

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC

7

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Volume 7

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Excerpts from Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1960,
from the First Published Critical Appraisals
to Current Evaluations**

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PREFACE

It is impossible to overvalue the importance of literature in the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual evolution of humanity. Literature is that which both lifts us out of everyday life and helps us to better understand it. Through the fictive life of an Emma Bovary, a Lambert Strether, a Leopold Bloom, our perceptions of the human condition are enlarged, and we are enriched.

Literary criticism is a collective term for several kinds of critical writing: criticism may be normative, descriptive, textual, interpretive, appreciative, generic. It takes many forms: the traditional essay, the aphorism, the book or play review, even the parodic poem. Perhaps the single unifying feature of literary criticism lies in its purpose: to help us to better understand what we read.

The Scope of the Book

The usefulness of Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)*, which excerpts criticism of current creative writing, suggested an equivalent need among literature students and teachers interested in authors of the period 1900 to 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, and playwrights of this period are by far the most popular writers for study in high school and college literature courses. Moreover, since contemporary critics continue to analyze the work of this period—both in its own right and in relation to today's tastes and standards—a vast amount of relevant critical material confronts the student.

Thus, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)* presents significant passages from published criticism on authors who died between 1900 and 1960. Because of the difference in time span under consideration (*CLC* considers authors living from 1960 to the present), there is no duplication between *CLC* and *TCLC*.

Each volume of *TCLC* is carefully designed to present a list of authors who represent a variety of genres and nationalities. The length of an author's section is intended to be representative of the amount of critical attention he or she has received in the English language. Articles and books that have not been translated into English are excluded. An attempt has been made to identify and include excerpts from the seminal essays on each author's work. Additionally, as space permits, especially insightful essays of a more limited scope are included. Thus *TCLC* is designed to serve as an introduction for the student of twentieth-century literature to the authors of that period and to the most significant commentators on these authors.

Each *TCLC* author section represents the scope of critical response to that author's work: some early criticism is presented to indicate initial reactions, later criticism is selected to represent any rise or fall in an author's reputation, and current retrospective analyses provide students with a modern view. Since a *TCLC* author section is intended to be a definitive overview, the editors include between 30 and 40 authors in each 600-page volume (compared to approximately 100 authors in a *CLC* volume of similar size) in order to devote more attention to each author. An author may appear more than once because of the great quantity of critical material available, or because of the resurgence of criticism generated by events such as an author's centennial or anniversary celebration, the republication of an author's works, or publication of a newly translated work or volume of letters.

The Organization of the Book

An author section consists of the following elements: author heading, biocritical introduction, principal works, excerpts of criticism (each followed by a citation), and, beginning with Volume 3, an annotated bibliography of additional reading.

- The *author heading* consists of the author's full name, followed by birth and death dates. The unbracketed portion of the name denotes the form under which the author most commonly wrote. If an author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the real name given in parentheses on the first line of the biocritical introduction. Also located at the beginning of the biocritical introduction are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose languages use nonroman alphabets. Uncertainty as to a birth or death date is indicated by a question mark.

- The *biocritical introduction* contains biographical and other background information about an author that will elucidate his or her creative output. Parenthetical material following several of the biocritical introductions includes references to biographical and critical reference books published by the Gale Research Company. These include past volumes of *TCLC*, *Contemporary Authors*, and *Dictionary of Literary Biography*.
- The *list of principal works* is chronological by date of first publication and identifies genres. In those instances where the first publication was other than English language, the title and date of the first English-language edition are given in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
- *Criticism* is arranged chronologically in each author section to provide a perspective on any changes in critical evaluation over the years. In the text of each author entry, titles by the author are printed in boldface type. This allows the reader to ascertain without difficulty the works discussed. For purposes of easier identification, the critic's name and the publication date of the essay are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the journal in which it appeared. For an anonymous essay later attributed to a critic, the critic's name appears in brackets in the heading and in the citation.
- A complete *bibliographical citation* designed to facilitate location of the original essay or book by the interested reader accompanies each piece of criticism. An asterisk (*) at the end of a citation indicates the essay is on more than one author.
- The *annotated bibliography* appearing at the end of each author section suggests further reading on the author. In some cases it includes essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights. An asterisk (*) at the end of a citation indicates the essay is on more than one author.

Each volume of *TCLC* includes a cumulative index to critics. Under each critic's name is listed the author(s) on which the critic has written and the volume and page where the criticism may be found. *TCLC* also includes a cumulative index to authors with the volume number in which the author appears in boldface after his or her name.

Acknowledgments

No work of this scope can be accomplished without the cooperation of many people. The editors especially wish to thank the copyright holders of the excerpts included in this volume, the permission managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in locating copyright holders, and the staffs of the Detroit Public Library, University of Michigan Library, and Wayne State University Library for making their resources available to us. We are also grateful to Fred S. Stein for his assistance with copyright research and to Louise Kertesz and Norma J. Merry for their editorial assistance.

Suggestions Are Welcome

Several features have been added to *TCLC* since its original publication in response to various suggestions:

- Since Volume 2—An *Appendix* which lists the sources from which material in the volume is reprinted.
- Since Volume 3—An *Annotated Bibliography* for additional reading.
- Since Volume 4—*Portraits* of the authors.
- Since Volume 6—A *Nationality Index* for easy access to authors by nationality.

If readers wish to suggest authors they would like to have covered in future volumes, or if they have other suggestions, they are cordially invited to write the editor.

