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An American Tale: Incarnations of the Wizard of Oz and the Negotiation of Identity, Race, and Gender, in Popular Culture

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

AN AMERICAN TALE: INCARNATIONS OF THE *WIZARD OF OZ* AND THE
NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITY, RACE, AND GENDER, IN POPULAR CULTURE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

by

Carly A. Orshan

2012

To: Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Carly A. Orshan, and entitled *An American Tale: Incarnations of the Wizard of Oz and the Negotiation of Identity, Race, and Gender, in Popular Culture*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Kenneth Johnson

Heather Russell

Steven Blevins, Major Professor

Date of Defense: July 13, 2012.

The thesis of Carly A. Orshan is approved.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

AN AMERICAN TALE: INCARNATIONS OF THE *WIZARD OF OZ* AND THE
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by

Carly A. Orshan

Florida International University, 2012

Miami, Florida

Professor Steven Blevins, Major Professor

The purpose of this study is to address the way in which several quite varied and often commodified representations of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) express and reproduce shifting notions of national identity within American culture across the twentieth century and at the beginning of our own.

This thesis pursues the question of national identity that the American myth perpetuates throughout the twentieth century and examines the shift in citizenship through representations found in popular culture's re-writings of the *Wizard of Oz* tale. This thesis evaluates both original and contemporary adaptations of the Oz story and their deconstruction for sociohistorical representations of racial, gendered, class, and national identity. I argue, that the numerous historical and ideological comparisons from the Oz tale reflect our own world in our discussions of identity, race, class, and gender and have become significant reflections of our own imaginations and national identity.

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INTRODUCTION

“WE’RE OFF”: OZ AND ITS MANY ITERATIONS

As a child, the Wizard of Oz¹ story and film was very present in my every day life. Not only did my family participate in the ritual of watching the regularly televised programming of the Oz film,² but also my loving mother and father would quote the film repeatedly ingraining the oratory of the work into our subconscious. My mother’s repetitively enthusiastic proclamations, “Lions, and tigers, and bears, oh my!” mocked our anxieties over various small concerns. At times she would even say in a grainy high-pitched voice, “I’ll get you my pretty...” as her own verbal enforcement for us to eat our dinner or do our chores. Verbally and visually Oz was present in my upbringing. We even spent summers at Emerald Mountain, a breathtaking space in Beech Mountain, North Carolina that included a mock cottage of Dorothy’s home with a yellow brick road filled with wonder to navigate on the warm summer days (see fig. 1). Our living room even contained small porcelain figurines of the Scarecrow, Tinman, Lion, Glinda, Dorothy and Toto. Near the characters lay the witch’s shoe: a ceramic Victorian black pump with a limp black and red striped sock emerging from it. Ironically, we did not

¹ The use of italics will be omitted when referencing the metanarrative of the Wizard of Oz. This includes the references to all Oz stories and media representations that have developed from the original text, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum (1900).

² The regularly scheduled showing of MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz* film can be traced back to CBS’s first broadcast in 1956, however, it did not become an annual tradition until 1959 (McClelland 144-5). The broadcast rights to the film shifted from CBS to NBC briefly from 1968 – 1975. Nevertheless, in 1976, CBS “reacquired the picture as an annual special under a five-year contract,” all the while paying \$4,000,000 for the five showings (McClelland 144-8). The story and the characters soon became “so recognizable that they could serve as shorthand in the marketplace,” with references to Dorothy and her friends appearing everywhere from car commercials to record album covers and advertisements (Harmetz 291).

have the infamous silver or red shoes.³ However, I have owned many pairs of silver and red brightly shining shoes throughout the years – and admittedly to this day, I still gravitate toward them because they remind me of a sweet sense of homeliness and innocence.



Figure 1: The Yellow Brick Road from the Land of Oz on Emerald Mountain, NC, 2011.

With Oz ingrained in me throughout my childhood, I developed the idea to write about the Wizard of Oz after seeing a performance of Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s hit Broadway musical *Wicked* (2003). The musical ignited something within me – a desire and a passion to dissect, analyze, and breakdown the American tale I had grown to love and accept with open arms. After seeing the wonderfully scripted and

³ The most influential magical artifact introduced in Baum’s story, and one which would resurface in one form or another in every version that follows, is inarguably the pair of enchanted silver shoes that holds the power to send Dorothy back home to Kansas. In the MGM film adaptation, Judy Garland’s ruby slippers have developed a mythical status all on their own with the artifacts being auctioned amid much fanfare for unsteady amounts of money.

richly melodic Broadway adaptation I was appalled by the mainstream “happily ever after ending” that steered from Gregory Maguire’s original fictional story, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1995). Since these two iterations diverged from their representative endings I became invested in trying to understand why society is in dire need of only accepting happy-ever-after moments specifically for mainstream consumers to continue to reproduce and engage in the commodification of the story.⁴

Wicked the novel and musical have at their premise a delightfully wicked idea: what if instead of jumping into action audiences take a step back and ensure that they have identified the good and bad guys correctly? If so, we might have to ask some questions, maybe even give the bad guy a chance to tell us his side of the story. This exact autonomy given to the “bad guy” is what I became increasingly puzzled with as I soon sympathized and rooted for the epitome of evil, the Wicked Witch of the West. This adaptation shows that the winner’s version of the story (Dorothy’s tale) obscures the loser’s version (the Witch’s tale). Since *Wicked* explores the life and times of the Wicked Witch of the West and retells *her* story, readers and viewers begin to empathize with her and glorify the essence of evil from the original Oz tale.

Wicked along with the other adaptations of Oz allow consumers to unravel and sift through the original tale by Baum creating new understandings of how the story can apply to the current culture. These adaptations enabled me to question the idea of national

⁴ Maguire’s original text sold three-quarters of a million copies since its publication in 1995. However, the novel is enjoying a more refined second life as a big-budget Broadway musical. Currently in its 9th year on Broadway, *Wicked*’s North American and International companies have cumulatively grossed over \$2.5 billion and have been seen by 30 million people worldwide. Since *Wicked* opened at the Gershwin Theatre on Broadway in October 2003, it has regularly grossed more than \$1.7 million a week, has been seen by over 6 million people and is already “one of the most successful shoes in Broadway history” says *The New York Times*.

identity, gain a better understanding of social Othering that circulates American culture, and see the variety of other perspectives that are given within the textual and visual spaces that honor and illuminate the original Oz story. In the earlier iterations it becomes easy for observers to hate the Wicked Witch when Glinda the Good and Dorothy tell us to. Yet to see the world through the Witch's eyes as Maguire's text explores, it becomes a lot harder to do so, ultimately fetishizing evil itself. As the Oz story permeates our current culture, so too does the idea of Otherness which has become so polarized on a national scale that it eradicates any possibility of understanding or any effort to see perspectives from the other side. *Wicked* along with other later iterations deconstructs the notions of Otherness through the Oz tale in relation to current sociohistorical events and politics in order to expose these multiple perspectives.

Similar to Maguire's retelling of the Oz tale, the modern incarnation of the Wizard of Oz narrative develops new elements to keep the story compelling and contemporary. The later iterations act as a deconstruction for sociohistorical representations of racial, gendered, class, and national identity. The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate significant adaptations of the Wizard of Oz story that have stemmed from L. Frank Baum's original children's book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and to examine the negotiations of national, gendered, and racialized identity addressed in each. In addition to Baum's series of children's books, the versions of the Oz tale I analyze include the MGM film *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Sidney Lumet's African-American recasting of the film musical in *The Wiz* (1978), Gregory Maguire's popular novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1995), and Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman's hit Broadway musical adaptation of Maguire's novel, *Wicked* (2003).

I found an increasing need to address the several quite varied and often commodified adaptations of L. Frank Baum's Wizard of Oz and explore how each iteration influences national identity within American culture across the twentieth century and at the beginning of our own. Therefore, a problematic issue assessed in this thesis is to reevaluate the concept of American myth. In doing so, I will navigate an understanding of national identity and how the contemporary notions of what the American myth implies has changed through time, specifically by the representations found in popular culture's re-writings of the Wizard of Oz tale.

The modern incarnations of the Oz narrative develop new elements to keep the story compelling and contemporary. Therefore, I approach these texts as fluid rather than fixed – changing with the development of the nation. This thesis facilitates an interdisciplinary consideration of the various adaptations of the Wizard of Oz by bringing children's literature, popular fiction, music, film, and theatre together in a theoretically multifaceted approach. Together these texts teach us about the lasting significance of myth in American consumerism and American culture.

The discipline of American cultural studies has its foundation in the myth/symbol school of theory. Cultural theorists have studied the idea that the winner's version of the story obscures the loser's version. They use the word "myth" to describe the winner's story that has been used and misunderstood in modern times. Henry Nash Smith pioneered the myth/symbol theory in his work, *Virgin Land* where he analyzes a variety of cultural representations based on western expansion, initiating that the essence of American culture could be culled by reading representative great individual works of American imagination. Many people think of myths as powerful representations of the

inner workings of the human psyche. Popular authors writing about the myth of ancient cultures such as the Greeks, Egyptians and Aztecs have described myths as springing from the human imagination that are never connected to anything that actually happened.⁵ Witches, ogres, monsters or dragons can be described as being no more real than the tales of creation that illustrate the world springing from the mouth of a god or life being destroyed by catastrophic floods. For these authors, though, myths contain certain truths about human psychology and should be studied as an ancient path to knowledge about our inner lives and national identity.

Moreover, Smith studies the inner workings of society in his mythical studies. He refers to mythical and symbolic patterns as “collective representations rather than the work of a single mind,” arguing that the reoccurring themes and symbolic references were reflective of the nation as a whole (Smith xi). In the preface of *Virgin Land*, Smith contends that the terms myth and symbol describe “larger and smaller units of the same kind of thing, namely an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image” (xi). Mythic discourse is rooted in the development of national identity because, as Smith proposes, “the American ideology [is] made into a myth” (Smith 26). Symbols of nationhood and myth-based narratives therefore are necessary imaginative constructions that contribute to the development of collective identity and a sense of

⁵ This understanding of myth was popularized by the writer and lecturer, Joseph Campbell. He published a series of books on the subject and was featured on the series, *Movers: Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth*, 1988.

exceptionalism that validate the formation of social behavior and communal experience within a culture.⁶

The concept of “myth” can be defined as stories that get told by winners to deliberately conceal the loser’s story. In a sense the story is a lie. Not only does it omit a whole side to the tale but then it distorts the events to make the victor appear completely virtuous and the loser wholly wicked. What a remarkable reversal – from paragon of evil to a victim of persecution. René Girard and other cultural theorists emphasize that there is more to the story than simply accepting the celebration of the victor as our own happy-ever-after narrative.⁷

These theorists wonder if the celebration is concealing a deeper truth that could be revealed by observing the story of the “villain” creating a voice for the demonized Other and marking a better understanding of American identity predicated on the “whole” myth and not only the one sided stories in which consumers devour. In comparing these revelations to the Oz story, observers of the 1939 Wizard of Oz film celebrate with Dorothy and her friends when the first witch is crushed by Dorothy’s house and they

⁶ In *American Studies as Cultural Criticism*, Giles Gunn points out that a central aim of the myth/symbol scholar “was not simply to differentiate those events that are mental from those that are not but to clarify the way imaginative constructions contribute to the formation of social behavior and [the way] social experience colors the nature of the communal as well as the individual life of the imagination” (Gunn 159).

⁷ René Girard explains that this is exactly the reversal that the persecutors (the Heroes of fairy tales and myths) want to avoid, and do so by telling of their glorious triumph excluding the point of view of the victim (the Villain). Girard explains that if persecutors succeed in “reducing [the victim] to silence, the persecutors’ belief in the [the victim’s] guilt would have been unanimous... This belief would have prevailed so totally that every future account of the affair would have been given by people sharing it... The accusations would be so powerful that they would be raised to the status of truth.” René Girard, *Job: The Victim of His People*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987) 34.

continue their celebration when the other witch is melted into oblivion. Similarly, the opening scene of *Wicked* the musical shows the Ozians jumping for joy when they hear about the Witch's death. However, in the musical the only individual who begins to reminisce as she tells the story of the "villain" displays a sense of melancholy.

Nevertheless, in the same celebratory way, Americans themselves rejoiced after hearing the news of Osama bin Laden's death. Although in this latter example the delighted people know of bin Laden's narrative as being liable for horrific acts of terror, it is nonetheless a celebration over death. With the victim silenced and his version of what happened lost – often because he has been killed, there is no one to challenge the victor's story. Instead those who hear the story immediately celebrate the loss. The incomplete distorted story rises to the level of truth adopted by audiences, and a Myth is born.

The discourse of symbol/myth created a national ideology adopted by citizens, whether consciously or unconsciously that celebrated mythic narratives of what it meant to be "American."⁸ These social ideologies and values that have taken a pervasive stance within the culture are especially apparent in the assumptions embodied in folklores and fairy tales, as well as literature, music, film and other works of popular culture.

