he was induced by popular demand and financial difficulties to write its sequel, *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (1904). In 1910 Baum moved with his family to Hollywood, California, to work on the *The Fairylogue and Radio-Plays,* a combination slide and motion picture presentation about Oz in which he invested in

1908. Baum tried to end the Oz series in 1910 with the publication of *The Emerald City of Oz,* but circumstances intervened; in 1911, Baum declared bankruptcy. By 1913 he had resigned himself to producing a new Oz book each year. Living in Hollywood, Baum became involved in the infant motion picture industry. With some friends he formed the Oz Film Manufacturing Company and produced several films based on his Oz books and some of his other books. While they featured impressive special effects, most of the films were not commercially successful, and the company failed in 1915. Although Baum had not invested his own money in the venture, ill health impeded any other projects he might have taken on. Complications from surgery left him bedridden for the last year of his life. Baum died on May 6, 1919.

MAJOR WORKS

Baum's intent, stated in his introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,* was to create "a modernized fairy tale," a children's story without "the horrible and bloodcurdling incidents" or the didactic themes in the tales of such writers as Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm. Nevertheless, Baum's stories contain a number of moral lessons as well as gruesome episodes. His real achievement was in creating a fantasy land that is recognizably American in psychology and setting: the virtues of home and family are stressed, and the characters are self-reliant, forthright individuals full of optimism and the pioneer spirit. In addition, the topographical features of Oz parallel those of the United States, and the magic in Oz is generally produced by science and technology rather than by spells and witchcraft. Moreover, Baum did not people his tales with genies, ogres, and fairies. Rather, he fashioned his characters, such as the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and Jack Pumpkinhead, out of real and familiar materials. A recurring theme of the Oz books—to find happiness look no farther than your own backyard—is exemplified by the characters' search for qualities they already possess. The Cowardly Lion, for example, acts bravely throughout the journey to Oz, yet he asks the Wizard for courage; the inordinately kind and compassionate Tin Woodman requests a heart; and the Scarecrow, who manifests wit and intelligence, is seeking a brain. Throughout the series, Baum emphasizes tolerant, selfless, and humble behavior. His villains and the objects of his satire are pseudo-intellectuals, the military, and figures who show greed or conceit.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Despite the wild popularity of the Oz books, and Baum's self-designation as the "Royal Historian of Oz," critics and educators virtually ignored Baum's achievements for nearly thirty years. They deemed his humorous, sometimes irreverent, approach "unwholesome" and considered his work insignificant in comparison to children's classics like Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* Edward Wagenknecht, in a study published ten years after Baum's death, was the first critic to argue that such comparisons were inappropriate. He and later critics contend that Baum's Oz books are important, for they represent "the first distinctive attempt to construct a fairyland out of American materials" and because they convey a uniquely American concept of Utopia. More recent criticism of the Land of Oz books has focused on some of the darker aspects of Oz. Some commentators have argued that the theme of the primacy of home and family usually attributed to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* actually comes from the 1939 film based on the book. These critics point out the rather grim description in the book of Dorothy's home, which Baum depicts as being desperately lonely and tedious. Still other critics have observed political allusions in the Oz books, contending in particular that the Yellow Brick Road symbolizes the debate over the gold standard in American politics of the time. Most critics believe that Baum should have heeded his instincts and discontinued the series when he first planned. They note that the later books, such as *The Lost Princess of Oz* (1917) and *The Magic of Oz* (1919), appear hastily written and lack structure, style, and humor. But commentators agree that at his best Baum was an original and innovative writer who created the most popular and imitated children's story of the century.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