AUTHORS TO APPEAR IN FUTURE VOLUMES

- Ady, Endre 1877-1919
 Agate, James 1877-1947
 Agustini, Delmira 1886-1914
 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey 1836-1907
 Annensy, Innokenty Fyodorovich 1856-1909
 Anstey, Frederick 1856-1934
 Arlen, Michael 1895-1956
 Barea, Arturo 1897-1957
 Baring, Maurice 1874-1945
 Baroja, Pío 1872-1956
 Barry, Philip 1896-1946
 Bass, Eduard 1888-1946
 Benét, William Rose 1886-1950
 Benson, E(dward) F(rederic) 1867-1940
 Benson, Stella 1892-1933
 Beresford, J(ohn) D(avys) 1873-1947
 Besant, Annie (Wood) 1847-1933
 Bethell, Mary Ursula 1874-1945
 Binyon, Laurence 1869-1943
 Blackmore, R(ichard) D(odd-ridge) 1825-1900
 Blasco Ibanez, Vicente 1867-1928
 Bojer, Johan 1872-1959
 Borowski, Tadeusz 1924-1951
 Bosman, Herman Charles 1905-1951
 Bottomley, Gordon 1874-1948
 Bourne, George (Morris Cohen) 1842-1927
 Broch, Herman 1886-1951
 Bromfield, Louis 1896-1956
 Buchan, John 1870-1953
 Byrne, Donn (Brian Oswald Donn-Brye) 1889-1928
 Caine, Hall 1853-1931
 Campana, Dina 1885-1932
 Campbell, (William) Wilfred 1861-1918
 Cannan, Gilbert 1884-1955
 Churchill, Winston 1871-1947
 Corelli, Marie 1855-1924
 Corvo, Baron (Frederick William Rolfe) 1860-1913
 Crane, Stephen 1871-1900
 Crawford, F. Marion 1854-1909
 Croce, Benedetto 1866-1952
 Davidson, John 1857-1909
 Day, Clarence 1874-1935
 Delafield, E. M. (Edme Elizabeth Monica de la Pasture) 1890-1943
 DeMorgan, William 1839-1917
 Doblin, Alfred 1878-1957
 Douglas, Lloyd C(assel) 1877-1951
 Douglas, (George) Norman 1868-1952
 Dreiser, Theodore 1871-1945
 Drinkwater, John 1882-1937
 Duun, Olav 1876-1939
 Fadeyev, Alexandr 1901-1956
 Feydeau, Georges 1862-1921
 Field, Michael (Katharine Harris Bradley) 1846-1914 and Edith Emma Cooper 1862-1913
 Field, Rachel 1894-1942
 Flecker, James Elroy 1884-1915
 France, Anatole (Anatole Thibault) 1844-1924
 Freeman, John 1880-1929
 Freeman, Mary E. (Wilkins) 1852-1930
 Gilman, Charlotte (Anna Perkins Stetson) 1860-1935
 Gippius or Hippus, Zinaida (Nikolayevna) 1869-1945
 Glyn, Elinor 1864-1943
 Gogarty, Oliver St. John 1878-1957
 Golding, Louis 1895-1958
 Gorky, Maxim 1868-1936
 Gosse, Edmund 1849-1928
 Gould, Gerald 1885-1936
 Grahame, Kenneth 1859-1932
 Gray, John 1866-1934
 Guiraldes, Ricardo 1886-1927
 Gumilyov, Nikolay 1886-1921
 Gwynne, Stephen Lucius 1864-1950
 Haggard, H(enry) Rider 1856-1925
 Hale, Edward Everett 1822-1909
 Hall, (Marguerite) Radclyffe 1806-1943
 Harris, Frank 1856-1931
 Hearn, Lafcadio 1850-1904
 Henley, William Ernest 1849-1903
 Hergesheimer, Joseph 1880-1954
 Hernandez, Miguel 1910-1942
 Herrick, Robert 1868-1938
 Hewlett, Maurice 1861-1923
 Heym, Georg 1887-1912
 Heyse, Paul (Johann Ludwig von) 1830-1914
 Heyward, DuBose 1885-1940
 Hichens, Robert 1864-1950
 Hilton, James 1900-1954
 Hofmannsthal, Hugo Von 1874-1926
 Holtby, Winifred 1898-1935
 Hope, Anthony 1863-1933
 Howard, Robert E(rvin) 1906-1936
 Hudson, Stephen 1868-1944
 Hudson, W(illiam) H(enry) 1841-1922
 Ivanov, Vyacheslav Ivanovich 1866-1922
 Jacobs, W(illiam) W(ymark) 1863-1943
 James, Will 1892-1942
 Jerome, Jerome K(lapka) 1859-1927
 Jones, Henry Arthur 1851-1929
 Kaiser, Georg 1878-1947
 Kipling, Rudyard 1865-1936
 Kornbluth, Cyril M. 1923-1958
 Kuzmin, Mikhail Alekseyevich 1875-1936
 Lang, Andrew 1844-1912
 Larbaud, Valéry 1881-1957
 Lawson, Henry 1867-1922
 Levenson, Ada 1862-1933
 Lewisoohn, Ludwig 1883-1955
 Lindsay, (Nicholas) Vachel 1879-1931
 London, Jack 1876-1916
 Lonsdale, Frederick 1881-1954
 Lowndes, Marie Belloc 1868-1947
 Lucas, E(dward) V(errall) 1868-1938
 Lynd, Robert 1879-1949
 MacArthur, Charles 1895-1956
 MacDonald, George 1824-1905
 Mais, Roger 1905-1955
 Mann, Heinrich 1871-1950
 Manning, Frederic 1887-1935
 Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso 1876-1944
 Marriott, Charles 1869-1957
 Martin du Gard, Roger 1881-1958
 Mencken, H(enry) L(ouis) 1880-1956
 Meredith, George 1828-1909
 Mew, Charlotte (Mary) 1870-1928
 Mistral, Frédéric 1830-1914
 Mitchell, Margaret 1900-1949
 Monro, Harold 1879-1932
 Moore, Thomas Sturge 1870-1944
 Morgan, Charles 1894-1958
 Morgenstern, Christian 1871-1914
 Morley, Christopher 1890-1957
 Murray, (George) Gilbert 1866-1957
 Nervo, Amado 1870-1919
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 1844-1900
 Norris, Frank 1870-1902
 Olbracht, Ivan (Kemil Zeman) 1882-1952
 Ortega y Gasset, José 1883-1955
 Pinero, Arthur Wing 1855-1934
 Pontoppidan, Henrik 1857-1943
 Porter, Eleanore H(odgman) 1868-1920
 Porter, Gene(va) Stratton 1886-1924
 Powys, T(heodore) F(rancis) 1875-1953
 Quiller-Couch, Arthur 1863-1944
 Rappoport, Solomon 1863-1944
 Reed, John (Silas) 1887-1920
 Reid, Forrest 1876-1947
 Riley, James Whitcomb 1849-1916
 Rinehart, Mary Roberts 1876-1958
 Roberts, Sir Charles (George Douglas) 1860-1943
 Roberts, Elizabeth Madox 1886-1941
 Rogers, Will(iam Penn Adair) 1879-1935
 Rölvaag, O(le) E(dvart) 1876-1931
 Rolland, Romain 1866-1944
 Roussel, Raymond 1877-1933
 Runyon, (Alfred) Damon 1884-1946
 Sabatini, Rafael 1875-1950
 Saltus, Edgar (Evertson) 1855-1921
 Santayana, George 1863-1952
 Schreiner, Olive (Emilie Albertina) 1855-1920
 Seeger, Alan 1888-1916
 Service, Robert 1874-1958
 Seton, Ernest Thompson 1860-1946
 Shiel, M(atthew) P(hipps) 1865-1947
 Slater, Francis Carey 1875-1958
 Sologub, Fyodor 1863-1927
 Squire, J(ohn) C(ollings) 1884-1958
 Sternheim, Carl 1878-1942
 Stockton, Frank R. 1834-1902
 Stoker, Bram 1847-1912
 Supervielle, Jules 1884-1960
 Swinburne, Algernon Charles 1837-1909
 Symons, Arthur 1865-1945
 Tabb, John Bannister 1845-1909
 Tarkington, Booth 1869-1946
 Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre 1881-1955
 Tey, Josephine (Elizabeth Mackintosh) 1897-1952
 Thomas, (Philip) Edward 1878-1917
 Turner, W(alter) J(ames) R(edfern) 1889-1946
 Vachell, Horace Annesley 1861-1955