⁸ Through myths and symbols national ideology is produced and represented as they are adopted and adapted by citizens, consciously or unconsciously. The American cultural studies myth/symbol discourse developed from Smith's *Virgin Land* which served as a generative work, a theoretical framework for a variety of scholars including R.W.B Lewis, John William Ward, Leo Marx, Alan Trachtenberg, Daniel Hoffman, Charles Fiedelson, and other (Gunn 158). Each myth/symbol theorist tried to develop "expressions of individual consciousness, forms of collective mentality, and the social and institutional structures of lived existence" (157). However, in sustaining a sense of national identity and American exceptionalism, theorists like Smith turned their attention to establish the presence of specifically American myths. Smith examines national identity through the narratives and symbolic discourses surrounding westward expansion, which he called, "the vacant continent"(4). Later theorists would refer to the land west of civilization as simply "the frontier."

Contemporary literary critic Lauren Berlant situates the citizen at the center of current national inquiries on shaping desire and national imagination in popular culture. In positioning the citizen at the center of the myth/symbol construction Berlant sets up the ideology adopted by citizens, whether consciously or unconsciously that mediates national identity and the desire for inclusion. Berlant focuses on the lives and experiences of racial, gendered, sexual minorities and the working class to position her theory of infantile citizenship. “While citizens should be encouraged to love the nation the way they do their families and their fathers, democracies can also produce a special form of tyranny that makes citizens like children, infantilized, passive and overdependent on the “‘immense and tutelary power’ of the state” (Berlant 27). Berlant’s theory of infantile citizenship can be read as a trope in understanding the cultural expectations of the nation on their citizens and the burden the nation places on these infantilized others.

In analyzing the multiple reconstructions of the Wizard of Oz and the characters within these textual spaces or worlds, we can gain a greater knowledge of the current cultural expectations of the American myth and a better understanding of how constructions of racial and gendered identities continue to divide society into hierarchies of power, ultimately infantilizing the subaltern bodies and identities. The Oz myth does so, I argue, through the differentiation of the “good” towards that, which is deemed “evil” or “wicked.” Thus, the binary of “good” and “evil” helps to deconstruct the sociohistorical representations of racial, gendered, sexual, and national identity and how these concepts all hinge together along the axes and regimes of power that get reconfigured throughout the various adaptations of the Wizard of Oz.

Each chapter in this thesis will touch on the idea of good and evil in relation to national identity. Chapter 1, *No One Mourns the Wicked: American Myth and National Identity* discusses the roots of American myth from Baum's original text and how the ideas of homeliness have shifted through time specifically in relation to current ideas and images of "evil" within popular culture. Chapter 2, *Wicked Shades of Green: Othering and Race in Popular Culture*, discusses how each adaptation of the Wizard of Oz story reimagines the Other in ways that highlight the social anxiety and tensions surrounding the sociohistorical moment in which the reworking was created initiating a discussion about historical and ideological discourses that signify identity, race, and Otherness. Chapter 3, *The Wicked Consumption of Gender Roles*, evaluates the performative roles set by the construction of gender, particularly in relation to fairy tale woes of princesses and evil queens and how this narrow construction of gender has led to demarcating the range of culturally validated femininities and gender construction within our culture.

This thesis adopts a cultural studies approach to the Wizard of Oz myth combining an analysis of the production, circulation, and consumption of the Oz myth within American culture. My methodology is to engage in a targeted textual analysis of the original text and various adaptations to critically analyze the children's literature, popular fiction, film, and theatrical representations of the Oz tale and show how these representations redefine and re-imagine the current understanding of American identity.

When L. Frank Baum wrote *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, published in 1900, he was most certainly responding to the cultural conditions of America, the severe depression that struck the nation in the 1890s and the shift from a rural to urban/industrial society as the American frontier came to a close. Many adaptations of the Wizard of Oz

that materialize American culture manifest during cultural turmoil, just as the original text acts as a political allegory of its time. Each time a re-release, reference, or retelling of Dorothy's American tale of innocence and homeliness floats across American eyes and ears, the story is in effect drawing society back to the American hegemony of the 1900s, a supposed simpler time in American culture.

By reinforcing the notions of homeliness the Oz narratives speak to their spectator's desires of building a national identity, allowing the story to enforce traditional perceptions of American ideology and hegemony. In the early 1900s, American identity shifted from the exploratory American frontier to a more settled domesticated unit. The home became a heteronormative space for the nuclear family to nest within. An emphasis on familial values and strong patriotic declarations became the ideal American image to uphold. While strengthening the construction of American citizenship through the framework of the home and the national homeland, citizens began to exclude those who did not fit into the prescribed roles of domesticity. Throughout the progression of American identity, American ideology has reinforced the notions of home against those that are cast as being Other, that is, those who are marred as racialized bodies and who do not fit into the suggested domestication by the social apparatus. This American hegemony builds an exclusionary ideology igniting a sense of terror within Americans and stages them against those who are segregated as Others.

In the midst of writing my thesis I found myself on an unexpected plane ride from Miami to Chicago when I experienced first hand the sociocultural American exceptionalism that has filtered our nationhood. I was flying in the middle of a work week with my two older sisters and two older cousins— the five 'girls' from my mother's

side to attend my grandmother's funeral; the nature of the flight and journey was intriguing to say the least. Just as the Wizard of Oz's Dorothy was abruptly cast away by the tornado, I too felt disconnected, confused and caught up in a whirlwind, yet humble to be with the group of women I grew up with. We were raised together, as if five sisters. When I was young, I used to envision us as the March sisters from Louisa May Alcott's classic American tale, *Little Women*. We each had our prescribed roles within the domestic space – our grandmother holding the position of matriarch, our own *Marmee*.⁹ We are now all in our late twenties or early thirties; I am the youngest of the group and the quietest for sure. I usually turn within when caught off guard by tragedy and in my introversion I felt orphaned from what had been an ideal American unit. This unique situation of coming together to enjoy each other occurred because of my Grandmother's death and I knew it was an unexpected moment of contentment that could and never would be reproduced.

As we made our journey to Milwaukee to say our goodbyes to our beloved matriarch, the one element I was determined this mid-week traveling would not prevent was my ability to continue reading and writing for my thesis. I knew this was something my Grandmother would respect. After all, she too received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, one of the many unique kinships that we shared. But, as my cousins and sisters read their copies of *Fifty Shades of Gray* by E.L. James and *People* magazine, I chose to take out the current book I was onerously working through: *Terrorist Assemblages* by Jasbir Puar.

⁹ In *Little Women*, the mother of the family was referred to as Marmee.

Without hesitation, I simultaneously took off reading while the plane ascended into the abyss; contemplating Puar's contention that heteronormative ideologies that the U.S. nation-state rely on are accompanied by homonormative ideologies that mirror racial, class, gender, and national ideals. Puar unpacks the assumptions of normative belonging within the domestic sphere and national ideologies. A space that young women such as Dorothy, Jo March, and myself are always already working outside of as we question the social apparatus. Puar focuses her argument on racialized terrorist look-alikes, especially Sikhs, Muslims, and Arabs – who become the scapegoats for those who are marred as “other”. The American culture is currently one that initiates fear, mainly through fearing terrorist bodies. Many in our society equate terrorism with the foresaid religions and groups. This construction can be easily seen at airport screening through TSA's policing of “good” bodies toward those who are coined “bad” producing American exceptionalism against the racialized Other. During the airport security process the fear of terror is spread as citizens begin to police each other, a controversial system that unfortunately does not rest until the plane has safely landed.

Within minutes I was being questioned about the current book I was “in to”. As I casually flipped the cover to show my comrades the title of the novel they either rolled their eyes or quickly hushed me to put the book down before another passenger saw. There was a fear that if a passenger or flight attendant would see my text, I would be placed outside the sphere of nationhood publicly, ultimately becoming the racialized terrorist that everyone fears. This moment made me question one of the themes, which I was developing in my own thesis – Why has it become increasingly uncomfortable for people to discuss social politics openly without terrorism being part of the discussion?

Why is there so much desire to read and participate in a circulation of “happy” literature (i.e., *Fifty Shades of Gray* or gossip magazines) versus reading and discussing cultural theory? There is a social phenomenon taking place in popular culture through consumers widespread interest in famous individuals. This is not a new revelation. However, the increasing obsession over tabloid magazines skews the public’s perception of what *is*. Why has it become more acceptable to discuss Lindsay Lohan’s latest DIU or James’s erotic novel rather than the turmoil, the beauty, and the politics of what is truly going on around us? Why do we focus on the fictional world we create or inhabit and cultivate through this cult of celebrity?

Of course, I had no intention of having TSA escort me off the plane so my word choice and explanations grew increasingly cautious and soft. As I tried to explain why there were images of men in turbans that I was “studying” I became frustrated that no one in my party wanted to engage in such rhetoric, especially since they are all bright women, who have all received post-bachelor degrees or certifications. As I have always been type casted as the quiet or shy one, this thesis is my true attempt to vocalize my own interpretation and understanding of current popular culture and its barring of authentic discussion in relation to a childhood story I have always held dear to my heart, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum (1900). In doing so, I hope to rectify the disassociation that is practiced by many who honor the cult of celebrity in times of war, death, poverty, and political upheaval while deconstructing the fear of terror circulating our nationhood.

If the Land of Oz in the original book is a representation of other worlds and communities far from home, the adaptations are both a representation of other times and

simultaneously a reflection of the political and social climate of the nation. Oz reflects the myth of terror that propagates American culture through its reproduction and distribution of the story, its reincarnations, and various references found transcribed within popular culture. In Jay Scarfone and William Stillman's foundational study on *The Wizard of Oz*, they argue that,

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

The audience and viewers of the Oz story are responsible for projecting and creating meaning toward the tale. The audience assumes the responsibility of constructing meaning, of making, articulating, and responding to the story. The role of the audience is particularly central to theorizing the implications of the Oz texts and performances. These narratives are imagining and producing their own mythmaking in response to the audience's perception and the contemporary moment in which the adaptation was created and then produced. The audience initiates and perpetuates the cultural status surrounding the Wizard of Oz by continually engaging in its regularly televised showings and myriad of references in popular culture.

The audience of Oz has had a variety of adaptations to interpolate. Oz's visual presence in American history was established early when the first Wizard of Oz visual adaptation was created in 1910, a one-reel silent film written by Baum himself. The Oz myth continues to circulate society through the variety of literary adaptations of the narrative such as Geoff Ryman's fantastical postmodern tale *Was* (1992), to other genres such as John Boorman's science fiction film *Zardoz* (1974), to more subtle references

found in modern day sitcoms.¹⁰ Often caricatures of Oz are explored in political cartoons such as Gary Larson's "The Far Side,"¹¹ to cartoon shows such as South Park's spoof on Oz (2000), *The Muppets' Wizard of Oz* (2005), or the special, *Tom and Jerry Meet the Wizard of Oz* (2011). Additionally, Oz is simultaneously situated in music as well, Elton John's album *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* (1973), Ozzy Osborne's Wizard of Oz tribute, and Sara Evan's song, "Born to Fly" (2000) each cite the Oz legend as their inspiration. The widespread references to the book, characters, events, and places that appear in the Oz narrative serve a significant role in all forms of entertainment, situating the story as a cultural icon. Ultimately, the contemporary adaptations and references re-enforce the evolving concept of American identity that has changed through time and continue to evolve with each incarnation of the Oz tale.¹²

¹⁰ Oz references in sitcoms are often spotted. A small Canadian TV series, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* created by Zarqa Nawaz showed the disconnect between cultural references to the Oz film when one Canadian-Muslim woman made a reference to the *Wizard of Oz* and then had to explain the correlation because the other Muslim woman was from Africa and didn't follow the reference. This disconnect shows how this story is formally rooted in Western society. Oz is alluded to in many television shows and movies, from *Glee*, *Simpsons*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *Scrubs*, and the like, each show references Oz, placing the narrative as a cultural icon implying that modern sitcoms need to reference Oz as a right of passage to be included in the American hegemony.

¹¹ Many cartoonists have used images from the movie such as Gary Larson's "The Far Side". He has a number of cartoons representing the Oz story. In one of them, there are three insects strolling down the Yellow Brick Road who paraphrase the dialogue from the movie. Instead of vocalizing, "Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!" they chant "Spiders and scorpions and insecticides, oh my!"

¹² There are a number of Blogs and Websites dedicated to Oz. Often these sites post daily references to the Land of Oz found throughout the world.

CHAPTER 1

NO ONE MOURNS THE WICKED: AMERICAN MYTH & NATIONAL IDENTITY

On May 1, 2011, the threat Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden held against the American nation was eliminated when Navy Seals conducted an operation to assassinate him. The news of bin Laden's death was perfectly scripted with mass media interrupting regularly televised programs and waiting for the official recognition that the headline was in fact true. The President addressed the country to confirm the announcement. While doing so, he fought back a grin and perhaps his own jubilation. He expressed in his speech that it was a good day stating, "[bin Laden's] demise should be welcomed by all who believe in peace and human dignity." In reaction to such righteous news, the American people cued patriotic music and embarked upon a joyful celebration including dancing in the streets. A crowd of revelers appeared in front of the White House displaying an impromptu sign riffing on the Wizard of Oz: "Ding, Dong, bin Laden is Dead."

These melodic words began to symbolically ring across America on the evening and days that followed bin Laden's death. The rhythmic tone resonated throughout our society; seventy-two years after MGM studios coined the slogan to represent the demise of a fictional character, the Wicked Witch of the East in the original 1939 film. This time, the lyrical declaration, which has been infused in popular culture from literature to theatre to film to television, was directed toward the very real al-Qaeda leader in numerous forms of mass media.