The Maid of Arran [as Louis F. Baum] (play) 1881
Mother Goose in Prose (fairy tales) 1897
By the Candelabra's Glare (poetry) 1898
Father Goose (fairy tales) 1899
The Art of Decorating Dry Goods Windows and Interiors (juvenile fiction) 1900
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1900; also published as *The Wizard of Oz,* 1939
American Fairy Tales (fairy tales) 1901
The Master Key (juvenile fiction) 1901
The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus (fairy tales) 1902
The Wizard of Oz (libretto) 1902
The Surprising Adventures of the Magical Monarch of Mo (juvenile fiction) 1903
The Marvelous Land of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1904
Queen Zixi of Ix (juvenile fiction) 1905
The Woggle-Bug Book (play) 1905
Daughters of Destiny [as Schuyler Staunton] (novel) 1906

John Dough and the Cherub (juvenile fiction) 1906
Twinkle Tales (fairy tales) 1906
Ozma of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1907
Policeman Bluejay (fairy tales) 1907
Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz (juvenile fiction) 1908
The Fairylogue and Radio-Plays (screenplay) 1908
The Road to Oz (juvenile fiction) 1909
The Emerald City of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1910
Sky Island (juvenile fiction) 1912
The Patchwork Girl of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1913
Tik-Tok of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1914
The Scarecrow of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1915
Rinkitink in Oz (juvenile fiction) 1916
The Lost Princess of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1917
The Tin Woodman of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1918
The Magic of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1919
Glinda of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1920
Our Landlady (satirical sketches) 1941
Animal Fairy Tales (fairy tales) 1969

CRITICISM

Douglas Street (essay date summer 1984)

SOURCE: Street, Douglas. "The Wonderful Wiz That Was: The Curious Transformation of *The Wizard of Oz*." *Kansas Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (summer 1984): 91-8.

[*In the following essay, Street discusses Baum's intent to create a uniquely American fairy-tale, distinct from the European tradition, in which a sense of reality was paramount, and then examines the reasons why the story was transformed back into pure fantasy for the film version.*]

L. Frank Baum's ***The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*** is perhaps America's best remembered children's fantasy—or is it? After forty-five years the 1939 MGM cinematic adaptation of this tale has so saturated generations of Americans that what most people assume to be Baum's story of a little girl from Kansas has actually little in common with the original publication. While this lost-story phenomenon is possible whenever fiction is transformed into film, few works have received such international exposure and at the same time have had such an impact on so many generations as has ***The Wizard of Oz***. How must a Baum aficionado react to that myriad of children and adults who respond, "I too love Baum's ***Wizard of Oz***—of course I've never read the novel but I have seen the movie five times"? What has become of L. Frank Baum's original turn-of-the-century fairy tale set in Kansas?

When Baum published ***The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*** in 1900 he little dreamed that it would soon become the "fastest selling children's book in America."[1] All Baum was striving for was a workable narrative appealing uniquely to American children of the new century.[2] In his original introduction he dismisses the older European folk and fairy tales, their characters and narrative structures, as outmoded for a turn-of-the-twentieth-century public:

> . . . the time has come for a series of newer "wonder tales" in which the stereotyped genie, dwarf and fairy are eliminated, together with all the horrible and blood-curdling incidents devised by their authors to point a fearsome moral to each tale. Modern education includes morality; therefore the modern child seeks only entertainment in its wonder-tales and gladly dispenses with all disagreeable incidents.[3]

Frank Baum wanted tales to please American children, but tales devoid of "heartaches and nightmares" frequently encountered in the traditional Haus and Kindermarchen of the Grimm brothers, and the literary fairy tales and faerie romances of the nineteenth-century German and British romanticists. He was the first to consciously articulate and develop this native "American fairy tale" form, although the concept itself had long preceded the Oz books. The writings of Washington Irving, Mark Twain and Frank Stockton distinguish the American experience as one unique from the European, and hence one demanding a home-grown literary style steeped in the values indigenous to its homeland. As Selma Lanes declares in her discussion of "America as Fairy Tale":

> The old European fairy tale was matter-of-fact in its clear-eyed cataloging of rank injustice and outright wickedness or perfect beauty and absolute goodness: they were all parts of life's intricate fabric. . . . The world, and man's fate in it, are full of uncertainty and surprise in these old tales. . . . The fairy tale's ultimate message is that there is a magic to existence that defies charting. And the charm of the best of the old tales lies in the convincing manner in which they record how bits of such magic can transform lives wholly. . . .
>
> Yet, in most home-grown American fairy tales, no magic is ever more powerful than the overriding reality of the American life experience. The facts of existence always manage to win out over the fantasy of the author's tale.[4]