Authors to Appear in Future Volumes

Valera y Alcala Galiano, Juan
1824-1905
Van Dine, S.S. (William H.
Wright) 1888-1939
Van Doren, Carl
1885-1950
Vazov, Ivan 1850-1921
Vian, Boris 1878-1959

Wallace, Edgar 1874-1932
Wallace, Lewis 1827-1905
Washington, Booker T(aliaferro)
1856-1915
Webb, Mary 1881-1927
Webster, Jean 1876-1916
Welch, Denton 1917-1948

Wells, Carolyn 1869-1942
Werfel, Franz 1890-1945
Wister, Owen 1860-1938
Witkiewicz, Stanislaw Ignacy
1885-1939
Wren, P(ercival)
C(hristopher) 1885-1941

Wylie, Elinor (Morton Hoyt)
1885-1928
Wylie, Francis Brett
1844-1954
Zamyatin, Yevgeny
Ivanovich 1884-1937
Zangwill, Israel 1864-1926

Readers are cordially invited to suggest additional authors to the editors.

L(yman) Frank Baum

1856-1919

(Also wrote under pseudonyms of 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, dramatist, journalist, and librettist.

Baum was a prolific author who achieved lasting fame through his "Land of Oz" fantasy-adventure series. The series' first book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, is considered a classic of children's literature; its sequels, though uneven in quality, are popular favorites. "The Land of Oz" appeals to adults as well, 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. Yet for nearly thirty years critics and educators ignored Baum's achievement. They deemed his humorous, sometimes irreverent approach "unwholesome" and considered his work insignificant in comparison to children's classics like Lewis Carroll's *Alice 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 "The Land of Oz" is important, for it represents "the first distinctive attempt to construct a fairyland out of American materials" and because it conveys a uniquely American concept of Utopia.

Baum traveled widely and 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 drama, *The Maid of Arran*. Upon his marriage in 1882 Baum left the theater and embarked on a series of business ventures which 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 "The Land of Oz." Baum eventually settled in Chicago, where he worked both as reporter and salesman, 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*. This book and its sequel, *Father Goose*, 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*.

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 blood-curdling incidents" or the didactic themes in the tales of 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



Culver Pictures

spells and witchcraft. Moreover, Baum did not people his tales with genies, ogres, and fairies. 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 brains. 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.