The day following the assassination, satirist Stephen Colbert held a sketch titled, “We got Bin Laden Party.” Colbert’s piece cued a variety of news anchors declaring the announcement of the dictator’s death ending the segment with a clip from the MGM film in which the Wicked Witch of the East is declared dead by several of the Munchkins leading the occupants of the land to resounding celebration. Colbert’s placement of the film in his sketch brought an authentic certification to all who were watching. Americans that have trusted the Oz story and the MGM film that they grew up with, participated in a similar celebration to that of the Munchkins when modern news anchors confirmed that America’s ghost of evil perished.

As in the land of Oz, the Mayor and Coroner of Muchkinland had to certify that the Wicked old Witch was *positively, absolutely, undeniably and reliably Dead* – just as news anchors from every station had to receive their own confirmation allowing the authentic truth to come directly from the nation’s president. Since spectators were not privy to seeing bin Laden’s body, some did not believe the words of the anchors or even the president himself, insinuating that this could be a national conspiracy, reflecting the epistemology of terror that permeates the nation. These parallel actions of the American people to the Munchkin Landers of Oz displays just one of the many ways in which the Wizard of Oz tale has been infused within American culture.

As an aside, some marginal theories allege that Obama is not a natural born citizen and therefore, his presidency and words should be disqualified. These people even view the president of the United States as an “other”. As such, to these individuals even the statements of the president of the United States are questioned. Just like the

Munchkins required reassurances from more than just their leader that the Wicked Witch was dead so too did the American people.

Most Americans have seen *The Wizard of Oz* film and are familiar with the tale of wonder. However, relatively few have read L. Frank Baum's children's novel published in 1900. The film, which initially did poorly at the box office, is now imprinted into each American's memory through its regularly scheduled television airings since 1954. This is the main reason for its current popularity. The movie was probably received more openly in the year of 1954 because of the focus on consumerism. Consumerism became glorified as a tactic of the Cold War, in order to celebrate the consumption of All-American items and products. The Oz story, situated as the representative American tale became an American product for audiences to indulge in. During this time, the mass distribution of televisions into the home initiated more advertisements and ways for Americans to cultivate a sense of exclusion against anything that was not dubbed American. Advertisements themselves brought to consciousness a way to happiness that could be achieved by purchasing the desired commodity, negotiating the sentimentality that purchasing American products bought you a sense of national inclusion. During this time, the evolution of advertisements and televisions altered the temper of American society in establishing an ideology of "Americanism" by excluding any thought or product that was coined un-American by the government. Since the distribution of televisions expanded to the masses, the regularly televised showing of *The Wizard of Oz* was received with open arms. After all, Oz was an American tale – excluding the demonized Others for their differences, just as America was demonizing those who were cast as communists.

The heart of the Oz story (both the original text and movie, though divergent at some points) have been burned into American culture, commercialized, redistributed, and adapted to various forms of media for all to consume. Moreover, consumers feel drawn to the text, media adaptations and materialization of Oz because it produces a desire to turn inward to a sense of true Americana and achieve a feeling of infantile citizenship within the confines of an American myth initiated by the original story. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer recognized the peculiar logic of “enlightened” consumerism, “the triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use products even though they see through them” (*The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 167). The acceleration of consumption led to the phenomenal price of a disintegrating pair of “ruby slippers” being auctioned off for \$600,000 in 2000 (Jarrett)¹³ and the commercialized use of clips used by Stephen Colbert to show a connection for Americans on *homeliness* and national comradeship. These are just a few of the myriad adaptations and references to the Wizard of Oz that arouse Americans to engage in the mass consumption of the Oz tale. In doing so, this allows the reifications to mirror American culture and construct new interpretations of national identity.

Each reiteration of the Oz story represents, redefines, and re-imagines the current understanding of American identity and the political and social climate of our time by igniting the American culture of consumerism with each reproduction. In doing so, the reemergence of the Oz story often surfaces when there is rupture in American economy and a desire to seek a sense of *homeliness*. To juxtapose the reaction of the American

¹³ The ruby slippers are one of the only pieces of clothing to have their own line of devoted fans who are members of “The Ruby Slipper Fan Club.” A website maintained by Stephen Jarrett, devoted to pictures of the authentic shoes, stories about them, and images of fan reproductions of their very own ruby slippers.

people to the Munchkins is a contemporary application of the Oz narrative, revealing how much media influences American consumerism and national identity, specifically through mythical and symbolic discourse. Each reference and various incarnations of the Oz tale, re-enforces the evolving concept of American identity that has expanded and continues to spread through time because of the story's mass production and lively appeal. The event that took place on May 1st, 2011, with the death of bin Laden, marks yet another fissure in the evolution of American identity and the deconstruction for sociohistorical representations of racial, gendered, class, and national identity.

The Wizard of Oz tale and the characters who populate it are internationally recognizable, and the narrative has a tendency to resurface at moments of sociocultural change and tension in American culture, as it did on the day of bin Laden's assassination. Fleming's classic MGM film occupies the historical space between the Great Depression and the Second World War, while Sydney Lumet's *The Wiz* (1978) embodies many of the struggles of the civil rights and feminist movements. Maguire's novel partakes in an intellectual discourse demanding the questioning and rescripting of canonical narratives, and Schwartz and Holzman's Broadway production of *Wicked* is situated in the midst of struggles over power and gendered image, on both the national and individual scale.

However, each cultural moment finds itself returning to the familiar story of a homely little girl from Kansas and her fantastical adventures in the Land of Oz, drawn by the omnipresent tensions of insider and outsider, inclusion versus marginalization, and the shifting realities and representations of gender, race, and nationalism implicated in the construction of mythic American identity, rooted in the ideals of home and nationhood. Discourses of American myth facilitate understanding through the Wizard of Oz tale as a

cultural narrative, repeated and revisited over the span of more than one hundred years. In addition, the significant changes in this traditional story reflect negotiations of individual, cultural, and national identities, especially through representations of gender, race, home, and nationhood.

Each reinvention of the Wizard of Oz narrative implores mythmaking as a revisionist process in and of itself, constantly undergoing negotiation and adaptation in order to effectively address contemporary cultural context. As Zipes points out, the aim of these revisions are to “create something new that incorporates the critical and creative thinking of the producer and corresponds to the changing demands and tastes of audiences” with a goal of challenging or changing “the reader’s view of traditional patterns, images, and codes” (*Fairy Tale as Myth* 9). The mythic framework of one generation is not adopted wholesale by its successors; instead, the fairy tales and cultural narratives that create the discourses of American myth are under constant negotiation, continually being challenged, remade, and reinvented. Therefore, in order to update the theoretical framework of the myth/symbol school, a critical understanding of American myth must situate itself within the larger context of mythic discourse including an understanding of mythmaking as a dynamic revisionist process. Positioning Baum’s original text within the framework of American myth highlights the significance of the stories early Americans were being told about themselves, tales from which they drew a sense of communal identity and exceptionalism.

The naturalizing myth that the Wizard of Oz reveals, highlights the construction of American identity and American exceptionalism by presenting the foreground of the duality between Self (identity) and Other. Each adaptation of the Wizard of Oz story re-

imagines the Other in ways that illuminate the anxieties and tensions surrounding racial differences and gender binaries in its own sociohistorical moment and context. For example, by analyzing the construction of American identity in the Wizard of Oz narratives in terms of race, gender, and social class we see that the Wicked Witch of the West can be viewed as a trope for the racially based anxieties that pervade American culture. This chapter will continue to broaden our understanding of national identity within American culture. It will address the domestic space of the home and the way in which readers continue to navigate identity through the experience of various commodified adaptations of Oz as a founding myth, on both a national and individual scale.

Central to mythic and cultural narratives is the figure of the hero. The heroic character is a constant fixture in fairy tales, books, films, plays, and cultural narratives around the world, and this figure offers a unique combination of flaws and familiarity in the variety of adaptations of the Oz tale. Critics have variously interpreted the Wizard of Oz, with most interpretations focusing on Dorothy's heroic image and journey to find her way *home*. In "homing" in on this one aspect of the story, critics tend to see Dorothy as an American female hero and her journey as a representative quest for national identity. The return home and the reincorporation into the domestic sphere and the family unit have been central to the Oz narrative since Baum's first writing. One of the most striking themes threading throughout each Oz story are the tensions themselves between a romanticized home and the adventures of being away.

The shifting idea of home and nationalism in each adaptation is associated with the sociohistorical and ideological representations that surround ideas of homeliness

within the confines of the domestic space and the larger national arena. In the original depiction, Baum presented home as either destructive (after all, Dorothy's house kills the witch) or a romanticized space where inhabitants are content. Baum circulates these two elements of home in his use of the now famous line, "There's no place like home." In the first Oz book, however, Dorothy seems to say this phrase in jest. Still, in the book, Dorothy only makes this statement in the book one time. In the classical MGM film, Judy Garland repeatedly states the famous line while clicking her heals three times. Either way Dorothy is clearly glad to go back home to Kansas. The preoccupation with home, threading throughout each interpretation, is best epitomized by Garland's ecstatic and relieved proclamation that "There's no place like home". The film created a mantra about *home* in this most famously re-quoted phrase. The emphasis on home established a national belief in American exceptionalism inciting within Americans a connection to their American *homeland* and a sense of autonomy. The idea of home is no longer restricted to the confines of a household and the domestic sphere; instead *homeliness* extends to individual American identity, as the nation becomes the nurturing space for citizens. Americans are now able to romanticize their connection to the larger national family by positioning themselves against the Other.

The relationship between the Self and Other is portrayed in the figure of the female hero and her journey. Dorothy (and all female heroes journeys) have become increasingly complicated over the past century. The female hero's place within the home and nuclear family has also required multiple negotiations and reinventions. Anxieties surrounding the idea of home and family remain central to considerations of gender

representations and the quest of the female hero in popular culture, the structure of American myth, and the continuing reinvention of the Wizard of Oz narrative.

The negotiation of the female hero's journey and the complication of home and family are significant elements to address in understanding the concept of home in each version of the tale, as a way to define and understand national identity. As the Wizard of Oz narrative has progressed over the past one hundred years, the nature of "home" has evolved as well. Rather than being a space of domestic bliss and tranquility, the home (including the nuclear family that occupies its space) has become fractured and contentious. With the concept of home now representing a space of anxiety, tension, and conflict for some people, the ideas of what home should be have changed. Further, the complicated notions of home have expanded beyond the confines of the *house* and immediate family to the more extended concept of national identity.

The MGM film further romanticized the longing for home. The threat of losing home was especially present with 1930s spectators. This fear "was experientially grounded for 1930s audiences in the demise of the family farm, the loss of family fortunes, and the rampant rise of homelessness" (Mackey-Kallis 126). The sociohistorical climate positions Dorothy and the family farm at the forefront, in order to historicize the importance of her desire for a home she believes she may have lost and her pure joy at returning to the potentially restrictive domestic sphere. After all, the comforts of home are inextricably intertwined with ideal notions of femininity, "attachment to the home, and particularly its redefinition in feminine terms ('a women's place is in the home'), helped give rise to the nineteenth-century 'cult of domesticity' in which the 'self-contained private home, overseen by the wife/mother, presented the highest ideal of

American life” (127). The safety and security of the family farm is dependent in part on Dorothy’s acceptance of her place within the domestic sphere of home and family.

Lumet’s *The Wiz* places a shift in the meaning of home and family, ultimately removing the idea of *home* from the domestic sphere. Dorothy (Diana Ross) lives in a Harlem apartment with her Aunt Em (Theresa Merritt) and Uncle Henry (Stanley Green) and audiences see the heroine assisting her aunt in the kitchen preparing for the larger extended family holiday dinner. Dorothy is simple-minded in her task of caring and cooking for others; however, she is problematically positioned outside the immediate familial interactions. She is outside of the family because she has not chosen to marry and reproduce yet. Dorothy is juxtaposed to her cousin, who has fulfilled these social obligations. In doing so, her cousin is excused from having to participate in the meal preparation whereas Dorothy is required to.

In these first scenes Dorothy hangs back wondering about her own insecurities and loss of connection in not wanting to conform to the ideological construction of black female domesticity and motherhood which include concepts of “‘the family’, ‘patriarchy’ and ‘reproduction’” (Carby 63). In an effort to persuade Dorothy to engage in the domestic space, her aunt attempts to set her up with a male suitor, ignoring Dorothy’s own western desire to be independent and choose the person she wants to have a romantic courtship with. “Western nuclear family structure and related ideologies of ‘romantic love’ formed under capitalism are seen as more ‘progressive’ than black family structures” (65). Dorothy’s conflict between making her individual decisions instead of simply fulfilling the expectations of her family, evidence the struggle for black females of that time in terms of domesticity, motherhood, and independence.