The American tale is unique in its fondness for reality over magic, and Baum's ***Wonderful Wizard of Oz*** is a fantasy saturated with this reality of the American experience. "Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies" we are told, the slate-gray W. W. Denslow illustrations reinforcing the bleakness of the scene of Uncle Henry and Aunt Em's homestead; "Their house was small, for the lumber to build it had to be carried by wagon many miles."[5] "Once the house had paint, but

the sun blistered the paint and the rains washed it away, and now the house was as dull and gray as everything else" (10). Dorothy, an orphan long ago taken in by the kindly couple, is a shining light unable to brighten this colorless wasteland. Indeed, this threesome appears separated from all humanity—no cheery farmhands, nor even cantankerous spinsters enliven this Kansas landscape. This is the isolated homestead of the nineteenth-century sodbuster of the fabled "Great American Desert" of Kansas, Nebraska, and Baum's own Aberdeen, South Dakota. Baum knew this terrain well, he knew its people and its problems. He paints a harsh world where laughter is rare, singing infrequent, and rainbows nonexistent; where a storm cellar is nothing more elaborate than a "small, dark hole" in the ground, and cyclones actually do pick up houses and transport them to Oz or to oblivion. Baum is uncompromising in his rendering of the same hard-luck farmers who but three decades later would be driven from their dustbowl on a journey toward a new, perceived "Emerald City" in California's central valley.

In the novel the cyclone actually does pick up the farmhouse and its inhabitants (the author even offers scientific explanation for its smooth ascension) and does transport Dorothy and Toto to Oz—a world isolated, unreported, untamed, yet within the context of the novel very real. Though Oz is fantastic, it is not a dreamland "somewhere over the rainbow"; and the author takes pains to make his readers acutely knowledgeable about its thriving existence.[6]

> In the civilized countries [instructs Glinda the Good] I believe there are no witches left; no wizards, no sorceresses, nor magicians. But, you see, the Land of Oz has never been civilized, for we are cut off from all the rest of the world. Therefore we still have witches and wizards amongst us.
>
> (23)

Baum's Land of Oz is no less exotic nor uncivilized to his way of thinking than were those American Indian cultures discovered, studied, and invaded by "civilized" Anglo-Americans during the last century. Those outsiders found and "civilized" the Native American cultures by taking their land, casting off their magic and "wizardry" for Christian values, and in general diluting their heritage with White culture. In a lesser way Dorothy "civilizes" Oz; for based on Glinda's rationale, that having never been civilized "we still have witches and wizards," Dorothy enters this land of sorcery and promptly kills one evil witch, eventually liquidates the other, exposes the humbug wizard who subsequently flees the land by balloon, to leave the land under the good, true ruler. When Dorothy returns to Kansas the Land of Oz has become a true civilization.

Baum constantly dilutes the quality of otherworldliness so much a staple of the European fairy tradition:

> The reason some fairy tales, for instance, are so very haunting is that they take us into the world of wishes, grip us powerfully there, and then let us go, to remember how frightening or magnificent it was where we have been, how much stronger our feelings were there than in the ordinary world. The enchantment of the great tales is, thus, a kind of night-time enchantment, analogous to dreams, where hidden things are uncovered, and from the vision of which we wake. Baum is not like that at all. . . . The narrative sense is stronger in fairy stories than in Baum, as is the sense of history and causation, but it is precisely what Baum "lacks" here that allows him to cast his own enchanting spells.[7]

What the reader experiences in L. Frank Baum's ***Wonderful Wizard of Oz*** is an enjoyable, neatly woven narrative in a fairy tradition devoid for the most part of the terribly wicked and the macabre. Frank Baum conscientiously follows his stated precepts of a story in which "wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out." Magic and spectacle are no more mystical than modern-day ingenuity, common sense, and a touch of good old Edisonian gadgetry. The most fantastic of phenomena are logically accounted for, the most threatening of adversaries overcome with quick thinking or a well-placed pail of water.

