

DAMMIT, TOTO, WE'RE STILL IN KANSAS:
THE FALLACY OF FEMINIST EVOLUTION
IN A MODERN AMERICAN FAIRY TALE

by

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This dissertation is dedicated, in loving memory, to two dearly departed souls:

to Dr. David L. Lavery, the first director of this project and a constant voice of encouragement in my studies, whose absence will never be wholly realized because of the thousands of lives he touched with his spirit, enthusiasm, and scholarship. I am eternally grateful for our time together.

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ABSTRACT

In a multi-disciplinary interrogation of L. Frank Baum's "Introduction" to his 1900 novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, this dissertation traces the historical, academic, cultural, and aesthetic definitions for the term "fairy tale" as both a generic categorization and an ideological representation of middle-class American culture at the time of the novel's release and across its most significant film and stage adaptations. Beginning with a close examination of the author's life, the work seeks to demonstrate the dedication with which Baum approached legitimizing his authorship of a "modernized fairy tale" at the turn of the twentieth century. By then considering that dedication within the context of the American literary market for children, the research situates Baum's creation against an already complicated history of literature created specifically for young American readers. Placing his authorship against a backdrop of Chicago's history, during a tenuous time for the city's national and global reimagining following the 1893 Columbian Exposition, and amongst widespread public interest for folk and fairy tales, the study asserts that a definitional discord regarding the means of fairy tale creation allowed for popular understanding of the genre to ignore *The Wizard's* literary origins in favor of placing that tale within the newly-defined tradition of American folklore. The dissertation addresses authorial generic intent, issues with popular consumption of "folk" ideology, traditional definitions for fairy tale authorship, and the ways in which those definitions should be challenged in the case of America and its specific historical, spatial, and technological construction. Additionally, consideration is given to the memetic life of Baum's

characters, specifically that of Dorothy, whose 118-year evolution highlights the ways in which popular affection for folk heroes can alter literary characterization in favor of textual character improvement. The work ends with an exploration of the ways that alterations in the social text of a fairy tale create the opportunity for gaps in social applications of important terms like “bravery,” “independence,” “strength,” and “feminism.” The implications of these gaps are explored with consideration given for the marketed age-group of readers for Baum’s original tale and for those tales which find inspiration in Baum’s legacy.

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INTRODUCTION:

A MODERNIZED FAIRY TALE, INDEED

On May 15, 1900, with all the hope for success they could muster, author L. Frank Baum and illustrator William Wallace Denslow released the first run of their second major creative collaboration: a children's book, lavishly printed in full color. The pair had achieved moderate success only two years earlier with a book of children's verse called *Father Goose, His Book* and hoped this next venture's success would surpass that of the first, propelling them into more lasting literary fame. In this new work, for which the final title listed was *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum included an introduction he hoped would distinguish his story from the other works of the day. It reads:

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

Yet the old-time fairy tale, having served for generations, may now be classed as "historical" in the children's library; for the time has come for a series of newer "wonder tales" in which the stereotyped genie, dwarf and fairy are eliminated, together with all the horrible and blood-curdling incident devised by their authors to point a fearsome moral to each tale. Modern education includes morality; therefore the modern child seeks

only entertainment in its wonder-tales and gladly dispenses with all disagreeable incident.

Having this thought in mind, the story of “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” was written solely to pleasure children of today. It aspires to bring a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out.

L. Frank Baum.

Chicago, April, 1900.

Despite its more than one hundred year history of having been reproduced with the novel in its various editions, the incredible significance of this introduction has received relatively little academic attention from scholars, and an acute analysis of Baum’s success in relation to his well-stated objective for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* has yet to be performed. I would suggest that the attention the introduction does receive either indicates a lack of any formal knowledge in Baum of the fairy tale genre, thus dismissing any adherence to the tradition as being indicative only of the author’s natural storytelling ability, or acknowledges Baum’s work as a member of the fairy tale genre but fails to analyze it in the ways other fairy tales – even other literary fairy tales – are analyzed. And, yet, Suzanne Rahn insists “Baum’s introduction reads like a kind of manifesto” (27); while acclaimed Baum scholar Michael Patrick Hearn makes clear in his “Introduction” to the centennial annotated edition of the work, that “one cannot overemphasize Baum’s conscious development of the ‘modernized’ fairy tale” (xlix).