Instead of the Emerald City, the Oz of *The Wiz* is a decaying version of New York City. Even in Dorothy's real life she is intimidated by her home surroundings. As Lumet comments, "I wanted the story of Dorothy to be the odyssey of a young black girl who was afraid of crossing 125th Street, the border of Harlem, and who discovers New York" (Ciment 100). As Dorothy follows the yellow brick road and gains confidence in her surroundings and becomes enlightened to her own independence, she conquers the fears that had debilitated her daily life. Her newfound independence reflected the liberation that many black men and women felt during that time. Often restricted and segregated to the confines of the New York Projects during the 1970s, these individuals began to escape the social structure of their restrictive environment. *The Wiz's* Dorothy is specifically encouraged to venture beyond the domestic boundaries, both figuratively and literally, established by home and family in order to find her autonomy as a young black woman in America.

The portrayal of Dorothy's relationship with the home evolves from the original classic book, film, and *The Wiz* with the next incarnation of the story in Maguire's book, *Wicked*. In Maguire's *Wicked*, the relationship between the primary character and her home and family changes. Elphaba's story constitutes an entirely different experience than that of the Dorothy of Baum, Fleming, and Lumet. Elphaba is unable to hold a sentimental attachment to the idea of home since her mother and father did not accept her because of her green-skin. Unlike Dorothy who had surrogate mothers, the lack of maternal love and nurturing left Elphaba devoid of feeling a connection to home. In fact, once she is older she is unable to stay in any one place for a long period of time. The only consistency in the many homes she makes for herself over the course of her abbreviated

life is her failure to connect to her home. Her refusal to allow herself to feel the sense of “belonging” that are traditionally associated with the ideas of home, family and nationhood that resonate in the earlier versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative are absent. Additionally, in *Wicked* the focus of the stories on Dorothy as a primary character disappears. We do not see Dorothy in the Land of Oz. She is not even included in the musical – becoming a vague shadow, an undertone to the stage performance.

The relationship between Dorothy and Elphaba draw connections to nationhood as each character situates herself as a cultural icon, a stand-in for the expectations associated with females and the home. Additionally, Henry Littlefield reads the Wizard of Oz as a symbolic allegory and emphasizes Dorothy’s universality extending her status as a cultural icon. Littlefield remarks that, “Dorothy is Baum’s Miss Everyman. She is one of us, levelheaded and human, and she has a real problem” (Littlefield 52). Dorothy is a representative of the average American citizen and her quandary is relatable to young readers as well as to adults. Therefore, Dorothy, even though she is a mere child, becomes situated at the core of American nationalism. She is the iconic “Miss Everyman” in which readers and viewers project their own nationalistic image onto.

As suggested earlier, adolescence itself is at the center of nationhood according to Lauren Berlant, who positions the child at the center of the nation as an archetypal figure known as the “infantile citizen.” Berlant criticizes American national dialogue that enforces rigid codes of morality – the kind of authority imposed upon a child to mold them into “good citizens.” This enforcement is reinforced by convincing arguments that such disciplinary action is “for one’s own good” and that “kinds of domination are being imagined as forms of social good” (Berlant 13). This patronizing statement would not be

widely accepted unless an archetypical citizen lies at the center of the debate. Berlant explains that the fetal/infantile person is:

a stand-in for a complicated and contradictory set of anxieties and desires about national identity. Condensed into the image/hieroglyph of the innocent of incipient American, these anxieties and desires are about whose citizenship – whose subjectivity, whose heroic narratives, will direct America’s future (Berlant 6).

The infantile citizen embodies and encompasses the sum of debates over national citizenship. It includes any racial, gendered, and working class minorities who bear the burden of expressing a desire for the nation and national identity. The infantile citizen is the mythical being that requires the nation’s complete collective protection, just like Dorothy who receives the protection and guidance from the Wizard, Scarecrow, Tinman, Lion, Good Witch, and Munchkins and others along her journey back home. Dorothy, who has assumed the symbolic role of the infantile citizen, functions as the universal “everyman” on her journey. In the name of the infantile citizen, borders are drawn, raids are conducted, and laws are drafted. The infantile citizen only exists in the future and adds more anxiety to the national discourse over questions of legacy and birthright because the nation owes the infantile citizen both safety and comfort: the pleasures of *home*. Therefore, Berlant’s conceptualization of the infantile citizen places the figure of the child at the center of the discourse of the nation situating Dorothy, our widely recognized infantilized female heroine, as a universal fantasy for all to consume.

Berlant proposes that “nations provoke fantasy” meaning that national identity is a fantasy, an internalized relationship to a category that is externally produced. National identity registers both cognitively and emotionally with national citizens and it is this double significance of national identity, its ability to say something about both the

internal experience and the external labeling of national citizens that the Wizard of Oz story speaks to. Just as Dorothy generates the role of the infantile citizen, the image of the developing American citizen at the turn of the century, the Wizard of Oz molds the definition of what being American means through its representation of its lead characters.

In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* book, the desire to establish the ideal American citizen was embodied by Dorothy and her companions; their determination, intelligence, empathy, working together to achieve mutual goals, and courage were presented as ideal American traits, while the greed and manipulation of the Wicked Witch situated her outside the realm of viable citizenship. Through these constructions, Baum's story is a uniquely formed American fairy tale, which clearly establishes who was included, protected, and celebrated within the discourse of national citizenship and who was excluded and therefore subject to threat of vilification, marginalization, destruction, and otherness. As such, Baum's story not only entertained children and instructed children on basic moral issues, but also established a mythic and fantastical discourse of American identity, codifying privileged positions of nationalism, race, gender, and American identity.

The male characters of Oz, the Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and Lion embody the particular experiences and challenges of what being an American citizen at the turn of the nineteenth century included or omitted, demonstrating the early negotiations of American identity, inclusion and exclusion. In the 1939 film, each male character that is living in Kansas is infantilized, dependent on their employment on the farm. These characters in Dorothy's "real" world are only included as part of the family during the tornado, but are traditionally excluded from participating in everyday interactions outside their respective

farm duties. Class differentiation is depicted between the male workers on the farm as they are separated from the family and others in Kansas. During this time as similar to today, these workers were given certain considerations, however, there remained a differentiation between classes – between the owners and the workers. This partitioning is always already a negotiation of the relationship between the Self and Other, similarly displayed in the later iterations of the Oz tale. When Dorothy lands in Oz these workmen on Auntie Em and Uncle Henry’s farm become comically portrayed. While in Oz, they are each further depicted being Other. The Scarecrow, Lion and Tinman do not have their own domestic space, instead they rely on others to employ and care for them, further infantilizing their dependency on society and their homeland.

The Scarecrow’s experience represents that of American farmers at the end of the century when pioneer farmers were undergoing a drastic change. The extension of railroads across the continent, especially between the 1870s and 1880s, stimulated the rapid increase in population of new settlers on the frontier. Historian, Samuel Morrison describes the migration of production to middle America, “virgin prairie land, and peak prices of wheat and corn in 1881 had induced excessive railway construction..., and over settlement of the arid western part of [Kansas] (Morrison 789). There was a significant drought in 1887 that caused serious damage to the agricultural products in the west and Kansas. This caused half of the pioneer farmers to leave Kansas. During this time, many of the last acres of available farmland passed to private corporate hands. It was not until later that the *Homestead Act* made it easier for individuals to regain access to these acres of farmland (789-790).

The brainless Scarecrow of Oz represents these Midwestern farmers, whose years of hardship and subjugation to corporations had created a sense of self-doubt. However, the initial description of the Scarecrow of Oz as being *brainless* was contradicted by his remarkable common sense, resilience, and rectitude shown through his conduct during his journey in Oz. He is not so dumb after all, and, despite doubts about his own intelligence, he proves to be the most clever and resourceful of the group. The Scarecrow was representative of the farmers of Kansas and other hard-working individuals in the country who, although may not have been formally educated constituted the backbone of the country. Living lives based upon common sense and hardiness.

In the book, the Scarecrow tells Dorothy that he cannot understand why she would want to leave the beautiful Land of Oz to return to the admittedly dusty plains of Kansas: “‘That is because you have no brains,’ says Dorothy. No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country, it ever so beautiful. *There is no place like home.*” The Scarecrow concedes: “‘Of course I cannot understand it,’ he said. ‘If your heads were stuffed with straw, like mine, you would probably all live in the beautiful places, and then Kansas would have no people at all. It is fortunate for Kansas that you have brains’” (Baum 42, emphasis added). Here, readers embrace the wholesome naiveté of the Scarecrow and perhaps of all American farmers who struggled in times of economic hardship but never gave up their dreams of independence and land ownership.

While the Scarecrow represents the farmers of America, the Tin Woodsman illustrates the changing of a country from an agricultural to industrial society. The industrialization of the country is depicted by the Tin Woodman’s metallic armored body.

The Tin Woodsman is extremely proud of his physical mechanical appearance, as he explains, “my body shone so brightly in the sun that I felt very proud of it and it did not matter now if my axe slipped, for it could not cut me” (Baum 54). Oddly enough, instead of feeling regret over the loss of his human body, the Tin Woodsman feels proud of his shiny, metallic body of silver. The Wizard of Oz signifies the changing workforce in America from frontier pioneers to factory workers in its representation of the Tinman’s embrace of his silver, more glamorous physique. At the turn of the century, the role of the Frontiersman was no longer as wholesome as it once was because of the rapid industrialization and urbanization, which changed the conception of a man’s preferred role in the workforce. The fact that the Woodsman loses parts of his body, one after the other, because of the enchantment of the Wicked Witch of the East’s spell cast onto him, reminds us that for many men, the roles in the workforce were changing. The Witch’s spell highlighted the limits of machinery, which although strong and resilient at times, required constant attention (oiling) to avoid breaking down. This exposed the differentiation between men who worked the farm and those worked the factories. Yet, the Tinman is ok with this evolution, up to the point that he lacks a heart, which he deeply wants. The point being made by the story was to express the concern that heart and humanity could be lost with the presence of machines though those machines could be more resilient, glamorous, and efficient with human care. Thus, the Tinman represents the changing nature of how many men in society earned a living, a change from agricultural to industrial production. However, the Tinman’s constant longing for a heart shows the nostalgic desire of a portion of society’s workforce to revert to the farming

home rather than the urbanized factory worker existence. The Tinman's desire for a heart evidences the detriment that industrialization caused to the psyche of many workers.

Unlike the Scarecrow who embodied the resilient farmer and the agricultural focus of the American worker, or the Tinman who epitomized the factory worker and the industrialization of the country, the Cowardly Lion embodies the anxieties created by the shifting paradigms from the Scarecrow to Tinman. Sociologist Anthony Rotundo explains that the number of blue-collar workers multiplied eight times between 1870 and 1910 due to increased industrialization (Rotundo 249). In big cities where the number of corporations increased, a bureaucratic new order was emerging. Within the new order, every businessman had to submit himself to his boss and answer to the hierarchical chain, which created feelings of insecurity and a desire to prove oneself in the workspace.

Rotundo writes,

In the nineteenth century, middle-class men had believed that a true man was a self-reliant being who would never bow to unjust authority or mere position. The new structures of work and opportunity in the marketplace did not support such a concept of manhood" (250).

American men's sense of "manly" prerogatives became threatened by this new order.

Additionally, during this shift in history, women starting becoming more prominent in the workforce. Women's presence made a symbolic statement to men that the world of middle-class work was no longer only for men, establishing some anxiety and insecurity to many men. This, in addition to the problems caused by having a multi-leveled hierarchal boss-worker paradigm, the inclusion of women into the male dominated workforce established additional anxiety and insecurity to many men. The reality these men had to face was that their workplace was not as masculine as it had been in the

Farmer/Frontier era where the individual man was his own boss and conceivably had all the power, decision-making, and responsibility. In the new formation of the industrial modern world, the new man had much less power having to take orders from the boss and having to coexist with a stronger archetypal woman; thus creating a more timid (feminized) American man. This began the continuing evolution of man's role in society and the ever-changing evolution of the relationships between men and women in the workforce.

The feelings of insecurity of much of the American workforce that became more prevalent when the focus of society changed from agricultural to industrial spilled over to feelings of insecurity on greater levels for all Americans. This process has continued through the present day. The contained view of the world that existed when *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was written in 1900 has now changed and the growing insecurities of the American citizen have continued to expand in today's society. One of the causes of this growing fear is the dread, trepidation and worry over terrorism.

Osama bin Laden attacked our home soil showing that outside terrorist forces could maim and kill Americans at home. By eliminating bin Laden, the poster boy for all things sinister since 9/11, the death of the symbol of evil against our country established a symbolic victory for the American

people – recognition that justice has been done or could be achieved. Yet, bin Laden as a symbol, was much more powerful than the actuality of bin Laden the man as an isolated and (to a certain extent) irrelevant man holed up in a compound without electricity or media communication to the

outside world. Bin Laden became an illusion, a spectacle designed to simplify the genuine tragedy of 9/11. As long as his *simulacrum*, a combination of blurry photos and wonky videos existed publically within the mass media as a reproduction and reaffirmation toward evil, the man who perished did not “exist”. Rather, he existed in our hyperreality as the Wicked Witch. Bin Laden can be viewed as the Wicked Witch in modern society whereas to his followers he may be viewed as the Wizard. As with most audiences the perspective of the viewer influences the determination of what is considered “good” and “evil”.