Baum's creation centers on Dorothy's attempts to return home to Kansas after actually being swept up in a twister and carried off to the land of Oz, on her accumulation of companions for her journey, on her confrontations with the Wizard, and finally on her compulsory trek to the red-hued land of the Quadlings and the castle of Glinda the Good. Dorothy's inauspicious arrival into blue-tinted Munchkinland comes at the expense of the Wicked Witch of the East (not West as in the film), whose *silver* slippers Dorothy acquires. White-clad Glinda the Good, a "little woman" whose "face was covered with wrinkles, her hair was nearly white, and she walked rather stiffly" (20), after applying an all-protecting kiss to Dorothy's forehead, very matter-of-factly sends the girl down the yellow brick road toward the Emerald City of Oz. The Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Cowardly Lion in turn join the quest. Their trek to Oz is highlighted by a fight against the dreaded Kalidahs and the rescue of the sleeping Lion by the Queen of the Mice. In contrast with the film narrative the hazards created by the novel are natural ones—there is no witchly conjuring nor sense of impending doom.

The Emerald City, where all about them "magically" appears green, with the aid of permanently affixed green-tinted spectacles—"Even those who live in the city must wear [them] night and day. They are all locked on, for so Oz ordered it when the City was first built . . ." (110)—similarly turns out to be as explainable and as earthly as its wizardly promoter.

> "Just to amuse myself, and keep the good people busy, I ordered them to build this City, and my palace; and

> they did it all willingly and well. Then I thought, as the country was so green and beautiful, I would call it the Emerald City, and to make the name fit better I put green spectacles on all the people, so that everything they saw was green."
>
> "But isn't everything here green?" asked Dorothy.
>
> "No more than in any other city," replied Oz; "but when you wear green spectacles, why of course everything you see looks green to you. . . . But my people have worn green glasses on their eyes so long that most of them think it really is an Emerald City."
>
> (178-179)

The Emerald City is not an ethereal dreamland over a rainbow but a vibrant, prosperous center for trade and activity. Baum never tries to deceive his readers into believing they have escaped into fairyland. Too, despite Glinda's contentions to the contrary, the Emerald City is a thriving, commercial, and, yes, civilized center in the land of Oz.

Dorothy and company pursue the still-to-be introduced Wicked Witch; the antagonism of the Witch is herein quite peripheral. The Winged Monkeys as commanded fetch the Lion to the Witch, so that she can "harness him like a horse, and make him work" (142). Dorothy too is conveyed to the witch—carefully, the reader confident no harm will come to her as "she is protected by the Power of Good, and that is greater than the Power of Evil" (143). The all-protecting kiss of Glinda is a shining talisman enlightening the darkness. Yet for all of this, Baum's Wicked Witch, as she bids the captive Kansan to "clean the pots and kettles and sweep the floor and keep the fire fed with wood" (146), is anything but the nightmarish figure so masterfully represented by Margaret Hamilton for MGM. Even her demise is triggered by her childish tricking Dorothy out of a magic slipper, making "Dorothy so very angry that she picked up the bucket of water that stood near and dashed it over the Witch, wetting her from head to foot. Instantly the wicked woman gave a loud cry of fear; and then, as Dorothy looked at her in wonder, the Witch began to shrink and fall away." (150)

The witch's demise accomplished, the Woodman and the Scarecrow repaired, and the Winkies freed, the group returns to the Emerald City, exposes the sham Wizard, and so that Dorothy may return to Kansas, resumes its adventurous journey to Glinda's castle—they pass through the forest of fighting trees, the China Country, and the lair of the Hammer-Heads, their last great obstacle, finally to alight within the welcome confines of Glinda's domain. With the destiny of each friend accounted for, and with the release of the Winged Monkeys from bondage, Dorothy, now free to return home, clicks the heels of her silver slippers, sails back across the great desert separating Oz from our world, and, losing her magical shoes along the way, finally tumbles to the ground before "the new farmhouse Uncle Henry built after the cyclone had carried away the old one."