Following Hearn's advice, this dissertation intends to critically examine *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in a new way: as a text with a firm foothold in the genre of fairy tales – a genre with significant cultural and historical implications which I will assert make the necessity of interrogating the texts we ascribe to that genre more critical than that work we do in other genres. In this interrogation, it will be important that I answer a number of questions: To what degree of certainty can we say L. Frank Baum understood the nuances of the fairy tale, or “wonder-tale”, in writing his “Introduction” to the novel? And what were his models for learning and imitating already accepted fairy tale texts? To do this, I will need to examine the work of L. Frank Baum as a man in numerous careers, a man whose yearning for success and lasting recognition creates a pattern of immersion in a variety of demographics and fields of study throughout his life in which he regularly alters his persona, often in both name and outwardly expressed opinions, to be successful. Furthermore, I'll need to explore what kinds of historical, cultural, literary, social, economic, and political climates had to exist to make Baum's decision to pursue authorship of a “modernized” fairy tale for children a logical and, ultimately, successful one. I will also need to examine the ways in which others classify and interrogate this text and consider the areas in those interrogations that I feel are lacking. I'll ask: If Baum's novel isn't a fairy tale, what might it be? And, if it is, why aren't we analyzing it in the same way that we do other fairy tales of this sort? Most importantly, I need to know: if Baum's text were to receive the same kind of analysis offered other fairy tales, what would we get? Would we find our current understanding of the text and the kind of moral/ethical sentiment we assume it offers correct? Are we reading the text for exactly

what it is? Or are we allowing that reading to be infiltrated by more than one hundred years of memetic influence on readers' ideas about narrative, characterization, and theme which may or may not be present in the work itself?

Considering the scholarship of Jack Zipes in *Why Fairy Tale Stick*, this dissertation suggests the likelihood that the latter question can be positively affirmed is extremely high. I believe if *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* were read with the same sort of critical eye with which we interrogate other literary fairy tales, we would find ourselves staring at an entirely different message for Baum's 1900 readers: a message reappropriated, with or without recognition, each time the tale finds popularity for a new adaptation, a new exploitation of its characters, or a new intertextual reference for readers and viewers in a variety of mediums – a message, I fear, which contributes to muddled definitions for important terms like “feminist,” “independent,” “brave,” and “good” in America and beyond. Because while Baum may have worked tirelessly to omit from his tale the standard “heart-aches and nightmares” he found so appalling in the more traditional fairy tales, a reader would be hard-pressed to say that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* does not contain one of those pesky morals he mentions in its introduction. For while the story *does* entertain in new ways for one of its time, it most certainly does so while leaving its readers with not-so-subtle lessons on what it takes to successfully travel life's (yellow brick) road.

The story of young Dorothy, a girl displaced by a Kansas cyclone, has its own cast of monsters and merry men. The traditional dwarves are replaced with the Munchkins, the fairies with good witches, and genies with the Wizard – a presence great

and powerful, and also a façade. And Baum makes no mention in his introduction of the fearsome witches, which he leaves fully intact for this new wonder tale. He places these all in a landscape populated with ideas foreign and domestic – brilliant color, people made of glass, fields full of poppies, a scarecrow, a lion, and a tin woodman, oh my!

On their march towards the Emerald City, each of our young protagonist's companions discovers they already possess the very things they seek: brains, heart, and courage. Baum's lovable Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Cowardly Lion offer readers characters with whom they can easily identify. Through the journey of Dorothy's male companions, Baum encourages his young readers to believe in themselves, to face life's problems as they arise, and to do so with people they love and care about. These are perfectly laudable lessons – the completion of which earns each "man" a position of authority by the end of the novel. Following Dorothy's harrowing encounter with the Wicked Witch of the West, the four friends return to Glinda the Good Witch for help in getting Dorothy back to Kansas. When asked what they will do when Dorothy leaves, the Scarecrow says he will return to the Emerald City as the newly appointed ruler of its people; the Tin Woodman vows to return to the land of the Winkies and rule over them at their request; the Cowardly Lion talks of his plans to take his position as king of the forest over all of the beasts beyond the hill of the Hammer-Heads. Each of these male characters finds strengths within himself and is rewarded with power over others for doing so.