Paralleling the multiple reconstructions of the Wizard of Oz to modern claims of a “Wicked Witch” known as bin Laden shows a contemporary application of the world of



Figure 2: Screen shot taken from YouTube caricature of bin Laden which shows him dressed as the evil witch with the infamous song from the MGM film, “Ding Dong The Witch is Dead!” playing in the background.

Oz. In doing so, we can gain a greater knowledge of the current cultural expectations of the American myth and a better understanding of how constructions of racial and gendered identities continue to divide society into hierarchies of power. Bin Laden's assassination was just one moment in time in which America negotiated her authority over the "Other," thus, re-enforcing the notions of "good" and "evil", re-defining America the country, and re-imaging the role of American citizenship. Bin Laden's assassination – a historical event that took place on May 1st, 2011 reifies and commodifies elements of the Land of Oz by perpetuating the American myth through the "quintessential American fairy tale," the Wizard of Oz (Riley 3). A result of the myth is a precedent that rings true in all adaptation and "real" applications of the Oz tale: no one mourns the *Wicked*.

CHAPTER 2

WICKED SHADES OF GREEN: OTHERING AND RACE IN POPULAR CULTURE

It's the one who doesn't lack me who is the Other. That is radical Otherness.
(Baudrillard 1999: 132).

The Wizard of Oz narrative is a story that addresses racial differences within American society. As a distinctively American myth, the story addresses inclusion and exclusion in society from characteristics based upon differences similar to those of race. Representations of Otherness in terms of race are highlighted in Baum's children's book and Lumet's *The Wiz*, as well as MGM, Maguire, Schwartz and Holzman versions. Robert Miles and Malcom Brown explain the significance of representations of the Other,¹⁴ as "images and beliefs which categorize people in terms of real or attributed differences when compared with Self ('Us'). There is, therefore, a dialectic of Self and Other in which the attributed characteristics of the Other refract contrasting characteristics of Self, and vice versa" (Miles and Brown 19). These representations of the Self and the Other are inextricably engaged with a "dialectic of representational inclusion and exclusion" (50). The Wizard of Oz narrative and the framework of American myth position the representations of the Self and Other that are implicated in the construction of American identity, including those who are deemed viable national citizens and those who, on account of Otherness, need to be indoctrinated into the

¹⁴ The discourse of the Other as that which is different from the Self has a rich philosophical theoretical history, addressed by Edmund Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, Claude Levi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault, as well as others. Using this intellectual tradition as a foreground, this thesis will continue to draw on theories of Otherness adapted to address issues of race outlined by Miles and Brown in addition to those articulated by Kenan Malik in *The Meaning of Race: Race History, and Culture in Western Society* (1996), where Malik argues that contemporary representations "define racial difference in terms of the Other" (221).

dominant culture in order to neutralize the threat of difference. As a result, if such assimilation proves impossible the Other must be excluded, marginalized and even destroyed.

In exploring the figure of the Other within these multiple versions of the Wizard of Oz tale, the sociohistorical context of each set of representations must be factored into account. As Miles and Brown pitch,

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

Representations of the Other are constantly developed as contrary elements to the Self and privileged identity. However, each adaptation of the Wizard of Oz story reimagines the Other in ways which illuminate the anxieties and tensions surrounding racial difference in its own sociohistorical moment and context.

The representations and images of race in the versions of the Wizard of Oz story function in two categories, historical and ideological representations of race that register within the same discourse. Historical discourse remains grounded in lived experiences of discrimination and Othering – positioning historical representations of race within a specific sociocultural moment and time. For example, Baum voiced his own opinions as a proponent for segregation of Native Americans from the rest of the population. During the westward expansion, Baum as well as others claimed the frontier as an established space for Americans asserting dominance over the racialized Others (Native Americans) and their land. Baum advocated ultimately forcing the natives from their land onto reservations to designate a new space for the Native Americans as racialized bodies.

Baum's participation in this historical discourse is reflected in the various parts of his story. He establishes differentiations that are coded by race throughout the diverse regions of Oz. Similarly, segregation and differentiation is also addressed in Lumet's *The Wiz*, which was positioned in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, and features an all-African American cast. *The Wiz* touches on the historical problems with urban expansion and urban decay by positioning the disenfranchised portion of the black community into segregated projects. The film performed a dynamic appropriation of the American myth through the Wizard of Oz narrative by claiming a new and personal meaning for the African American community. The representations of race and ethnicity within the works of Baum and Lumet are positioned within specific sociohistorical moments of discrimination, exclusion, and privilege. Furthermore, the role of racial difference in these versions of the Oz tale must be read within the context of the everyday racial discourses surrounding these works of popular culture at the times that the versions were brought into the public.

Although the representations of race in MGM's Wizard of Oz and the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman are grounded in the larger racial and social realities of the cultural moments in which they were created, these works specifically address race from an ideological standpoint, rather than initiating themselves in a specifically historical representation. These versions of the tale address the visibility of race, in part, through their representations of greenness, the skin color difference that sets the Wicked Witch of the West apart from her fellow Ozians. The Wicked Witches' in each adaptation stemming from Baum's original text are literally colored in their Otherness. MGM studios paints the evil witch as being green ultimately dehumanizing

her and establishing a new generation of an embodied evil archetype. Baum's witch was not described as green, and his illustrator William Wallace Denslow, did not draw her that way; in fact, the similarities between the Witch illustrated in Baum's book and the Witch of the MGM movie are few and far between (see fig. 3). This is in part due to one of the main production goals of the Wizard of Oz film in showing off MGM's new Technicolor process by saturating the film with multi-colors. However, the coloring of the Witch also conveyed the negative Otherness associated with this being. The Technicolor process which enabled color to be differentiated not just between black and white but all the shades in-between was used to demarcate a racial divide within the confines of the motion picture. By coloring the Wicked Witch as green, this cast her as an Other not only because of her "wickedness" but most significantly, simply by her appearance.



Figure 3: Baum's original Witch that W.W. Denslow illustrated in the first *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* novel, 1900.

The Wicked Witch has now become an iconic green image that viewer's readily associate with evil. The Witch, as a symbol of evil, represented through her greenness holds a liminal space in our cultural history as a marker. The Witch is a symbol to all that is different – an Other. Jean Baudrillard explains that "[e]verything which is symbolically exchanged constitutes a mortal danger for the dominant order (Baudrillard 1993:188). The Witch is a symbol of diversity and as the later iterations expose, the Witch's difference is predicated on defying the current social order including the Wizard's

regime.¹⁵ In exploring Baudrillard's notion of symbolic exchange and radical otherness through the Wicked Witch's journey into Oz, we can see the ideological "otherness" of the various adaptations, in the MGM film, *The Wiz*, Maguire's text, and Schwartz and Holman's musical. Each adaptation influences the cultural particularity of their audiences, inviting new understandings of social differentiation through these racialized bodies. In doing so, the dominant order (in this respect the directors and creators of the various adaptations) create a new representation of race in popular culture that viewers consume.

Baudrillard's theory of "symbolic exchange" differentiates concepts such as human/animal, good/evil, and rational/irrational suggesting that these dualities are imposed by society and the capitalist agenda rather than actually existing (Baudrillard 1993: 133, Pawlett 2007: 55-9). Baudrillard's symbolic exchange applies to the concepts

¹⁵ Maguire speaks to the Witch's alienation that resulted from her own desire to be an activist and strive for a more equal community in Oz. There is particular attention drawn to Animal Rights in the story and the Witch challenges the phrase, "*Animals should be seen and not heard*" (Maguire 90). Animals (with a capital A) were once equal citizens of Oz but are slowly being stripped away of their rights, losing their ability to speak. Similar to the Holocaust where a dictator determined the destruction of so many lives, the nefarious Wizard in Oz tries to take control of the area with restrictions on the Animals such as curfews, constraints to teaching in schools, and censoring freedom of thought. Many are caged and confined in order for Oz leaders to take control over the population. The Wizard dehumanizes the Animals and anyone that is Other and does not mold into his world of emerald green splendor. The Wizard is silencing the Animals and turning the public against them to inspire loyalty to his political regime. Doctor Dillamond who is an Animal professor, a goat, is captured because he is an Animal regardless of the fact that he is an intelligent and influential instructor at "dear old Shiz" college. Animals are no longer allowed to teach under the Wizard's ruling, mainly because these Animals held positions of authority in regard to education – teaching the generations to come. Thought establishes a sense of power and the Wizard does not want these Animals to have any faculty over the wondrous world of Oz that he is creating. Throughout *Wicked* the Witch chooses to defy society but is quickly stopped from doing so by the Wizard himself. The Wizard reprimands her by saying, "[t]he thing is, my green girlie, it's not for a girl, or a student, or a citizen to assess what is wrong. This is the job of the leaders, and why we exist" (Maguire 175). It is through this partitioning between those who are in power from those who are not, that *Wicked* delineates the complicated notion of the capitalist agenda and the overcomplicated conviction of social politics.

established in the Wizard of Oz narrative unraveling these binary codes, specifically those of good and evil. The later iterations of the Oz story deconstruct these binary notions. This is accomplished by specifically drawing on a discourse of Otherness, which address the visibility of race particularly by polarizing the Wicked Witch and her greenness. In addition, Baum's *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* physically codes the Munchkins who welcome Dorothy to Oz as their equal (after all they are her own size and stature). However, the classic MGM film dramatically Others the Munchkins and emphasizes the difference between them and Dorothy, racially situating these small-statured Ozians as an Other against whom Dorothy, the infantilized citizen is positioned against.

In order to understand Baudrillard's symbolic exchange as a principal structure for society, William Pawlett and Meena Dhanda's reading of the Wizard of Oz, describe symbolic exchange in two distinct ways:

Firstly it is presented as the organizing principle of pre-industrial societies where everything must be given and returned...Secondly concerning modernity, where symbolic exchanges are dismantled, foreclosed or diverted into commodification and simulation by the capitalist system (115).

Therefore, symbolic exchange can threaten the capitalist system of power by changing perception about the binary oppositions and ordered exchanges upon which the system depends. Each media reification of Baum's text shifts these standard binary notions of racialized Others, ultimately creating a new exchange of differentiation and allowing the capitalist system to control and obtain power over its consumers, their ideas, and perceptions. Just as Dorothy situates herself against the Munchkins in the MGM film, Americans continue to differentiate similar physical coding because the capitalist system (i.e., the films we consume) suggest doing so.

The Wicked Witch plays a specific role in understanding the demarcation of social Others and the capitalist agenda toward class differentiation. In the original adaptations of Baum's text and MGM film, the Wicked Witch marks a traditional erasure of all indigenous voices from the Oz narrative. The Witch's character operates as a plot object to further Dorothy's story. However, Maguire's back-story of the Wicked Witch of the West helps to rupture the racialized Other's story by giving the wicked witch a name, Elphaba (after the first sounds of L. Frank Baum). The simple gesture of giving the witch a name provides her with a tangible identity and immediately personalizes the witch and limits her Otherness. The symbolic exchange that occurs when naming the Witch transforms the Wicked Witch to a fictionally "real" person; Elphaba an activist for the demonized Others of Oz.

Although the description of the Witch herself is different in both the original novel and the MGM film, Maguire creates a hybrid between these two depictions of the witch. In Maguire's narrative, Elphaba Thropp, is presented as having been born a green-skinned outsider. Even though Elphaba is born as a native of Oz, as a Thropp of Munchkinland, she is later figured as a terrorist, creating assumptions about and connotations of color, Otherness, and nativeness that resonate throughout the Oz series. In *Wicked*, natives of Oz are portrayed as existing specifically outside the boundaries of civilization and the culture. Elphaba's lover, the Vinkus Prince Fiyero, is described as being indigenous within his first introduction to the story. Fiyero is described as a "new student, oddly dressed in suede leggings and a white cotton shirt, with a pattern of blue diamonds tattooed on the dark skin" (Maguire 145). Fiyero is separated in his description

by his colored skin – an out casting based on his physical distinction. This partitioning is a mutual demarcation that he and Elphaba share.

When *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was written at the close of the nineteenth century, the classification of separate ethnicities and races developed out of attempts to justify the colonialism of expanding the western land and segregating the native people from it.¹⁶ In America, different races occupied specific territories though; this was slowly merging due to the Frontier exploration of land in the west and the start of the Jim Crow laws in 1890. Similarly, in Oz, different races in each region are coded by color itself. The Munchkins' environment, landscape, and attire are blue; the Winkies are described as yellow; and, the Quadling country and those that inhabit the land are red. In *Wicked*, Maguire rearranges Baum's original description where each color represents each country of Oz and creates a "parallel racial colorism – an axis of oppression that figures significantly in colonialist thinking, where race is delineated by physical features and visible nonwhiteness essentialized to inferior traits" (Annabeth 36). This segregation through land is a characteristic of "othering" deliberately creating the idea of an alien other, a Wicked Witch, to reinforce difference and promote social and political dominance over the one coined as "other" or "wicked".