> Aunt Em had just come out of the house to water her cabbages when she looked up and saw Dorothy running toward her.
>
> "My darling child!" she cried, folding the little girl in her arms and covering her face with kisses; "where in the world did you come from?"
>
> "From the Land of Oz," said Dorothy gravely. "And here is Toto, too. And oh, Aunt Em! I'm so glad to be at home again!"
>
> (236-237)

This original ***Wonderful Wizard of Oz,*** as created by Baum, is however not the story which immediately comes to most people's minds upon mention of this title. What has happened to Baum's plot between Kansas and Hollywood? Obviously any piece of fiction transformed for the screen must undergo some metamorphosis; the mere conventions of the film medium dictate such—Dorothy's silver shoes become ruby to better showcase the beauty in Technicolor, just as the sepia-toned scenes in Kansas are lengthened in order, we are told, "to build character."[8] But Baum's Oz is a real place, it has been located and mapped, and Dorothy's journey there is a real journey—she is gone long enough for Uncle Henry to erect a new farmhouse! Why create them otherwise? A supreme attraction of the novel has always been the knowledge that Oz is out there waiting to be rediscovered by anyone ingenious enough to find a way to get there. The wonderful land brought to life in the film is that dreamland, akin to the European fairy tale world discussed earlier, embodying "a kind of night-time enchantment, analogous to dreams, where hidden things are uncovered, and from the vision of which we wake." As extraordinary and titillating as MGM's Oz is, we the viewers are happy and relieved that the excitement and adventures are spawned from our nightworld imaginations—this Oz is best left in fantasy, accessible only through dream escapes. In this it possesses a power and a fascination which would be unattainable within the boundaries of Baum's real world. Roger Sale comments:

> Rereading ***The Wizard,*** for instance, is always a strange experience for anyone who has come to know Victor Fleming's movie. Book and movie each begin wonderfully and in different ways; the movie has its spectacular cyclone and shift from brown-and-white to color, and Baum's matter-of-factness about Kansas, cyclones, and the Munchkins is winning. From then on, though, the advantages seem to belong to the movie. Baum's admirers may complain about having the whole thing be a dream, but the movie makes the dream create its own kind of sense, by emphasizing two characters, the Wizard and the Wicked Witch of the West, whom Baum uses only as part of his zoo.[9]

Frank Baum's world is one of child-like innocence. His scenarios and his characters are not multi-leveled; they are devised solely as entertainment for young readers. To fully appreciate them requires viewing them with the eye of the young. Those scenes and characters scripted by the MGM screenwriters, directed finally by Victor Fleming, and effectively fleshed out by Judy Garland, Margaret Hamilton, Frank Morgan, and company, are multi-leveled, psychologically complex, decidedly adult. They are utilized as working personae for one of the classic examples of Hollywood Depression escapism. The entire, lavish product is aimed at an audience not of juvenile Baum admirers, but of end-of-the-Great-Depression-eve-of-World-War-II middle-class American adults who long with Dorothy also to be "someplace where there isn't any trouble." This is the crux of the curious transformation: an adventure fantasy for children has metamorphosed into a complex dream escape for adults.