As shall be demonstrated, a great deal of scholarship regarding Baum's fairy tale addresses the models offered young readers through these male companions and their

rewards. However, to analyze a tale for the lessons offered by *secondary* characters is highly irregular. This is not to say that secondary characters in other fairy tales fail to offer models for normative behaviors; but one would be hard-pressed to find those models indicative of positive behavior affirmation. Rather, those secondary characters (when present or discussed at all) most often exhibit negative behavior models for children from which they can contrast the positive behavior found in the protagonist *or* they act as positive influences from whom the main character learns behaviors which allow them to make the changes necessary to alter their status or fulfill their need by the end of the tale. To analyze Baum's text for the lessons Dorothy's *companions* teach makes troublesome the act of analysis: either the story isn't Dorothy's, but theirs, or the lessons offered through the protagonist are less fulfilling than we'd like.

Consideration of the tale in a more traditional analysis suggests a need to interrogate the lessons offered young readers through Dorothy's journey. We must ask: what, then, of our young female protagonist? What does sweet Dorothy get? What happens to the girl who "frees" the Munchkins from slavery, "saves" three friends from certain self-destruction, and "ends" the reign of the last Wicked Witch in Oz? And just how much of those actions are the products of agency and autonomy found in that girl, anyway? She gets to go *home*, of course, and care for her family –like any good American girl should. Why worry about agency or autonomy or power? What more could she want? After all, "there is no place like home" (Baum, *Wizard* 76). But does an analysis that shows the tale condemning young girls to the domestic sphere (regardless of its promise to drain their livelihood) just not offer enough promise for what its author

purports to be the first real American fairy tale? Does the recognition that, within *this* novel, the great American children's literature figurehead most intensely displays stereotypical nineteenth-century gender expectations *against* the advancement of young girls just not fit with the narrative Baum's later serialization of Dorothy and Oz offers readers and critics? Or, perhaps, does that recognition fall in too strong a contrast to the historical "Baum", often lauded as an advocate for women's rights and suffrage? Finally, given the status of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a children's classic, is this kind of interrogation really possible? This dissertation says "yes" to all of the above and asserts that interrogating a work which has won its place as a touchstone of American writing must necessarily receive critical analysis which questions genre, recognizes its temporality, and then considers the implications of forgetting that temporality in favor of more politically (or economically) advantageous labels for the author and his text then, now, and in the future.

PROBLEMATIC SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVES

A plethora of analyses which evaluate Baum's work based on critical considerations beyond the scope of fairy tale conventions explored for other tales represents just one facet of the many problematic scholarly perspectives concerning *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Another trend in scholarship regarding the novel's fairy tale categorization involves those academic voices which credit Baum's attempt in writing a "new" fairy tale as having been successful without acknowledging the author's having deliberately done so. For example, Brian Attebery, in *The Fantasy Tradition in America* (1980), asserts that "Baum was probably unaware of most of the scholarly work being

done in his time by folklorists,” arguing further that “if his story corresponds in any significant measure to the traditional structure, it indicates not a studied imitation but an intuitive grasp of the fundamental dynamics of the folktale” (91). Nevertheless, Attebery concedes that “*The Wizard* does, indeed, follow the traditional pattern, with the additional multiplication of elements and overlaying of action we expect of a good written work, though a good oral storyteller can do the same things” (91). Despite a lengthy analysis of the work and the context of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in the history of the American fantasy genre, Attebery’s assessment of Baum’s position as a literary fairy tale author falls short of ever actually applying the label to the author or to his work. He simultaneously dismisses Baum’s formal knowledge of the genre as being coincidental or intuitive, while acknowledging his tale’s conformity to generic conventions already well-established in academia by the time of its authorship. He writes:

Though Baum’s familiarity with fairy tale style and structure does not mean that he was in touch with the Jack tales and other American versions of *Märchen*, still he was able to do what oral storytellers often do, adapt a borrowed pattern to local conditions, local habits of thought. There are genuine bits of oral tradition in his stories, mostly on the level of language: prose rhythms, metaphors, and jokes. A structure is a very neutral thing, so that no matter where Baum learned the pattern for a fairy tale, his fantasies came out unmistakably American because of their sound, their sense of place, and [. . .] their characters. (95)

But Attebery fails to consider the reality of the man behind the *Wizard* introduction. As this dissertation shows, L. Frank Baum was a man deeply committed to learning and to trying in earnest to make a name for himself in a great number of careers – that of the modern fairy tale author certainly being one of them.