The author never intended *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to be the first of a series. He was induced by popular demand and financial difficulties to write its sequel, *The Marvelous Land of Oz*. In such books as *Queen Zixi of Ix* and *John Dough and the Cherub* he tried to interest readers in tales of other imaginary lands, but the call for "more books about Oz" persisted, and Baum obliged. As a result, his literary reputation suffered. Most critics believe that Baum should have heeded his instincts

and discontinued the series. They note that the later books, such as *The Lost Princess of Oz* and *The Magic of Oz*, appear hastily written and lack structure, style, and humor. However, 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] (drama) 1881
Mother Goose in Prose (fairy tales) 1897
By the Candelabra's Glare (poetry) 1898
Father Goose (fairy tales) 1899
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1900;
 also published as *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939
American Fairy Tales (fairy tales) 1901
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
Daughters of Destiny [as Schuyler Staunton] (novel) 1906
John Dough and the Cherub (juvenile fiction) 1906
Ozma of Oz (juvenile fiction) 1907
Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz (juvenile fiction) 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

THE NEW YORK TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW OF BOOKS AND ART (essay date 1900)

It is impossible to conceive of a greater contrast than exists between the children's books of antiquity that were new publications during the sixteenth century and modern children's books of which "*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*" is typical. The crudeness that was characteristic of the old-time publications that were intended for the delectation and amusement of ancestral children would now be enough to cause the modern child to yell with rage and vigor and to instantly reject the offending volume, if not to throw it out of the window. The time when anything was considered good enough for children has long since passed. . . . In "*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*" the fact is clearly recognized that the young as well as their elders love novelty. They are pleased with dashes of color and something new in the place of the old, familiar, and winged fairies of Grimm and Andersen.

Neither the tales of Aesop and other fableists, nor the stories such as the "Three Bears" will ever pass entirely away, but a welcome place remains and will easily be found for such stories as "*Father Goose: His Book*," "*The Songs of Father Goose*," and now "*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*," that have

all come from the hands of Baum [and his illustrator, William W. Denslow].

This last story of "*The Wizard*" is ingeniously woven out of commonplace material. It is of course an extravaganza, but will surely be found to appeal strongly to child readers as well as to the younger children, to whom it will be read by mothers. . . .

The drawing as well as the introduced color work vies with the texts drawn, and the result has been a book that rises far above the average children's book of today, high as is the present standard. Dorothy, the little girl, and her strangely assorted companions, whose adventures are many and whose dangers are often very great, have experiences that seem in some respects like a leaf out of one of the old English fairy tales that Andrew Lang or Joseph Jacobs has rescued for us. A difference there is, however, and Baum has done with mere words what Denslow has done with his delightful draughtsmanship. The story has humor and here and there stray bits of philosophy that will be a moving power on the child mind and will furnish fields of study and investigation for the future students and professors of psychology. Several new features and ideals of fairy life have been introduced into the "*Wonderful Wizard*," who turns out in the end to be only a wonderful humbug after all. A scarecrow stuffed with straw, a tin woodman, and a cowardly lion do not at first blush, promise well as moving heroes in a tale when merely mentioned, but in actual practice they take on something of the living and breathing quality that is so gloriously exemplified in the "Story of the Three Bears," that has become a classic.

The book has a bright and joyous atmosphere, and does not dwell upon killing and deeds of violence. Enough stirring adventure enters into it, however, to flavor it with zest, and it will indeed be strange if there be a normal child who will not enjoy the story.

"*A New Book for Children*," in *The New York Times Saturday Review of Books and Art*, September 8, 1900, p. 605.

L. FRANK BAUM (essay date 1900)

Folklore, legends, myths and fairy tales have followed childhood through the ages, for every healthy youngster has a wholesome and instinctive love for stories fantastic, marvelous and manifestly unreal. The winged fairies of Grimm and Andersen have brought more happiness to childish hearts than all other human creations.

Yet the old-time fairy tale, having served for generations, may now be classed as "historical" in the children's library; for 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.

Having this thought in mind, the story of "*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*" was written solely to please children of today. It aspires to being a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out.

L. Frank Baum, in his introduction to his The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, George M. Hill Company, 1900

(and reprinted in his *The Wizard of Oz*, Ballantine Books, 1979, p. ix).

EDWARD WAGENKNECHT (essay date 1929)

America is not rich in distinctive fairy lore. We have indeed, among older books, those of the great American illustrator, Howard Pyle. (p. 16)

Only, it can hardly be claimed that Pyle's fairy tales are in any definite or distinctive sense American. They happened to be written in America—that is all: the materials of which they are compounded is the fairy lore of the Old World. . . .

This is surely not the case with the writings of L. Frank Baum. Indeed it is in *The Wizard of Oz* that we meet the first distinctive attempt to construct a fairyland out of American materials. Baum's long series of Oz books represents thus an important pioneering work: they may even be considered an American utopia. (p. 17)

It is interesting to see how accidentally as it were Baum discovered the Land of Oz, and how little he realized at first just what a mine he had struck. He had written in 1897 a book called [*Mother Goose in Prose*]. This is a volume of charming stories inspired by the historic jingles, the general idea being to tell that part of the story which Mother Goose did not tell. The book is excellent in its way. . . . For our purpose, however, the point to be noted is that *Mother Goose in Prose* is English not American in its inspiration. That is to say, Mr. Baum's fancy plays about and transforms not things that he has seen but things that he has read about. . . . And the same assertion might be made about some of the later Baum books—for example, *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* and *Queen Zixi of Ix*, the latter certainly one of the best fairy tales in the world.