Nevertheless, since Maguire has given the Witch a name, the Othering, and segregation cast onto Elphaba allows her to become sympathetic to readers of *Wicked* the

¹⁶ Baum often wrote editorials published in the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*, which "advocate[ed] a genocidal policy against remaining Indians". Baum's dialogue surrounding race, resulted in representations of Otherness and segregation within the magical land of Oz. His editorials reflected his opinion that Native Americans should be excluded from participation as American citizens because the white settlers had become "masters" of the frontier through conquest and subjugation of the Native Americans. As such, Baum discounted them as not deserving of life itself: they were not viable citizens and therefore, by extension, not viable human beings, always already excluded in the pursuit of "life, liberty, and happiness".

text, and viewers of the hit Broadway musical. Now a symbolic reference for all racialized bodies and diversity, Elphaba redefines consumer's imaginations to rethink the original story – its one-sided mythical exposé of Dorothy's tall tale. Maguire's ability to structure a narrative about the Wicked Witch allows consumers to negotiate the problematic assumptions that are generally tailored to the Other, reconfiguring the understanding of evil itself.¹⁷

In current popular American culture, the demonization of the Wicked Witch can be paralleled to the real and imagined threat of racialized bodies – specifically, Sikhs, Muslims, and Arabs who have often been isolated from the American mainstream. These individuals are often segregated from Americanness because of their physical appearance. Readers and audiences judge the Witch because she is grounded in her “wickedness” by her mere green appearance. Further, her identity is skewed as we only receive the story from Dorothy who is the ultimate perhaps biased victor in this mythical construction. Just as the Wicked Witch is hastily judged because of her greenness and one-sided character evolution, those who are different from the cultural “norm” such as

¹⁷ According to *Wicked: The Grimmerie*, David Cote gives a behind the scenes look at the production of the text and Broadway musical specifically explaining how Maguire developed the idea for his novel as a way to wrestle with the question of evil. Maguire wrote *Wicked* during the build-up of the first Iraq war when he “became riveted by how the British press vilified Saddam Hussein to galvanize public opinion in support of the war” (Cote 19-20). Maguire described himself as “a progressive liberal” (*Ibid*) who, under the influence of the press attacks against Hussein, found that his “politics had shifted way to the right.” His transformation into an advocate for war, any war, shocked him. “How,” he asked himself, did I lose my moorings so quickly?” (Cote 20). He wanted to examine how someone like Saddam could become the abhorrent human being that he so obviously was, and explore how he, Maguire, could slide into the same evil place with so little provocation. He then chose as his vehicle a familiar childhood story about wickedness, using the Wicked Witch as his stand-in for Saddam. However, what he found out was that no matter how hard he tried to write wickedness into the character of the Witch, whom he named Elphaba, she refused to comply. Although he began his project with hatred toward his main character he began to have compassion for her.

Sikhs, Muslims, and Arabs are also cast away for their physical differences, their own greenness that equates to a wicked nature.

Just as the Witch is defined as a terrorist and outcast throughout her story, so too is the perverse terror attached to Sikhs, Muslims, and Arab bodies. According to Jasbir Puar, the invocation of the word “terrorist,” “always already betray[s] an implicitly installed prerequisite of perverse sexuality, queerness, and gender nonnormativity beyond the pale of proper citizenship sexuality, both heteronormative and homonormative” (Puar 169). These “terrorists” are initiated into terrorized bodies primarily because of their visible differences from the societal norms.¹⁸

The Othering of Muslims and Orientalist bodies are narratives that have been carefully and steadily built upon since 9/11 by American conservatives and deserve careful attention as to why these groups are being cast into an always already assumed terrorist category. Puar questions the assumption that educating would-be attackers into “seeing” the difference between Muslims and Sikhs is an effective project to rectify why these groups are being partitioned into an assumed terrorist category (Puar 170). Sikh Americans attempted to separate themselves from Muslims after 9/11 in response to a number of murders and attacks. This included public relation campaigns that advocated Americans to become more familiar with the different sects of Middle Eastern groups. “These efforts were driven by a desire to inhabit a proper Sikh American

¹⁸ Puar says, “Visibility is an inadequate rubric because of an old liberal predicament – visibility invites surveillance – but also because regimes of affect and tactility conduct vital information beyond the visual. The move from visibility to affect takes us from a frame of misrecognition, contingent upon the visual to discern the mistakes (I thought you were one of them), to the notion of resemblance, a broader affective frame where the reason for the likeness may be a vague or repressed (You remind me of one of them): from ‘looks like’ to ‘seems like’” (187). Thus, visible marks such as headscarves, hijabs, turbans, and the like differentiate part of the population as a way to show the presence of the Other.

heteromascularity, one at significant remove from the perverse sexualities ascribed to terrorist bodies” (167). According to Puar, the terrorist is often attributed as being homosexual because as an outsider, he delineates from societal norms in wearing the turban. Therefore, when Sikh’s became mistaken for Muslims after 9/11, there was often homosexual and/or sexual undertones associated with hate crimes against the Sikh community. Furthermore, Sikh men wearing turbans are often mistaken for kin of Osama bin Laden and have been disproportionately affected by backlash racist crimes because of their religious commitment to wearing the turban.

In a YouTube video that sings, “Ding Dong the Witch is Dead” the well known image of MGM’s Margret Hamilton who played the Wicked Witch is replaced with Osama bin Laden’s face, green and vilified (see fig. 2). The substitution for bin Laden in this image shows an interchangeable affect between the turban and the Witch’s hat. The turban has become an assemblage accruing the mark of a terrorist. In reproduced images of bin Laden such as this one, he is depicted wearing a headpiece. The turban is imbued with nationalist undertones, religious, and cultural symbolic notions of the Other. Similarly, the Witch’s garb is incomplete without her tall hat that signifies her wickedness to viewers. The symbolic exchange is further complicated by placing binary notions of femininity and masculinity upon the terrorist, depicted him wearing a female witch’s hat. Each appendage, the “hat/turban” delineates the racial body in which it sits upon as being Other. In this image, however, the substitution of the turban to the witch’s hat creates an interchangeable power, which audiences can project onto the symbolic reference. Puar’s suggestion that it is not necessarily the “...*actual turban itself*, an embodiment of metaphysical substance, that is the desired object of violence,” instead it

is suggested and understood as much more than an appendage (Puar 179). In replacing bin Laden's turban with the Witch's hat, these objects signify the power in which symbolic exchange can reproduce images and visual fissures of societal expectations of the Other.

Puar further discusses Judith Butler's treatment of the Rodney King¹⁹ case and Sara Ahmed's analysis of racial hate crimes²⁰ to note that both of these pieces continue to treat race as a primarily visual phenomenon, just as explored in the visual representation of bin Laden as a witch. In examining the Rodney King case, Butler has written, "The visual field is not neutral to the question of race; it is itself a racial formation, an episteme, hegemonic and forceful" (Puar 183). Suggesting, that "seeing" is a specific interpretation of the visual, Puar continues analyzing Butler's exploration of visualized racist organization by defining what qualifies as visual evidence: "For when the visual is fully schematized by racism, the 'visual evidence' to which one refers will always and only refute the conclusions based upon it; for it is possible within this racist episteme that no black person can seek recourse to the visible as the sure ground of evidence" (*Ibid*).

The visual field places the black (often) male body as always already the site of violence

¹⁹ Rodney King became well known in the public eye after being beaten harshly by Los Angeles police officers during a traffic stop in March 1991. Much of the beating was videotaped showing seven officers surrounding the solitary King; some repeatedly sticking him with their clubs while the others idly stood alongside watching the incident unfold. The Los Angeles County Superior Court initially acquitted all four officers who were tried for their participation in the beating. This incident sparked the 1992 Los Angeles riots, in which thousands of people rioted on behalf of civil rights violations.

²⁰ Sara Ahmed explores hate and fear as an economic regime. "Hate does not reside in a given subject or object. Hate is economic; it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement" (Puar 184). The anxieties and tension toward the feared body occurs through a "visual racial regime" meaning that fear can be materialized in any body within a particular profile range (*Ibid*). Because the Wicked Witch of the West looks like a witch (wearing a black cape, black hat, and carrying a broom) her body becomes the figure of a terrorist, a feared object viewers want to escape from.

and a source of danger to whites and model minorities. Similarly, the turbaned Sikh is always already circumscribed as a dangerous terrorist look-alike or aspiring terrorist.

Representations of race are always already grounded in the tensions and realities of the surrounding culture, under constant contestation. In American, the turbaned Sikh appears to be always already fixed and defined by his social struggle of being a terrorist excluded as a viable national citizen on the account of Otherness. It is here that the active engagement through the lived experiences of groups of Americans and the struggles they are engaged in foreground the partitioning of the Self and Other. The displacement of ethnicity onto the bodies of green-skinned witches, turban wearing “terrorists”, talking Animals, and an African American cast position the depictions of Oz in a reality of contemporary and historical discourses of race and ethnicity in American culture.

Sydney Lumet’s 1978 film, *The Wiz* explicitly addresses African American experiences in the 1970s, positioning the familiar Wizard of Oz narrative in post-Civil Rights Movement America. In this interpretation, Lumet attempts to dynamically reclaim the mythic discourse for African American audiences. *The Wiz* marked an appropriation of the familiar Wizard of Oz narrative to speak to the experiences of an African American audience – a tale that had up to this point been an exclusively white experience, with the notable exception of Hamilton’s green-skinned Wicked Witch in the classic MGM film.

The Wiz highlighted the racially unmarked whiteness privileged within the versions of the Wizard of Oz by Baum and MGM.²¹ Toni Morrison argues that blackness

²¹ One of the significant noted pitfalls that killed the movie at the box office was, “simply the fact that no longer were black hands in control. Instead the movie’s most important creators – the directors Sidney Lumet and writer Joel Schumacher – were white artists, totally out of tune with

has historically been engaged in literature as a means through which to define the whiteness that served the Self to its Other, with explicit ramifications for national identity. Morrison specifically asks, “What parts do the invention and development of whiteness play in the construction of what is loosely defined as ‘American?’” (Morrison 9). By resituating the Wizard of Oz narrative from an African American perspective, this highlighted the always already white image of American identity represented in earlier versions and continued to resonate in *The Wiz* itself. *The Wiz* is problematically illuminated through the lens of white creators and those that perpetuate the construction of normative white citizenship. Therefore, the national citizen developed through this new iteration is constructed by positioning the citizen against that which it is not. Each version of the Oz tale places Munchkins, Wicked Witches, and fantastical figures outside the realm of viable citizenship – because they are “other,” they cannot be citizens. Similarly, *The Wiz* speaks to this Othering exploring the struggles that surrounded African American’s during this period.

In reinventing the traditional Wizard of Oz narrative, Lumet’s *The Wiz* simultaneously creates space within the mythic discourse for the specificity of the African American experience and claims a position within the distinctly American narrative of identity – created by the story itself. While engaging in historically based representations of race and Otherness, Lumet addresses lived experiences of marginalization as well, such as not being able to hail a cab in New York City, to tension

the material (its built-in folkloric quality) and the style of its performers” (“*The Wiz*” 230). Therefore, while the Broadway version of *The Wiz* was an African American version of Baum’s fairy tale, created and nurtured by African American artists both on and off stage, Lumet’s film version had an all-African American cast in front of the camera, but was filtered through the lens and perspective of the white creators perched behind the camera.

and anxieties surrounding contemporary African American identity. In homing in on the urban decay displayed during the 1970s, Lumet strategically placed a decomposing “Nathan’s” hot dog restaurant at the core of Oz. In doing so, the story initiates the urban blight of big cities during this time period. The economic restructuring, abandoned buildings, employment challenges, fragmented families, and political disenfranchisement that resonated at the time created a decrepit atmosphere that is reflected throughout the film, *The Wiz*.

By positioning *The Wiz* in a role of historically grounded representations of race, the film remains significant in terms of portraying the sociohistorical realities of racial differences that permeate national diversity in American culture. As Daniel Bernardi argues, “Race is conceived as both a social structure and a culture discourse...Anything but an illusion, race as identity is meaningful, even if not biological or divinely determined, because it has a real impact on everyday life, on social practice, and on the stuff of representation” (Bernardi xvi). Therefore, contemporary discourses of race are constructed at the intersection of historical realities and metaphors of racial differences, building upon one another to create a wide range of representations of Otherness throughout the myriad versions of the Wizard of Oz narrative. In this negotiation, later versions of this narrative revisit and revise one of the central notions of this distinctly American myth: who counts as a citizen in America and in Oz. This class differentiation is not only based on physical representations but also biological and symbolic representations of gender construction.

CHAPTER 3

THE WICKED CONSUMPTION OF GENDER ROLES AND IDENTITY

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

These enchanting words are a familiar first line to many fairy tales. These words along with the fairy tales themselves have been passed from generation to generation, almost as a rite of passage throughout western civilization. Whether it is the tales from the Grimm Brothers, Hans Christian Andersen, or Disney’s modern twists on enthralling woes of princesses, fairy tales have permeated society for ages. The particular phrase above signals the liminal space between storytelling and everyday life, not only by ushering in the tropes of the tales themselves, but by introducing the structure of gender that defines these stories, inviting the beautiful princess into the space. Gender representations are particularly significant in mythic structures, in large part because they outline the acceptable parameters of gender behavior within the larger social culture. Moreover, fairy tale discourses codify individual behaviors, social structures, and cultural value systems, making fairy tales especially instrumental in demarcating the range of culturally validated femininities and gender construction.