Florence Ryerson and Edgar Allan Woolf, who along with Noel Langley were given the final writing credit on the film (though several others at one time or another added to the script), in discussing their concerns in transforming the fictional masterwork into the commercially and artistically successful motion picture, rationalized their approach to the project:

> Necessarily a few things had to be sacrificed by selecting the most important incidents and characters and telescoping and combining others. . . . Only a few grotesque things which might be amusing to read about, but would not be well to look at, were eliminated. . . . Changes in the story were really minor.[10]

Yet in plot particularities and inherent tone and philosophy the movie is radically different from the book. The filmmakers' riveting, breathtaking Land of Oz is a Bosch-like netherworld of grotesque Munchkins, haunted forests, demonic Winkies, and terrifying sorcerers. These writers and cinematographers have expertly crafted an adventureland wherein the transfixed moviegoer is made to fear for Dorothy from the instant she crashes into Munchkinland, pulverizing the Wicked Witch of the East and invoking the fiery wrath of the Wicked Witch of the West—this restructuring of material to focus on and enhance the presence of and conflict between Dorothy and the Witch, archetypal Goodness and Evil respectively, provides a classic foundation upon which to develop and solidify audience suspense and anticipation. We are forced to wonder: Can anyone survive the treachery of this truly satanic creature? Can Dorothy's comrades rescue her from horrible death before the sand in the hour-glass runs its course? Will all elude the evil Winkies or will they perish miserably in a ball of fire? The viewers cannot be sure until the Witch is melted, the Winkies' loyalty to Dorothy affirmed, and the quartet is safely returned to the Emerald City with the Witch's broom, that our heroes *may* survive. Say the scenarists, seemingly understanding the impact of their accomplishments: "We changed the scenes in the Witch's castle slightly, making them a little more dramatic. But all the episodes [from the novel] are there, including the melting of the Witch."[11] "A little more dramatic" to be sure, this melting scene, superior visually to Baum's and intellectually far above the novel's version sparked by the childish squabble over the little Dorothy's shoes. Baum's Witch is ugly and cranky, yet great care is taken to portray her as *not* sinister—any suspense Baum manages pales in comparison to MGM's screen creation. There is never any real doubt in the novel that Dorothy will survive; the appeal for the reader, unlike that for the screen viewer, is generated by attempting to figure out not *if* (as in the film) but *how* she will do it. Too, it is curious to note that the "few grotesque things" alluded to by the screenwriters as being dispensed with are seemingly inconsequential in light of those astutely inserted. Such cinematic choices dissolve Baum's simplistic, child-like innocence into an adult cinema classic deserving of its long list of commercial, professional, and artistic accolades.

Florence Ryerson says, "We scenarists did have problems. But they were those that involved satisfying Oz readers. We left in the most memorable incidents, never altered the characters, and we inserted most of the magic."[12] But all the characters, not merely Dorothy and the Witch as noted earlier, have undergone marked transfigurations from the written page to scripted film. And utilizing nicely an effective framing device, each of the major characters encountered by Judy Garland's "Dorothy" in the magical Land of Oz (except for Glinda the Good) are given developed alter-egos in the framing Kansas scenes at the film's beginning and end. Furthermore, the writers have endowed these Kansas counterparts with the identical personality traits (weaknesses) subsequently ascribed to them in Dorothy's "dream." Miss Gulch (superbly stylized by Margaret Hamilton) is the supreme antagonist as she threatens the girl with the Gales—in a foreshadowing scene Dorothy even calls her "You wicked old witch." Professor Marvel (Frank Morgan), father-confessor figure for the runaway little girl, proves no more the marvel in Kansas than he becomes for Dorothy as Oz the Magnificent. Of the Dorothy character so memorably developed by Judy Garland, Anne Edwards articulates the most crucial of character differences:

> The portrayal was not just wistful or charming, nor did it contain the quality of endearing cuteness that would have been brought to the part by Shirley Temple [the producer's original choice for the role].
>
> A desperation to believe crept into Judy's performance. She was much more than a young girl in jeopardy as she pursued a dream. Achieving the dream was where the spirit of survival existed. And in the end the dream

> was one shared by the majority of the American people—that their small, brown lives would be touched with wonder; that there could be a Land of Oz in their own backyards. It was not a children's tale, for it was adult in philosophy; and Judy's eyes and voice mirrored severe human suffering, which they knew and identified with.[13]

The screenwriters Ryerson, Woolf, and Langley, possibly blinded by the overwhelming musical and visual lavishness of their own marvelous Technicolor creation, were, it seems unable to grasp the true nature and wonder of their screen adaptation. To them the adult decadence of the Oz film and the simple innocence of the Oz novel remain closely allied. Perhaps, to allude back to Baum's Wizard's diagnosis of his citizenry, these scenarists viewed the novel for so long through their "cinematic glasses" that they really did see book and film alike. For them the transformation was complete.