When he finished *The Wizard of Oz*, Baum at first regarded it as one of his books, no more and no less than the others. It caught on immediately and went through enormous sales the very year of its publication. This of course gratified him immensely, and the next year he came forth with *Dot and Tot in Merryland*, the story of a candy country ruled over by a doll, to me at least one of the least interesting of his books. Indeed the idea for a series of Oz books did not originate with Mr. Baum: it came from the children who after the publication of *The Wizard* deluged him with letters begging that the story might be continued. (pp. 18-20)

I have made much of the fact that these are *American* fairy tales. By this I do not mean that Mr. Baum has used no European materials. . . . [He] used very freely whatever suited his purpose from older literatures and from older cultures. Indeed had he not done this, his output could hardly have been recognized as wonder tales at all. The greatest villain in all the Oz books is the Nome King—the "G" is left out because the children cannot pronounce it!—the ruler of an underground nation of elves, as old as fairy lore itself. Again, we have Polychrome, the Rainbow's daughter, a character surely with nothing distinctively American about her. . . . (pp. 23-4)

These, however, are not the distinctively "Ozzy" characters. Suppose we look at the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy finds the Scarecrow, newly-made, with a bean pole up his back, in the middle of a corn field. She lifts him down and they go to the Emerald City together, where Dorothy plans to ask Oz to send her home to Kansas while the Scarecrow wants brains instead of straw in the painted

sack that serves him for a head. The next addition to their party is the Tin Woodman whom they find rusted in the woods and who cannot go along with them until they oil his joints so that he may walk. The Tin Woodman was once a man of flesh and blood, one Nick Chopper, in love with a pretty Munchkin girl. But a wicked witch enchanted his ax, so that as he was working in the forest he cut himself to pieces. Fortunately Nick Chopper had among his friends a very wonderful tinsmith who, as soon as any part of Nick's body had been cut off, would replace it with tin, until at last the man was wholly tin and as good as new. Only one thing was lacking: he had no longer a heart and accordingly he did not care whether he married the pretty Munchkin girl or not. The Tin Woodman therefore goes along with Dorothy and the Scarecrow to the Emerald City in the hope that the Wizard may give him a heart. Now who but an American—in a country overrun with mechanical skill—could ever have dreamed of a creature like that? (pp. 24-5)

The use of machinery in the Oz books is also characteristically American. In general, magic may be said to inhere not in persons but in things. Whoever has the magical instrument can perform magic deeds. Continually, the forces of Nature, as we know them in America, are used for purposes of conveyance. In *The Wizard of Oz*, it is a Kansas cyclone which carries Dorothy and her house over the desert and deposits them in the Land of Oz. In *Ozma of Oz*, Dorothy is shipwrecked. In *Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy, in California, is swallowed by an earthquake and carried down into the center of the Earth, from whence she makes her way to Oz. (pp. 27-8)

Indeed the United States is well represented in Oz. Dorothy is from Kansas; the Shaggy Man comes from Colorado; and Betsy Bobbin's home is Oklahoma. The Wizard of Oz himself is a native of Omaha. There he was connected with Bailum and Barney's Consolidated Shows, and his magic was, all of it, pure fake. . . . It is not until later in his career when the Wizard becomes a pupil of the great sorceress, Glinda the Good, that he learns something about real magic.

Now what is the significance of all this? Not surely that American magic is any better than French magic or German magic. No. Simply that Mr. Baum has enlarged the resources of fairyland. He has not destroyed European magic: he has simply added to it. And he has done one thing more. He has taught American children to look for the element of wonder in the life around them, to realize that even smoke and machinery may be transformed into fairy lore if only we have sufficient energy and vision to penetrate to their significance and transform them to our use. (pp. 28-9)

Now this seems to me significant and important. It is not healthy—and it is not true—for children to be made to feel that romance belongs only to the past, and that everything in America today is drab, uninteresting, and business-like. . . . Thus Mr. Baum's work is primarily significant because it has pointed in the right direction: it has helped to teach us how to find wonder in contemporary American life. (p. 30)

All in all, there is much fuller command over nature in Oz than we enjoy in any country yet known. Animals can talk and mingle with human beings on terms of equality. Even flies are considerate and kindly: if one alights on you, you do not kill it: you simply request it politely to move on, and it complies with your request. Many of the inhabitants of the country, not being made of flesh and blood, do not need food, sleep, drink, or clothes. (pp. 32-3)

Best of all, there is no army in Oz. Ozma refuses to fight even when her kingdom seems in danger of invasion. "No one has

the right to destroy any living creatures, however evil they may be, or to hurt them or make them unhappy. I will not fight—even to save my kingdom.” For the safety of the world’s future, the children could not well learn any more wholesome doctrine than that.

(Is it becoming clear, then, why so many of those who are well satisfied with the established order will have none of the Oz books?)

There is one element in the Oz books that the children probably do not get, and that is the element of satire. You will remember how in *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Woodman travel to the Wizard because they want, respectively, to get home to Kansas, to receive some brains, and to be given a heart. The fourth member of the party is a Cowardly Lion, who wants courage. He is a most ferocious fighter in the jungle, but he is much concerned over the fact that whenever there is danger he is terribly afraid. . . . So he goes to Oz to ask for courage. Mr. Baum makes the whole journey a sermon on the text: “Man does not live by bread alone but principally by catchwords.” All through the journey, the Lion is the valiant protector of the party, and whenever any particularly difficult problem comes up, it is the Scarecrow who solves it. Once the Tin Woodman accidentally steps on a beetle and kills it. Greatly distressed over this act of clumsiness, he weeps bitter tears which run down his tin cheeks and rust the hinges of his jaw. . . . The point is, of course, that all these creatures, except Dorothy, are already in possession of that of which they are going in search. Yet because they lack the name, the fact that they are in actual possession of the thing itself wholly eludes them.