Furthermore, considering Baum's deliberate division of "folk lore, legends, myths and fairy tales" in the context of literary genres and discussions regarding those genres at the turn of the twentieth century, his use of the terms within the *Wizard* introduction suggests the author had an understanding of what makes each categorization unique from the other. Though his knowledge of those divisions could have certainly been surface-level – even feigned – an examination of this introduction alongside those of Baum's first two children's books, *Mother Goose in Prose* (1897) and *Father Goose, His Book* (1899), reveals rhetorical patterns suggestive of a man very much aware of the *Märchen* tradition, the power of fairy tales, and both academic and popular fascination with folklore and the fairy tale circulating at the time of his writing. Additionally, further examination of Baum's paratextual material within the context of American children's literature and the increasing demands of childhood commodification in American culture shows the author was extraordinarily clear in his purpose and had (at least as demonstrated in his public persona) a full understanding of the implications involved in creating just such a text. As discussed by Jerry Griswold in a 1987 article entitled "There's No Place but Home: *The Wizard of Oz*," "Baum was no mean folklorist, was intimately familiar with his genre, and knew what he was about" (465). Griswold's further discussion regarding a 1909 article, "Modern Fairy Tales," in which Baum "reveals his thorough acquaintance with

the history and techniques of Perrault, the Grimms, Lang, Andersen, and subsequent writers who deliberately set out to write fairy tales” illustrates more clearly the position of Baum in terms of academic awareness (465).

However, as this dissertation shall later discuss, Griswold’s credit for Baum’s creation in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is cut short by an analysis of the text that examines the character of Dorothy through a lens made cloudy by long-held labels of feminism and strength – labels which I suggest are only ascribed to the character following the serialization of Oz in Baum’s later writing. His doing so is one example in another large body of problematic academic texts – texts that insert the characteristics given to Dorothy in later Oz books into the character of Dorothy in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, a character this project will show as being substantially different from that of the Dorothy which Baum writes in 1919, and one upon which Baum had no intention of expanding in 1900. Still, Griswold does go a step further in his categorization of Baum’s work by noting that “like fairy tales, *The Wizard of Oz* [. . .] can no longer be regarded the work of a single author. It has been taken over by the folk” (465). While I will not address the concept of “folk” applied by Griswold in this context, his recognition that the work has been absorbed by the general populous is the voice of one in many who see it as such: Michael O. Riley claims “*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* has become part of American folklore; it is redolent with the spirit and space of America, but its themes are universal” (51), while Hearn echoes: “*The Wizard of Oz* has entered American folklore. It reflected and has altered the American character” (*Annotated* xiii).

While Baum's work is most frequently discussed by scholars of fantasy, or of children's literature, or by those who specialize as "Ozophiles," it is not entirely uncommon to find fairy tale scholars who include Baum in their discussions: Jack Zipes, a widely-acknowledged fairy tale scholar, regularly includes Baum's work in his interrogation of the genre. In "The Changing Function of the Fairy Tale," he calls *The Wizard of Oz* "the most notable and memorable American fairy tale" (21), and in "Second Thoughts on Socialization through Literature for Children," Zipes lists L. Frank Baum as one of the "classical writers" who "participated consciously and unconsciously in a fairy-tale discourse about civility and civilization" alongside "Perrault, the Grimms, Hans Christian Andersen, George MacDonald, [and] Oscar Wilde [. . .] up through J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis" (25). In his incredibly significant 1983 text, *Fairy Tale and the Art of Subversion*, Zipes includes an extended discussion on Baum and asserts that he "opened up new frontiers for fairy-tale discourse on civilization and paved the way for later writers to experiment even more with the potential of *sequel* fairy tales to present radical alternatives to social reality" (127; emphasis in original). Additionally, the work is included in the edition of *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* edited by Zipes, with entries for both Baum and *The Wizard of Oz*, along with countless references regarding its influence and presence – particularly in sections on North American tales – appearing within the volume. But Zipes is not the only fairy tale scholar to acknowledge the work as such; as shall be later demonstrated, a number of prominent scholars in fairy tale studies list the title among considerations for the genre.