In traditional fairy tales, female characters generally fall into categories of good or evil, the beautiful princess or the evil witch. Characters that embody the first archetype are coded as lovely and good with a sense of virtue through selflessness demonstrated by a willingness to help others and passivity to the goals and desires of the more dominant (often) male characters. This compulsion is also often seen in a propensity for self-sacrifice of identity and agency. In short, the ideal “good girl” of fairy tales is relatively

one-dimensional. This “good girl” gives up individual motivation to support the forward motion of the fairy tale, a direction that is almost invariably dedicated to more active male character counterparts.

In direct contrast, the figure of the “bad” woman, usually occupied by a wicked witch or evil stepmother, is characterized by her self-serving manipulation of circumstances to satisfy her own desires. From the evil queen who tricks Snow White into eating a poisoned apple to the Wicked Witch of Oz’s obsession with Dorothy’s magic shoes, these monstrous women are defined by their willingness to do whatever they have to in order to get what they desire. Vilified in comparison to their virtuous counterparts, these women are set apart by their agency and active longing, which separates them from both the beautiful princesses and the men who fear their ruthless power and non-conformity. In fairytales, the only female character that is perceived as “good” is almost by default a young girl. “Bad” female characters are almost always women in their sexual prime but who do not necessarily conform to social expectation of reproduction. Female sexuality therefore is not only linked to evil but in some cases the impetus for evil acts against the “good girl” because they are perceived to be sexual and a social competition. The only caveat to this is perhaps the “good” mother, grandmother, or godmother whose sexuality has been nullified by childbirth itself. As Phillip Cole points out in *The Myth of Evil*, “The punitive treatment of deviance not only demonstrates the control of rulers but also asserts the values of conformists. The advantage of [evil] witchcraft over other crimes in this context is that it sums up all forms of non-conformity” (Cole 88). The disparaging witch is therefore cast off as being a deviant by not complying with societal norms. In obliging to the social expectations, the good girl is

ultimately containable whereas her evil counterpart is marked as wicked by ambition, power, and an uncontrollable nature.

Negotiations of mythic narratives such as the Wizard of Oz tale are notable in the ways in which they validate, challenge, or reinvent such representations of gender in our prescribed social order. This revisionist process often reflects shifts in notions of acceptable femininity within the sociocultural discourses surrounding the stories and society itself. The images of women offered by these variations of the Wizard of Oz narrative become increasingly complicated as they are revised and re-imagined. While early versions, such as Baum's children's tale and MGM's classic film, provide audiences with a dichotomous view of femininity populated by women as either good or evil, later versions unsettle these polarized notions of gender identity. The later versions of the tale instead represent complex and flawed female characters who fail to fit neatly into clearly-defined categories, who participate in the construction of their social images, and who highlight the performative nature of gender identities. In addition, femininity is an embodied performance, as well as an enacted one and the physical appearances of these women also serve to visually code, regulate, and represent their characters in each of the adaptations.

Baum's novel, and the film adaptation of Baum's novel, each explore the Wicked Witch of the West as a vile woman devoid of human emotion. In these interpretations, the Wicked Witch of the West is a striking stereotypical figure with degenerating teeth, a long diamond chin, black pointed hat with dark attire, and encompassing the full garb of any witch, with an elongated cape and broom in hand. Readers and viewers are not shocked by the Witch's appearance or her demeanor that the characteristics adhere to; the

image of a Witch and her representative *badness* that coincide with the stereotype. In contrast, the good witch is colorfully gaudy in her garments and appearance. Although this dichotomous organization is present in early versions, this structure unravels in later iterations. Instead, the heroines of both versions of *Wicked*, the novel and musical, are shown in positions of actively negotiating morality, public image and the performance of gender roles to which characters identify and prescribe.

There is a strong polarization of female characters in each version of the Wizard of Oz. By situating the wonderful beside the wicked the contrast between good and evil is reflected blatantly throughout every adaptation specifically in aligning the various character representations of the good Witch, bad Witch, and Dorothy. Dorothy can be read as an active participant and hero in the Land of Oz, escaping the European traditional fairy tale restrictions for a female heroine. Women in fairy tales have often been assigned to passive positions such as awaiting rescue; however, Dorothy takes her fate into her own hands becoming an active female hero. Feminists have claimed Baum's Dorothy in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as one of their own and acknowledge Baum's novel as the earliest truly feminist American children's book (Hearn 13). As a feminist, Dorothy prescribes to the distinctly American trajectory of self-discovery and self-determination within a culture that celebrates individuality and the mythic discourse that allows individuals to achieve such self-realization. Nevertheless, Dorothy's active heroism is fixed on her position as a "good girl." It is particularly interesting that the two main actions she completes entirely on her own (even though her actions may have been inadvertent) is the killing of both the witches – acts she is unable to take responsibility for in other iterations. These actions are overlooked because Dorothy is the "good girl" so

any misbehavior on her part is her quest to return home and becomes glossed over. Even Dorothy's behaviors that might have been punishable to regular children are overlooked in Baum's story and not only deemed permissible but heroic.

Baum creates a window for young girls to "misbehave" by establishing an exception to Dorothy's actions and ultimately celebrating those actions. When the Witch refuses to return Dorothy's shoe, the child has a temper tantrum and becomes "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" an action resulting in the Witch's death (Baum 225). Not only is Dorothy not punished for her tantrum and perhaps accidental murder of the Witch, she is rewarded and celebrated, a re-action echoing the joyful community of the Munchkins when her house fell on the Wicked Witch of the East. Following the discourse established by Baum's text, any actions against the Witch that Dorothy is guilty of, including the murders, become admissible because of the Witch's status of being "wicked." Dorothy is similarly circumscribed by her positions as the "good girl" requiring a balance of pursuit and passivity. By excusing any questionable action or misbehavior on her part (as it does so in Baum's tale) Dorothy is caught between two worlds, literally and figuratively, as she tries to navigate the social expectations that her new "power" has provided her. Even though Dorothy has more agency than the majority of her fairy tale sisters, the representations of her gendered body and behavior neutralizes her actions, creating a heroine who is constantly negotiating between activity and passivity.

As previously suggested, in Fleming's 1939 film version, Dorothy's heroism is quite accidental, and she even denies her participation in killing the Witches, refusing to

take any responsibility for such an action. When the Wicked Witch of the West asks Dorothy if it was she who killed her sister, Dorothy protests that it was an accident and that it was not her *intention* to have her house fall on the Wicked Witch of the East and kill her. Later in the film, when Dorothy kills the Wicked Witch of the West, she claims, “I didn’t mean to kill her. Really, I didn’t. It’s just that [the Scarecrow] was on fire.” Here, Dorothy altruistically acts to save the life of her friend. Her selflessness and her *goodness* are praised and honored. Moreover, only after it is acknowledged that killing the witch is a good thing does Dorothy “own” her act. Even with Dorothy’s inability to claim her agency over her actions, this film reinforces the dualities of good and evil. Judy Garland’s Dorothy disrupts the social order with sentimentality because she depicts the sweet and innocent “good girl” stereotype. This further demonizing the Wicked Witch of the West as the Other for all viewers to consume. This particular contrast is strongly reinforced by the physical representations of the characters in the 1939 film.

The representation of good and evil is highlighted through the prescribed gender roles permeating the Oz tale. The story becomes an instrument in demarcating culturally validated femininities through the duality of that which is good versus that which is evil. These binaries show up at the forefront of the film version when Glinda ethereally floats in her bubble to meet Dorothy upon her arrival in Oz. In that first scene the following conversation takes place:

Witch of the North: Are you a good witch, or a bad witch?

Dorothy: Why, I am not a witch at all. Witches are old and ugly! (Background giggling)

Witch of the North: The Munchkins are laughing because I am a witch.

Dorothy: I’ve never heard of a beautiful witch.

Witch of the North: Only bad witches are ugly. (1939)

The Wizard of Oz film reinforces the notions of evil being ugly and in turn praising good as beautiful. In her statement to Dorothy, the Witch of the North poses a number of problematic gender issues in reinforcing Dorothy's comment that "witches are old and ugly" but qualifying her statement as she separates those that are beautiful to being good. Additionally, the comment that "only bad witches are ugly" posits additional problems in terms of aesthetic expectations, which seem to convey an unrealistic façade of beauty urging a set of social and cultural expectations imposed onto society and viewers of the film. The two witches demonstrate the larger social concepts of "good" and "evil" and the perception that beautiful equals good and ugly equals evil. These concepts are found within gender roles and force that categorization onto Dorothy as she struggles to find her balance in being the "good/beautiful girl" versus the "bad/ugly girl".

The Wicked Witch of the West, on the other hand, is an embodiment of the "monstrous-feminine," a term coined by Barbara Creed who argues that "[a]ll human societies have a conception of the monstrous-feminine, of what it is about women that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject" (Creed 1). Significantly, gender is central to the fear inspired by the monstrous-feminine because "[a]s with all other stereotypes of the feminine, from virgin to whore, she is defined in terms of her sexuality" (3). Therefore, the figure of the monstrous-feminine is defined by her own power, desire, and sexuality. The most dangerous aspect of this figure as Bonnie Friedman points out, is that the Wicked Witch is a woman who *wants* (Friedman 23, emphasis added). The Wicked Witch wants power, the *shoes*, and everything. The problem is that Dorothy's perceived innocence shields viewers from seeing that she too is a character who *wants*. "The shoes represent the role, the social position that the young girl wants to fulfill and that society

expects her to assume” (Jones 94), and Dorothy *wants* to oblige society. In Baum’s book, when Dorothy and the Wicked Witch are each wearing one of the silver shoes, both the good little girl and the big bad Witch are consumed by their desire to possess the silver shoes and throw identical temper tantrums. The good girl and the bad Witch will stop at nothing, not even murder, to obtain the object of their desire (in later iterations, this same quest for *desire* of an object is mimicked in Maguire’s *Wicked* but the parallel is between the Wicked Witch and the Good Witch). In Baum’s Oz, they become twins, sad doubles of greed and hatred because of the *want*, they try to consume and ultimately become consumed by a bejeweled pair of shoes.

Baum’s silver shoes and most notably MGM’s ruby slippers are the sparkling nexus of femininity and serve as an American icon. Cultural icons, such as the slippers represented in the various Oz films are considered “iconic” because of their reproduction and manifestation in popular culture. In a general sense, an icon is a symbol or image, a name, picture, face, edifice, or an article that is readily recognized as having some well-known representation and significance to a particular group of people. In the case of the ruby slippers, this icon evokes particular values and a national representation to accelerate the prescribed roles of femininity found in these fairy tale worlds of Oz. Judy Garland’s ruby slippers have developed a mythical status all on their own, with the artifacts being auctioned amid much fanfare and staggering amounts of money. On May 24, 2000, collector David Elkouby bought the ruby slippers at an auction for \$600,000 (Jarrett). The commodification and reproduction of these special shoes is very present in society as is their representation of America’s domination when it has simply gone too far, that is, when the ideals of economic integration, distribution of resources, mass

production, cultural inclusiveness, and exuberant social and political exchange have all become a fog or delirium feeding into the materialism of the culture. Similarly, when the Witch and Dorothy become each other's double, they too are amidst the haze and feed into the American myth of consumerism.

In his short story "At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers" (1994), Salman Rushdie interpolates the myth of the Ozian magical slippers, which have been idolized as one of the most revered iconic embodiments of emancipation, individualism, unrestrained mobility, and femininity (Rushdie 46). Accounting for their misadventures in the modern Oz, which has actually become another Disneyworld of production and mass-produced products, Rushdie offers a wry commentary on the extremes of America's neo-liberal ethics and market oriented capitalism in his story. In doing so, Rushdie's commentary is just one of the many that discuss the commodification of American iconography of Oz and the influence of the shoes as a potent symbol in our culture.

In *Wicked*, Gregory Maguire criticizes as well as glorifies the Witch's relationship to the shoes and her clear desire to remove them from Dorothy. Although Maguire's back-story allows readers to become more sympathetic in understanding why the witch so desperately wants these shoes, the desire itself highlights a problematic critique on American materialism. Elphaba's desire for a relationship with her father becomes materialized in the shoes meant for her sister who always received preference over her. Elphaba's desire for the shoes is simultaneously a righteous effort to reclaim family "property" as much as a desperate desire to create a façade of familial kinship and the desire for home which never quite exists for Elphaba. The shoes become representative of her father's love and although not meant for her, she is desperate to possess them. The

standard representations of femininity are underlined by the glow of Cinderella's famous fairy tale: a pair of shoes can change your life.

Nevertheless, in *Wicked* Maguire offers a third version of Dorothy and the Witches as a new portrait of iconic gender roles portrayed throughout the Oz adaptation as a way to fissure the relationship between the "good girl" and "bad girl" dichotomy in the fairy tale genre. Maguire situates Glinda, the Good Witch of the North beside Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West to emphasize that good and evil collide even in the simplicity of the first letters of their name, Glinda the Good and Elphaba the Evil. These two strong female characters are therefore, fixed in their representations of their names. The Wizard of Oz contributes to the tradition of equating morality with aesthetics in both its stereotypical representation of beauty seen through Glinda's material world and non-beauty through Elphaba's strong appetite for activism. The novel *Wicked* expresses an apparent attitude towards these concepts praising the underdog, Elphaba. In doing so, Maguire reinvents the common understanding of good and evil particularly through the expression of beauty's exaggerated depiction seen in Glinda's simple gestures throughout the novel. For instance, she demands to wear a ridiculous attire of a "green traveling gown with its inset panels of achre musset" (Maguire 65). Glinda reasons that because she is beautiful, she is important and therefore "good". This, of course, indicates the concept of beautiful equating to good. In juxtaposing the beautiful witch to the ugly one, and further matching each figure with corresponding attributes of acute goodness or excessive badness, a detrimental myth of what illuminates these binaries in relation to femininity are imposed onto the interpreters of these images.