When they arrive at the Emerald City, it is easy for the Wizard to satisfy the Scarecrow, the Lion, and the Tin Woodman. The Lion eats a dish of porridge for courage and never trembles again. A silken heart stuffed with sawdust serves the Tin Woodman a great deal better than any frail heart of flesh possibly could, and the Wizard assures him, as he puts it in his breast, that it *is* an especially kind heart. The Scarecrow’s new brains are a judicious mixture of bran with needles and pins, and whenever one of these latter ingredients comes sticking through the sack covering of his head, the Scarecrow congratulates himself upon his sharpness. But Dorothy—Dorothy wants to get home to Kansas. That is a different sort of problem, and that is where the Wizard meets his downfall. (pp. 33-6)

Sometimes the satire strikes a deeper note as in the incident of the Woggle Bug having reduced all knowledge to pills, so that the students in his college do not need to spend any of their valuable time in studying but may be free to devote it all to such important thing as football and other outdoor sports. (pp. 36-7)

The Oz books are “popular” in character. That admits, of course, of no dispute. In distinction of style they are utterly lacking and often in imaginative distinction as well. Nobody could possibly write fifty volumes of fairy tales and keep the whole up to a high level of imaginative power. In this respect the series may be said to have declined notably as commercial considerations made it necessary to string it on indefinitely. (p. 37)

As popular literature then, and along the lines indicated in this essay, I think the Oz books deserve consideration. They are an American phenomenon. . . . And it is undeniable that literature conceived in terms of our own life and thought must have always a certain vividness for us which other, sometimes much finer, literature does not possess. (pp. 37-8)

Edward Wagenknecht, in his *Utopia Americana* (copyright 1929 and 1957 by Edward Wagenknecht; reprinted by permission of the author), University of Washington Book Store, 1929, 40 p.

JAMES THURBER (essay date 1934)

I have been for several weeks bogged in Oz books. It had seemed to me, at first, a simple matter to go back to the two I read as a boy of ten, “*The Wizard of Oz*” and “*The Land of Oz*” . . . , and write down what Oz revisited was like to me now that my life, at forty, has begun again. I was amazed and disturbed to discover that there are now twenty-eight different books about Oz. . . . The thing is obviously a major phenomenon in the wonderful land of books. I began my research, therefore, not by rereading the two Oz books I loved as a child (and still do, I was happy to find out later) but with an inquiry into the life and nature of the man who wrote the first fourteen of the series, Mr. L. Frank Baum. . . .

Let me quote from his own foreword to the first Oz book . . . : “‘*The Wizard of Oz*’ aspires to be a modernized fairy tale in which the wonderment and joy are retained, and the heartaches and nightmares left out” [see excerpt above]. I am glad that, in spite of this high determination, Mr. Baum failed to keep them out. Children love a lot of nightmare and at least a little heartache in their books. And they get them in the Oz books. I know that I went through excruciatingly lovely nightmares and heartaches when the Scarecrow lost his straw, when the Tin Woodman was taken apart, when the Saw-Horse broke his wooden leg (it hurt for me even if it didn’t for Mr. Baum). . . .

[He was forty-three] when he did “*The Wizard of Oz*,” which to him was just another (the twentieth or so) book for children. It sold better than anything he had ever written. . . . He ignored the popular demand [for more Oz books] for four years, meanwhile writing a book called “*Baum’s American Fairy Tales*,” subtitled “*Stories of Astonishing Adventures of American Boys and Girls with the Fairies of Their Native Land*.” He must have been hurt by its cold reception. . . . His American fairy tales, I am sorry to tell you, are not good fairy tales. The scene of the first one is the attic of a house “on Prairie Avenue, in Chicago.” It never leaves there for any wondrous, faraway realm. Baum apparently never thoroughly understood that fatal flaw in his essential ambition, but he understood it a little. He did another collection of unconnected stories but this time he placed them, not in Illinois but in Mo. “*The Magical Monarch of Mo*” is not much better than the American tales; but at least one story in it, “*The Strange Adventures of the King’s Head*,” is a fine, fantastic fairy tale. The others are just so-so. On went L. Frank Baum, grimly, into the short tales making up “*The Enchanted Island of Yew*”; but the girls and boys were not interested. Finally, after four years and ten thousand letters from youngsters, he wrote “*The Land of Oz*.” He was back where they wanted him. . . . The first two, “*The Wizard*” and “*The Land*” are far and away the best. Baum wrote “*The Wizard*,” I am told, simply as a tour de force to see if he could animate, and make real, creatures never alive before on sea or land. He succeeded, eminently, with the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman and he went on to succeed again in the second book with Jack Pumpkinhead, the Saw-Horse and the Woggle Bug. After that I do not think he was ever really successful. (p. 141)

I think the fatal trouble with the later books (for us aging examiners, anyway) is that they became whimsical rather than

fantastic. They ramble and they preach (one is dedicated to a society in California called "The Uplifters"), they lack the quick movement, the fresh suspense, the amusing dialogue and the really funny invention of the first ones. They dawdle along like a class prophecy. None of their creatures comes to life for me. I am merely bored by the Growleywogs, the Whimsies, the Cuttenclips, the Patchwork Girl, Button-Bright, the Googly-Goo, and I am actually gagged by one Unc Nunkie. Mr. Baum himself said that he kept putting in things that children wrote and asked him to put in. He brought back the Wizard of Oz because the children pleaded and he rewrote the Scarecrow and the Woodman almost to death because the children wanted them. The children should have been told to hush up and go back to the real Wizard and the real Scarecrow and the real Woodman. (pp. 141-42)

James Thurber, "The Wizard of Chitenango" (© 1934 The New Republic, Inc., copyright renewed © 1962 by Helen W. Thurber and Rosemary Thurber; reprinted by permission), in *The New Republic*, Vol. LXXXI, No. 1045, December 12, 1934, pp. 141-42.