However, as is certainly the case with Zipes's writing, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is most frequently mentioned within this area of academia as part of a series and not as a stand-alone work. As this dissertation demonstrates, analyses which neglect to consider the text outside of its position in the Oz series risk underestimating Baum's latent lessons for readers and misreading his characters – specifically the character of Dorothy – in the context of the novel's release, allowing for continued misapplication of character labels over the course of the tale's publication and for any adaptations and retellings it may inspire. Rather than neglecting the series and its importance, I believe that readings of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* must critically consider the work three-fold: first, as a stand-alone, intentionally-constructed, modern American fairy tale, without consideration for the author's oeuvre; then as the first work within a sequence of fourteen Baum novels set in Oz; and, finally, as a stand-alone work which carries the memetic weight of the series that followed it via that series' readers and the vast material and paratextual expansion of its narrative. Doing so allows Baum's first novel to find its strongest footing in the genre of the fairy tale, with all of the structural and thematic characteristics of those tales which remain in the cultural milieu for centuries, and with the same memetic weight of those tales which have been continually reappraised and revised, played out in a much shorter time span thanks to the vast commercial, literary, social, and technological networks of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

RIDING THE CYCLONE

While there is more than sufficient documentation to indicate Baum's lack of intention for serialization during his authorship of the 1900 text, reading *The Wizard* as

part of a larger group of texts is understandable. After all, Oz grew into a series with hundreds of texts in its run today.¹ However, as shall be later discussed, this growth was the result of a logical business move for a blossoming author at the turn of the century and did not come as a result of the sort of careful calculation in folk with which *The Wizard* was written.

Just as Baum and Denslow had hoped, the release of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* won both author and illustrator near instant fame. By December it dominated the publisher's bestseller list for the year, having had, in the highest estimate, nearly 90,000 copies printed for the Hill Company through the end of 1900 (MacFall 121).² Its continued success led to another bestseller designation in 1901, and in 1902 the story found additional popularity in *The Wizard of Oz*, a musical stage production Baum co-authored with composer Paul Tietjens and comedic bookwriter Glen MacDonough, and for which Denslow contributed designs for both costumes and sets. As discussed by Mark Evan Swartz in *Oz before the Rainbow*, the show enjoyed immensely positive reception from audiences at both Chicago's Grand Opera House and the Majestic Theater on

¹ While the International Wizard of Oz Club and most Oz scholars recognize only the first forty books, labelled the "Famous 40" as being canonical to the Oz universe, fan-fiction and adaptations of those texts have widely increased the number of "Ozian" works which continue the stories of characters written by the seven recognized "Royal Historians of Oz" and add characters of their own to the vast collection of Oz-centered-fiction publications.

² Reports for this figure vary. Though MacFall and F. J. Baum present the largest figure of 90,000 in *To Please a Child* as having been received from the publisher's records, *The Book Collector's Guide to L. Frank Baum & Oz* (2009) offers the smallest figure of 35,000 copies. Closer to that figure, Katharine Rogers (*Creator*) lists 37,672 as the number of total copies sold in the first fifteen months of publication (88).

Broadway for more than two years before beginning a well-attended tour, which ran until 1909.

Certain that he'd discovered the most original voice for modern American fairy tales in himself, L. Frank Baum continued over the next three years to write collections and single-volume works in the fairy tale spirit, releasing three books – *The Master Key*, *American Fairy Tales*, and *Dot and Tot of Merryland* – in 1901, *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* in 1902, and both *The Enchanted Island of Yew* and *The Surprising Adventures of the Magical Monarch of Mo and His People*³ in 1903. However, the newly famous author enjoyed little to no success in having these tales acknowledged with the same sort of enthusiasm with which *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* had been consistently recognized by both readers and critics. Regardless of the voluminous work elsewhere since its release, it was the singular story of the Wizard that continued to carry Baum's name across the land. As it seemed, the American public's adoration found its home less in this particular author's pen and more in the magic of Oz.