Dress and masquerade have emerged to play a significant role in the negotiation of feminine identity, not only seen in the Witch and Dorothy's desire for a pair of shoes but especially in the consumption of Elphaba and Glinda, where the clothes in fact make the witch. In *Wicked*, Elphaba does not assume a specific role set in society and chooses to defy social constructs by not adopting a sense of reference in terms of grandiose and "girly" attire which Glinda subscribes to. Elphaba creates her own identity, which after her birth her Nanny contemplates when stating, "little green Elphaba chose her own sex, and her own color, and to hell with her parents" (Maguire 31). Elphaba is strong willed from the onset showing her sense of difference from an early age. Elphaba refuses to be known as one or the other in all aspects of her life, specifically in terms of her gender. Therefore, Elphaba is a character who encompasses both male and female qualities, good and evil attributes, beautiful and villainous, and submissive and dominating demeanors. The construction and negotiation of identity highlighted in both versions of *Wicked* are echoed in the appearances of Elphaba, described by Maguire and later embodied onstage by Indina Menzel as gorgeous and sexually desirable fulfilling the monstrous-feminine, an all powerful female figure.

In contrast, Glinda holds a strong preoccupation with her beauty and is thus portrayed as foolish and silly. She is a vain girl who struggles throughout her education and obsesses over her self-image and beauty making her less intelligent than Elphaba. In doing so, the physical appearance of characters is less important than the ideas they offer in *Wicked*. It is here that Maguire attempts to deconstruct the standard notions of prescribed gender roles found in the land of Oz. The tone of the novel consistently suggests an irrelevance of Glinda's attitude toward beauty, especially as she grows older:

Glinda approached slowly, either through age or shyness, or because her ridiculous gown weighed so much that it was hard for her to get up enough steam to stride. She looked like a huge Glindaberry bush, was all the Witch could think; under that skirt there must be a bustle the size of the dome of Saint Florix. There were sequins and furbelows and a sort of History of Oz, it seemed, stitched in trapunto in six or seven ovoid panels all around the skirting. But her face: beneath the powdered skin, the wrinkles at eyelid and mouth, was the face of the timid schoolgirl from the Perth Hills... 'You haven't changed a whit', said Glinda... The Witch took Glinda's arm. 'Glinda, you look hideous in that getup. I thought you'd have developed some sense by now' (Maguire 340).

Maguire retells the Oz tale from the inside out – essentially rebuilding the story through the central character, the Witch Elphaba. She is no longer one dimensional, she is no longer extreme in her evil actions of her ugliness, no longer silent, nor speechless or frozen. In the section above, Elphaba's humanity is seen in her teasing of Glinda's "hideous" garb. Glinda is hiding behind the clothing and makeup that is overly extravagant which does not parallel who she is inside. Elphaba can see that Glinda remains at her core a "timid schoolgirl" maintaining innocence and goodness on the inside; however what she has become on the outside is nothing to be proud of according to her dear friend. Maguire is alluding to the idea that social and cultural conformity such as being consumed by appearances can shift an individual's persona.

Maguire's Wicked Witch is no longer wholly "wicked" just as his good Witch is no longer fully "good." He has effectively blurred the boundary between each image by literally undressing them and erasing the need to define them in such polarizing female identities. The differences of these characters are further juxtaposed when Elphaba demands to Glinda that she wants the shoes from Dorothy; after all, it is her birthright. Elphaba's father had given the presumably magical slippers to her sister Nessarose (the Wicked Witch of the East), so it is her heirloom that she seeks from Dorothy along with

the power the shoes may possess. Elphaba fixates on getting the shoes back linking her actions to a sentimental longing for acceptance from her father, but also fixates on obtaining the object of her desire because she is afraid of what the Wizard, whom she has spent her life fighting against in an underground revolutionary group, might do with them. Because of the Witch's obsession with the shoes, as suggested previously, Maguire is perhaps responding to the commodification and consumption of the shiny slippers and what can happen when material desires come before more spiritual relations, such as friendship. Glinda jokingly pleads with the Elphaba to forget about the slippers since they are "only shoes" convinced that they are unimportant, but Elphaba simply cannot let go. In fact, although these two women are long time friends, it is this fight that leads to the final collapse of their friendship, "They have too much common history to come apart over a pair of shoes, yet the shoes were planted between them, a grotesque icon of their differences. Neither one could retreat or move forward. It was silly, and they were stuck, and some one needed to break the spell. But all the Witch could do was insist, I want those *shoes*" (Maguire 347).

In *Wicked* the musical by Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman, the separation between good and evil and the prescribed gender expectations that emphasize the polarities is shown not only in the Witches garb but also in the value given to friendship between the two Witches. When Glinda receives her nomination as "The Good" thinking she would be happy with this honor, she cautiously sings, "happy is what happens when all your dreams come true"; she soon learns that happiness comes with a price. She laments that "There's a kind of a sort of *cost*/ There's a couple of things get *lost*" (Track,

Thank Goodness). Glinda recognizes that she has become “The Good” by giving up and undergoing a loss of some kind, the loss of friendship.

The friendship between these two main characters sets up a moral binary ordering of subjects that underline “a logic of moral opposition with one of ethical relation” (Shomura 18). Glinda and Elphaba realize an ethical lesson when they are joined together. In “For Good,” a song the two sing expressing the contributions they each had on one another, the audience feels the molding of the two as their voices collide. “Who can say/ If I’ve been changed for the better?/ Because I knew you/ I have been changed for good.” In his essay, “*These Are Bad People*” – *Enemy Combatants and the Homopolitics of the “War on Terror,”* Chad Shomura explains that the meaning of this “good” in the quotation above is ambiguous and questions if it carries temporal connotations or ethical ones. The author suggests that,

within that ambiguity we may discover what Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak calls an ‘eruption of the ethical;’ in the song, to ‘know’ is not to ‘construct the other as object of knowledge’ but ‘to listen to the other as if it were a self’ by recognizing one’s debts to alterity. The Other registers changes in the self such that subjectivity must be understood through relationality (19)

This interpretation suggests that their friendship must come together as a single self, joining both good and evil dualities in order to become one. Additionally, Schwartz and Holzman address the homosocial conventions of female friendship and devotion, creating spaces for addressing and embracing same-sex desire within the structure of American myth. Therefore, foregrounding a previously marginalized perspective of the society allowing their heroines to sing from a position often ignored by traditional mythic, fairy tale discourses.

The hybrid of good and evil depicted throughout *Wicked* suggests that these two concepts are essential to join together in order for an individual to become whole – further suggesting that male and female qualities are necessary to merge in order to be whole. Even in an image for the popular adaptation of the



Figure 4: This image is the main promotional advertisement used for the musical *Wicked*, 2003.

musical there is a representative hybrid force underlying the caricatures of the two witches (see fig. 4). This image suggests that a little of good and evil is necessary to find stability in society as the image of Elphaba and Glinda portray a yin-yang balance going as far as to complete each other becoming a whole person in the process. Elphaba's eyes are not seen as her pointed hat covers them secretly but Glinda's eye peers out. Glinda's mouth is hidden as she surreptitiously whispers to her counterpart in a stereotypical gesture that girlfriends perform. Elphaba's conspiratorial grin completes the image to make one whole person, a single face with a mouth, nose, and eye suggesting that there is a needed balance of all gendered dualities to become whole. Fusing Elphaba and Glinda in song and visual representation encompasses the ultimate conflict of the story that Maguire tries to discern.

The barriers that separate individuals (i.e., Dorothy, Glinda, and the Witch) all rest on a fine line that is often blurred from the social ideologies, sociocultural expectation and materialistic desires that create the American myth. The new configuration of these social constructs portrays those who are *wicked* as misunderstood

powerful heroines. As this progression of heroines demonstrates, these versions of the Wizard of Oz tale have been instrumental in validating shifting notions of acceptable femininity and gender roles within American culture.

CONCLUSION

BEYOND THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Our American utopia may be somewhat crude in spots but there is not denying that it is ours...Someday we may have better American fairy tales but that will not be until America is a better country. Edward Wagenknecht. (*Utopia Americana* 156-57).

Each version of the Wizard of Oz narrative that engages in literature, film, theatre and the like have worked over the past several decades to invite viewers into an immediate identification with the familiar story and cast of characters. Salman Rushdie comments on this self-identification, “In the case of the beloved film, *we are the stars’ doubles*. Our imaginations put us in the Lion’s skin, place the sparkling slippers on our feet and send us cackling through the air on a broomstick... We are the stand-ins now” (Rushdie, 46 emphasis original). Rushdie’s self-identification theory allows us to see how much our perceptions and perspectives have been shaped by the Oz story, in renegotiating our American Myth and American identity over time. Through the numerous historical and ideological comparisons in the Oz tale that reflect our own world, the discussions of identity, race, Otherness and gender have become significant reflections of our own imaginations.

In the more than one hundred years since Baum’s first publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, issues of national identity within this specifically American myth have continued to be preoccupied with race, ethnicity and the Other, in demarcating who counts as a national citizen and who is marginalized and excluded. As such, it is not surprising that multiple reinventions of the Wizard of Oz tale have returned to these issues time and time again. Baum’s support for racial segregation and clear-cut notions of

the American citizen is reflected in the regimentation of his Oz, complicating the largely multicultural discourse of his *Oz* series. Lumet's *The Wiz* also participates in historical representations of race, negotiating the African American appropriation of the Wizard of Oz story in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement, claiming a privileged position within the discourse of this previously white American myth, as well as highlighting anxieties surrounding other elements of African American identity, including problematic notions of masculinity, femininity, and exclusion. The works of Baum and Lumet position themselves within the historical moments of their individual creation, engaging with the anxieties surrounding race and national identity of their contemporary moments.

In contrast, MGM's *Wizard of Oz* and the versions of *Wicked* by Maguire, Schwartz, and Holzman engage in ideological discourses of race, framing these interventions through difference and Otherness. MGM's classical film positions the Other as subordinate (the Munchkins) or dangerous and worthy of destruction (the Wicked Witch), with the dichotomy of Self and Other established to further validate Dorothy's heroism and identity as an ideal "infantile" American citizen. Resituating discussions of Otherness through sentient Animals invites identification while simultaneously engaging with discourses of biological differences and ideological representations of real-world discrimination and abuse such as those who wear turbans being defined as terrorists or bin Laden's kin.

Moreover, both versions of *Wicked* further reestablish the Other as a figure of self-identification by recasting Elphaba as a heroine rather than a villainess, highlighting a discourse which embraces and celebrates those who are different and unique, a distinct response to the segregation and vilification of the versions which have preceded it.

However, Elphaba still faces destruction, achieved in Maguire's novel and simulated in the Broadway version of Schwartz and Holzman, suggesting that the discourses of national identity, race, and gender are far from settled.

According to Zipes, these adaptations have "a utopian constellation, a reference point, one that fortunately has not gone away and compels us to return time and again to determine our national character and identity" (Zipes 122). Our continued participation with the Wizard of Oz story allows Americans to renegotiate the American myth over time inviting the numerous adaptations to structure a sense of American identity. As the Oz story continues to situate itself in popular culture²², the tale will remain a reference point and reflection of our own world and imaginations. The repeated return to Baum's fable will continue to position the Oz legend within popular culture as a way to discuss and negotiate national identity, race, Otherness, and gender, beyond the confines of the yellow brick road.

²² There are two new Oz movies that are on the horizon, *Dorothy of Oz* produced by Summertime Entertainment is a computer-animated film in IMAX 3D to be released in 2012 and Disney's *OZ: The Great and Powerful* movie directed by Sam Raimi with an expected release in 2013. *Dorothy of Oz*, which stars all-American *Glee* star Lea Michele, is a story of Dorothy's return to Kansas to save the devastated country that is in peril. *OZ: The Great and Powerful* focuses on the Wizard's story and how he arrived in the Land of Oz. Stars include Mila Kunis, Rachel Weisz, Michelle Williams, Zach Braff, and James Franco as the Wizard.

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APPENDIX

- Fig. 1. The Land of Oz on Emerald Mountains, North Carolina. 12 Aug. 2011.
Personal photograph by author. JPEG file.
- Fig. 2. *Ding Dong Osama's Dead!* YouTube Video. Web. 12 Nov. 2011.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SqWPb1Dbkc&feature=related>>.
- Fig. 3. *The Wicked Witch* Image. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum.
Illustrated by W.W. Denslow. The Reilly & Lee Co, 1900.
- Fig. 4. *Wicked: The Untold Story of the Witches of Oz*. Web. 12 Nov. 2011.
<<http://www.fanpop.com/spots/wicked/images/6345797/title/witchy-secrets-wallpaper>>.