FRANK BAUM (essay date 1952)

What has made *The Wizard of Oz* so successful? There are three main factors, all of concern to today's juvenile fantasy writers.

First, the story is told clearly in simple language easily understood by the child reader. In preparing the manuscript, the author placed on the wall above his desk a quotation from the Bible to which he constantly referred: "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child." This is the first lesson every juvenile writer must learn.

Secondly, the story is properly directed to a particular age group. In no other field of writing is there such a distinct variation in the type of appeal required as in the juvenile field. (p. 19)

The Wizard of Oz was written to interest the "tender age" class but it did more than that—it also interested the adults who had to read the story to the little ones. That's one of the big secrets of writing for this early age group. To appeal to the parents the story must contain humor, often subtle, and an undercurrent of philosophy which they will recognize and chuckle over, and which will make it for them more than just a child's story.

The Wizard of Oz fantasy is woven out of commonplace material. That is the third basic reason for its success. Reality and unreality are so entwined that it is often difficult to know where one leaves off and the other begins. . . .

The opening scene [in *The Wizard of Oz*] depicts a logical situation. A little girl living on the Kansas prairie is caught in a cyclone which carries away her house while she and her little dog are inside. But in the story, the storm lands the little girl's home in a mythical country—the Land of Oz. Her problem is to get back home to Kansas.

There are blocking forces to cause trouble—the Deadly Poppy Field, the Fighting Trees, the Hammerheads, the Kalidahs and the broad river to cross with no boat or bridge available. Through it all, however, nothing happens to the leading character to make her afraid and thereby frighten the little reader. A child can carry this story into the darkness of night without fear of harm from any of the quaint characters.

The odd characters are logically explained. For example, the Scarecrow was made by a farmer to keep the crows from his

field. Although he stuffed the head as well as the body, the farmer neglected to put in any brains. (p. 36)

Contrast is used throughout the book. There is the Lion who is always telling how cowardly he is, but who invariably proves to be the bravest member of the party; the Scarecrow who complains of lack of brains, yet is the one to solve every tough problem; the Tin Woodman who has no heart, yet is so kind and gentle that he cannot bear to injure the smallest ant in his path; the Wizard who is thought to be the greatest magician in the land, yet who turns out to be a fake and a humbug.

An example of whimsical humor is found when the Cowardly Lion demands he be given courage. The Wizard hands him a bowl of liquid to drink. When the Lion wants to know what it is, the Wizard explains: "If it were inside you it would be courage. You know of course that courage is always inside one so this really cannot be called courage until you have swallowed it." This sort of touch appeals to the parent who has to read aloud to the child. (pp. 36-7)

The Wizard of Oz is told chronologically so that childish minds may easily follow the sequence of events. The story leaves the reader with a feeling that it all *could* have happened just as it was told. And the end is not spoiled by the author's explanation that these marvelous adventures were a dream or a hallucination. Never attempt to explain fantasy.

In writing this book, the author refrained from the use of certain incidents and situations, either because "tender age" minds could not grasp their import or because he felt it unwise to draw attention to them. No mention is made of love or marriage; of death or sickness; of killing human beings. There is no use of such trite fairy tale devices as genie, dwarf or ogre. No blood-curdling or disagreeable incidents occur. And no attempt is made to impress a moral on the child's mind. *The Wizard of Oz* is pure entertainment. (p. 37)

Frank Baum, "Why 'The Wizard of Oz' Keeps on Selling," in *Writer's Digest*, Vol. 33, No. 1, December, 1952, pp. 19, 36-7.

RUSSEL B. NYE (essay date 1957)

[Baum's] strength as a storyteller for children lay in his unique ability to implement and adapt the familiar apparatus of the older tale by reworking old materials into new forms. He worked within the framework of the Grimm tradition despite his disavowal of many of its elements, constructing out of essentially traditional materials a fresh new gallery of characters and a group of delightfully varied plots. The changes he rang on the traditional fairy story, not his rejection of that tradition, account to a great extent for his effectiveness. A great part of the perennial attraction of the Oz books lies in the child's recognition of old friends in new roles and costumes.

The "horrible and bloodcurdling incident" to which Baum objected in the Grimms [see excerpt above], of course, appears nowhere in Oz. Here Baum followed out his original intentions. There are excitement and danger in his stories, but violence is absent and evil under control. The witches may enchant Dorothy; they never threaten to eat her or bake her in an oven, and the bad wizards and witches who threaten Oz are frustrated creatures whom one could never imagine victorious. The Nome King, though obviously a thorough villain, is given to temper tantrums and capricious mischief much like a spoiled child, but no more dangerous and almost as easily disciplined. (p. 2)

In his effort to create an American *genre*, Baum had least success and more or less gave up the attempt. The tremendous popularity of *The Wizard* surprised him. He had held really higher hopes for his next book, *Baum's American Fairy Tales: Stories of Astonishing Adventures of Boys and Girls with the Fairies of their Native Land*. . . . These "American" tales, laid in American locales, were lost in the instant popularity of the Oz stories, and Baum's attempt to create a native *genre* simply did not come off. Clever, inventive, with a substratum of very shrewd satire, the stories fail to measure up to the standard set by the Wizard and his crew. Nor could Baum quite keep Oz out of the book; the most effective stories in the collection are those dealing with the kingdom of Quok (another version of some of the wildly wonderful realms of the later Oz books) and with the doings of the Ryls (blood brothers of Munchkins and Gillikins).