Despite healthy and continuing sales for Baum's novel, it was in the previously mentioned stage production (*The Wizard of Oz*, 1902) that the writer found his most financially successful creation: the popularity for the show widened his demographic for audiences of future theatrical creations while returning and recruiting readers for his 1900 novel. Baum had dabbled in theatrical performance as a youth and had his first taste of

³ Originally copyrighted in 1896 and published in 1899 as *A New Wonderland, Being the First Account Ever Printed of the Beautiful Valley, and the Wonderful Adventures of its Inhabitants*, this book shall receive greater attention later in the dissertation as being an early attempt at fantasy (modeling the work of Carroll and others), which failed until use of Baum's name recognition from the success of *Wizard*.

creative success as a playwright in his mid-twenties; and so these regularly sold-out performances of the adaptation tempted his pocketbook and reinvigorated his love for the stage, encouraging him to pursue what he firmly believed could be a profitable formal career as a playwright. It was only after several failed attempts to duplicate the success of the *Oz* musical extravaganza through work on other theatrical adaptations that Baum created a sequel to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in novel form, hoping to put its story on the stage employing the same actors who'd propelled his first show to such incredible ticket sales with their portrayals of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman – comedic acting greats David C. Montgomery and Fred A. Stone (Swartz). As Hearn notes, “Baum even dedicated it to the two actors, and their pictures in costume graced the endpapers” (*Annotated* lxiii). L. Frank Baum still did not plan for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to be part of a longer series of tales, but he hoped his connection to two Vaudeville legends and the public's continued love for *The Wizard of Oz* on stage might allow him to garner fame and fortune for a while longer through a brief expansion in the lives of two of its characters.

Titled *The Marvelous Land of Oz being an account of the Further Adventures of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman*, Baum's second book on these new Ozian favorites opens with a very different introduction than that of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Labeled the “Author's Note,” Baum speaks directly to an adult audience, filled with parents of adoring fans while writing about his latest work's creation:

After the publication of “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” I began to receive letters from children, telling me of their pleasure in reading the

story and asking me to “write something more” about the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman. At first I considered these little letters, frank and earnest though they were, in light of pretty compliments; but the letters continued to come during succeeding months, and even years.

Finally I promised one little girl, who made a long journey to see me and prefer her request, – and she is a “Dorothy,” by the way – that when a thousand little girls had written me a thousand little letters asking for the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman I would write the book. Either little Dorothy was a fairy in disguise, and waved her magic wand, or the success of the stage production of “The Wizard of Oz” made new friends for the story, for the thousand letters reached their destination long since – and many more followed them.

And now, although pleading guilty to long delay, I have kept my promise in this book.

L.FRANK BAUM.

Chicago, June, 1904.

As explored by Jennifer Schacker in her article “L. Frank Baum, Fairy-Tale Discourse, and the History of Folklore,” which traces the evolution and presence of Baum’s authorial voice in the prefatory framing written for the first four books in the series, the ways in which Baum “blurs the line between reader and writer, reality and fiction, anecdote and fantasy, in ways that can be considered both subversive and also strategic” (13) in this “Author’s Note” makes some serious alterations to the position of

the author and his readers as well as in the intentional demographic for the work. Rather than adopt the tone of a distanced scholar and author, speaking to an adult audience with a more nuanced understanding of fairy tales and their history as he did in the introduction to *Wizard*, here “Baum’s rhetorical framing has shifted in a significant way, bypassing adults and placing the desires and preference (the demands) of children at the center of this basic capitalist model – despite their general lack of spending power” (Schacker 11). Beyond this shift in audience, Baum’s note to the children – which Schacker calls a “strategic performance of narrative authority” (13) – “also highlights Baum’s entrepreneurial spirit and understanding of market strategies: he manages at once to establish himself as a cultural force (a writer with a significant and demanding audience) and to perform some serious self-promotion and cross-marketing” (Schacker 13) through his aforementioned plug for *The Wizard of Oz* musical extravaganza and in his (possibly feigned) requests from young fans for more to be written specifically about the Scarecrow and Tin Woodman – both popular characters from the first book made even more so by the stage performances of the duo in Montgomery and Stone, whose likenesses appear in the illustrations of John R. Neill, Oz’s new artist after a separation from Denslow, whose career continued elsewhere.⁴ Whether or not Baum actually received a thousand little letters from fans (or even one little letter) matters not; so long as Baum creates in his audience the anticipation of a work loved by so many *other*

⁴ I will later argue that this “strategic performance of narrative authority” is actually the fourth such interjection from Baum during his career in children’s literature and is only one of a number of incidents in the author’s life during which he presented himself as an authority in any number of social and intellectual roles, regardless of his actual position in or knowledge of them.

readers, the expectation of joy in new readers exists. In addition to the author's note, within *The Marvelous Land of Oz* narrative Baum inserts a number of what Peter Glassman labels "theatrical elements, like an army of women," (271) whose presence on stage would provide a bit of the impressive spectacle that wowed audiences for *The Wizard of Oz*.