For the rest of us it is clear that we do not have simply an Oz novel and its filmed adaptation: we have the luxury of two, distinct, critically acclaimed ***Wizard of Oz***'s, one with the roots in the sod of America's heartland, the other in the tinsel of America's dreamland. Independently each masterwork has enriched (and will continue to enrich) the imaginations and dreams of young and old alike. Each demands separate evaluation in order completely to perceive and appreciate their distinctive qualities. The uncluttered settings of turn-of-the-century Kansas and the countries of the Land of Oz, even with W. W. Denslow's multicolored illustrations, must always pale when forcibly compared with the grandiose spectacle of MGM's Technicolor wonderland. By the same token, this cinema milestone can scarcely do justice to the innate simplicity infused by L. Frank Baum into this "modernized fairy tale in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out." Yet to better savor the grand scale of the motion picture the discriminating audience must read and relish the novel; to better appreciate Baum's straightforward simplicity they must recognize, and fewer still will actually admit that, as George Bluestone, says, "the end products of novel and film represent different aesthetic genera, as different from each other as ballet is from architecture. . . . It is fruitless to say that film A is better or worse than novel B. . . . In the last analysis, each is autonomous, and each is characterized by unique and specific properties."[14]

In the last decade or so the cinematic potential of children's novels has rapidly and successfully been exploited at a rate rivalling that of the thirties when ***Oz*** was adapted. While many producers make a conscious effort to retain the novelist's magic in a saleable film commodity, most do not. The majority of such screenwriters are myopic or blind to the faithfulness and integrity of the novels from whence inspiration arises—films like *The Little Prince, The Secret of NIMH,* and *The Wiz* result. The transformations become more curious. Terms like "faithful" and "unfaithful" adaptions are bantered about without the filmmakers realizing that they are really meaning successful and unsuccessful movies. As Bluestone says, "Whenever a film becomes a financial or even a critical success, the question of 'faithfulness' is given hardly any thought. If the film succeeds on its own merits it ceases to be problematic. The filmmakers are content with the assumption that they have mysteriously captured the 'spirit' of the book."[15] This of course is what we see in Ryerson, Woolf, and Langley. Happily, their transformation of ***Oz*** from print into celluloid did not "mysteriously capture the 'spirit'" of Baum's narrative; it endowed a new vibrant one of its own. ***The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*** breathes life each time we open the pages of L. Frank Baum's 1900 Kansas fairy tale, each time we witness the 1939 MGM musical extravaganza. Both have earned permanent places in our American cultural history. Both are classics of their respective genre, each too enjoyable and aesthetically important to forsake one for the other.

Notes

1. Martin Gardiner quoted by Roger Sale, "L. Frank Baum, and OZ," *Hudson Review* 25 (Winter 1972-73): 572.
2. L. Frank Baum, "Introduction" to *The Wizard of Oz* (Chicago: Reilly & Lee, 1900; rpt. 1956), 3.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Down The Rabbit Hole* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), 94-95.
5. *The Wizard of Oz,* 9. (All further references will be noted internally.)
6. For further insights into Ozian geography see: David L. Greene, "The Concept of Oz," *Children's Literature 3* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1974): 173-76; and Michael Patrick Hearn, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1973).
7. "L. Frank Baum, and OZ" 580-81.
8. Doug McClelland, *Down The Yellow Brick Road: The Making Of The Wizard Of Oz* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 90.
9. "L. Frank Baum, and OZ" 584.
10. McClelland, 90.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.* Note: An interesting critical comparison of screenplay and original novel may be done by reading Baum's *Oz* alongside *The Wizard of Oz,*