The *American Fairy Tales* were good stories, far better than most run-of-the-mill "educational" tales for children, but in the majority of them Baum failed to observe the first rule of the wonder-tale—that it must create a never-never land in which all laws of probability may be credibly contravened or suspended. When in the first story the little girl (Dorothy by another name) replies to a puzzled, lost genie, "You are on Prairie Avenue in Chicago," the heart goes out of the story. It is only in Quok, or in Baum's zany version of the African Congo, or among the Ryls, that the book captures the fine free spirit of Oz. (p. 3)

[The Oz books became classics] not because Baum succeeded in writing a new kind of Americanized fairy story, but because he adapted the fairy tale tradition itself to twentieth-century American taste with imaginative ingenuity. There are in the Oz books a number of references to American locale, and Dorothy herself, of course, comes to Oz via a prairie twister. But beyond such casual references Oz has no real relation to the United States—it is fundamentally the out-of-time, out-of-space fairyland of tradition. Working from the midst of older materials, Baum's clever and occasionally brilliant variations on traditional themes are marks of craftsmanship and creativeness of a high order. It is not solely in their "Americanism," nor in their avoidance of the "horrible and bloodcurdling," nor in their rejection of moralism (which Baum did not wholly reject), nor in their pure entertainment value (which Baum did maintain), that the power of the Oz books lies. It stems rather from Baum's success in placing his work directly in the stream of the past, in his assimilation into Oz of the ageless universals of wonder and fantasy. What Baum did was to enlarge the resources of the European inheritance by making it possible to find the old joy of wonderment in the fresh new setting of Oz, creating a bright new fairyland in the old tradition. (p. 4)

One of Baum's major contributions to the tradition of the fantasy tale is his recognition of the inherent wonder of the machine, his perception of the magic of *things* in themselves. In the Oz books he expanded the resources of the fairy tale to include for the first time, the mechanical developments of the 20th century, when every child saw about him—in the automobile, the dynamo, the radio, the airplane, and the rest—the triumph of technology over distance, time, and gravity. No American child of Baum's time or after could remain unaware of the age of invention, or fail to feel the wonderment of what machines could do. The mechanical marvels of Oz fitted exactly the technological pattern of American life, its consciousness of machinery, its faith in the machine's seemingly unlim-

ited potential. Kipling, of course, had experimented before Baum with tales of technology, but from a much more mature and sophisticated point of view. . . . Baum, in a burst of inspiration, moved the machine into the child's world of imagination, endowed it with life and magic, and made it the ally of all the forces of good and justice and well-being in Oz.

The machines of Oz are magician's creations, with the white magic of the sorcerer clinging to them. By transforming the talking beasts of ancient folktales into talking machines, Baum grafted twentieth-century technology to the fairy tale tradition. (p. 7)

Baum was no Swift nor Twain, but he belonged in the same tradition and his wit is (on a lesser level) astonishingly subtle and ingenious. The pertinent but unexpected association of the apparently unrelated, the joy of novelty, the pleasure of recognition of the obvious in new form, . . . all the classic elements of the humor tradition appear in the Oz books.

Baum's wit, though, is geared to the child's pace. It is wit a child can understand and appreciate, since it deals with concepts within the circle of his experience and those which are applicable to his own sphere of action. Baum's skill in evoking a humorous response from a child is real and expert; he locates quickly and unerringly those areas of incongruity and absurdity that are recognizable to a child and subject to his judgment. There are witty bits in the Oz books that children may miss the first time, but if adults can be prevented from explaining the joke (this is almost a crime in Oz) they can have the wonderful pleasure of finding it the second or third time.

The humor of Oz lies in the interaction of character and situation, in the genuinely humorous creations who get into equally humorous predicaments because they are what they are. Sometimes the humor is broad and obvious—such as the Kingdom of Utensia, populated by kitchenware, whose King Kleaver often makes cutting remarks to Captain Dip of the Spoon Brigade. . . . At other times Baum's strokes are somewhat more delicate, as with Ann Soforth, the ambitious young queen who sets out to conquer the world with sixteen generals and one private, or with Diksey the jokester, who once made such a bad joke it led to war—both witty commentaries on military motivations. . . . The best illustration of all, however, is probably H. M. Woggle-Bug, T.E., a masterpiece of humorous creation. A lowly field bug with no name at all, he hid in a schoolhouse and became thoroughly educated (T. E.) by eavesdropping on the lectures of Professor Nowitall. Caught in a magic lantern lens, he was projected on the classroom screen and stepped off highly magnified (H. M.), fully qualified to be Dean of the Royal College, "the most learned and important educator in the favored land of Oz." Thus H. M. Woggle-Bug, T. E., struts his way self-importantly through various adventures, the very symbol of ostentatious erudition. All this, and much more like it, is genuine humor, touched now and then with genius. (pp. 8-10)

The First Law of Baum's Utopia of Oz, the rule that inspires its harmonious order, is Love. This theme, on which Baum played constant and subtle variations, binds all the Oz books together as a moral unit. Love in Oz is kindness, selflessness, friendliness—an inner check that makes one act decently toward human beings, animals, plants, fairies, machines, and even one's enemies. A Love Magnet hangs over the gates of the City, so magnetizing all who enter that they must love and be loved, and Princess Ozma explains her kingdom's whole reason for existence by the simple remark, "The Land of Oz