Released by Reilly & Britton in 1904, the second Oz book did enjoy some initial success equal to that of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* just four years earlier. According to Hearn, it was that success which "established the long line of Oz books," numbering fourteen by 1920 (*Annotated* lxiii) but not beginning in earnest until the release of the third book, *Ozma of Oz*, in 1907. On the stage, however, Baum's adaptation for *Marvelous Land*, titled *The Woggle-Bug*, was "unable to secure Montgomery and Stone in the end, and it was one of the worst failures of the summer of 1905" (Hearn, *Annotated* lxiii). Most likely a direct result of Baum's inability to refashion the sequel to his wildly popular children's book for an adult theatre-going audience, the play received reviews that branded it a show for children and attendance did not improve. Sadly, despite several varied attempts to promote the production, *The Woggle-Bug* closed within the same month it opened.

But even with the sudden failure of *The Woggle-Bug*, L. Frank Baum and his family were to live in relative comfort for a while. Upon committing to a contract to write a third Oz book (*Ozma of Oz*) for publishers Reilly & Britton by December 1 of 1906, Baum signed an agreement "to submit two additional Oz books, one in 1909 and the other in 1911" (Glassman 271). As Glassman notes, "With only two Oz books issued,

Baum and his publishers were confident enough to commit themselves to at least three more” (271). The results achieved by Baum in the publishing of *Ozma of Oz* led to additional installments which far exceeded that figure, encouraging the publication of Baum’s novels about Oz every year from 1907-1910 and again from 1913-1920.

It was in the publication of *Ozma of Oz* that L. Frank recognized the opportunity for narrative longevity in an Oz series and altered his authorial persona most distinctly from that which he presented in the “Introduction” to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to reflect that recognition. The “Author’s Note” for this third installment reads, in part:

My friends the children are responsible for this new “Oz Book,” as they were for the last one, which was called *The Land of Oz*. Their sweet little letters plead to know “more about Dorothy” [. . .] And some of them suggest plots to me. [. . .] Indeed, could I do all that my little friends ask, I would be obliged to write dozens of books to satisfy their demands. And I wish I could, for I enjoy writing these stories just as much as the children say they enjoy reading them.

As Glassman notes in his “Afterword” to the 1989 Harper Trophy reprint of the novel, “While Baum had written *Marvelous Land* planning to adapt it to the stage, he wrote *Ozma of Oz* with the intention of launching a continuing series of Oz books” (271). L. Frank uses his “Author’s Note” to repeat the cross-marketing Schacker recognizes in the prefatory note to *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, by making mention of that second tale whose own “Author’s Note” Baum hopes will lead readers to the stage production and novel which began what could then be called a series. Additionally, he continues with his

presentation of an anonymous fan base, continually yearning for more and more about Oz.

The use of the phrase “my friends the children” further aligns the author with this very specific reading (and marketing) demographic, making their “ideas and preferences play an increasingly central role in the rhetorical framing” (Schacker 13) for the Oz books through what Schacker notes is a “model in which child readers are co-creators,” (14) offering ownership in the history of the Land of Oz to those children and, in terms of financial security, finding a space in the then-relatively-newly-established market of children’s commodities to encourage regular purchases for those readers as long as the enthusiasm for Oz could be maintained. However, as noted by Schacker,

Baum still writes of children objectively here, not as addressees – but he also [later] quotes directly from children’s letters (or so his prose suggests), allowing child voices to dominate his author’s note and his unfolding series. Whether an accurate representation of process or not, there is radical potential in this move on Baum’s part: neither children’s literature circa 1900 nor children’s literature today has marked children’s own ideas, voices, and desires as their primary driving force, but by 1908 Baum refers to his latest Oz volume, *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*, as “Our Book—mine and the children’s.” He begins his introduction (now entitled “To My Readers”) in mock despair: “It is no use; no use at all. The children won’t let me stop telling tales of the Land of Oz. I know lots of other stories, and I hope to tell them, some time or another; but just now

my loving tyrants won't allow me. They cry: 'Oz—Oz! more about Oz, Mr. Baum!' and what can I do but obey their commands?" In statements such as these, stories about Oz appear to be as compelling to twentieth-century American children as *contes arabes* had been to eighteenth-century French adults; Baum positions himself as a modern-day Antoine Galland, compelled by readerly passion for tales to conjure up ever more text. (16)

I would further suggest that Baum's objectification of those child-readers follows theoretical concepts in the criticism of children's literature which recognize the power of adult readers and consumers in the passing of literary commodities to those children – an intellectual commodity which, as Maria Tatar notes, "by and large stands in the service of productive socialization" (*Off* xvi).

Through the insertion of Baum as humble adult servant, the author takes his place as part of a supply-and-demand chain with an army of tyrannical child-readers at the imaginative helm. Though his note in *Marvelous Land* suggests that reader letters come to him without request, and his note in *Ozma of Oz* ends with an off-handed plea for more ("perhaps I shall get more of those very welcome letters from my readers, telling me just how they like 'Ozma of Oz.' I hope so, anyway"), by the time Baum writes book four, "the children won't let [him] stop telling tales of the Land of Oz." Though Baum shifts his characterization of the children in tow, his prefatory material remains issued to an adult reading audience, as suggested by the title of each piece, "To My Readers", which is demonstrably separate from "the children" who refuse to let him write anything but

Oz-centric tales. Keeping his “readers” separate from “the children” allows Baum to maintain an adult persona of one who keeps in tune with the parents for whom he rationalizes his writing, while capturing their affection as a writer dependent on their generous purchase of his books and simultaneously recognizing their dependency on him for their children’s reading and the presentation of material suitable for boys and girls of the day.

Rather than labeling these overly-demanding child readers off-putting, however, Baum encourages yearly parental purchasing of the Oz tales through an authoritative voice that continues to remind the children (or, rather, their parents) that his literature gives them what they want while providing what they need: an outlet for creativity and imagination on which American ingenuity depends. For, as Baum writes in his prefatory framing for *The Lost Princess of Oz* (1917), “The imaginative child will become the imaginative man or woman most apt to create, to invent, and therefore to foster civilization”; and parents who continue to foster opportunities for advancement in imagination for their children will ensure that future generations continue the advancements which “led Columbus to discover America [. . .] Franklin to discover electricity [. . .] [gave] us the steam engine, the telephone, the talking-machine and the automobile, for these things had to be dreamed of before they became realities” (*Lost Princess*).

Acting in the form of a steady pretextual advertisement, as can be seen when one follows Schacker’s lead and traces references from one book to those which precede it, Baum’s admonition that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is a modernized fairy tale would

suggest that the series in its entirety should be taken as a member of the fairy tale genre. Baum certainly calls the works fairy tales in his own correspondences. As quoted by Michael Patrick Hearn, a letter from Baum to Sumner C. Britton, on January 23, 1916, includes a description of the author's writing process in which he explains, "a lot of thought is required on one of these fairy tales" (*Annotated* xxxvi). And he recognizes the longevity that a successful fairy tale might hold in its future: Baum is quoted in the *Grand Rapids Herald* (August 18, 1907) as having said:

To write fairy stories for children, to amuse them, to divert restless children, sick children, to keep them out of mischief on rainy days, seems of greater importance than to write grown-up novels. Few of the popular novels last the year out, responding as they do, to a certain psychological demand, characteristic of the time; whereas a child's book is, comparatively speaking, the same always, since children are always the same kind of folks with the same needs to be satisfied. (Hearn, *Annotated* xxxv)

Despite Baum's own assertion that his works are *all* fairy tales, a more careful critical assessment of the thirteen Baum novels that follow *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* might suggest that the series as a whole belongs more firmly to the genre of fantasy – certainly in close relation to the structural and thematic elements present in the genre of the fairy tale, but with markedly different end goals. As shall be later discussed in far more detail, the fairy tale genre operates within a unique literary space wherein the intentional education of a citizenry is a recognized, accepted, and embraced purpose for all tales in

the genre, the most universal of which offer that education through a narrative framework that allows for temporal adjustments to service shifting ideologies and expectations for normative behavior in the audience receiving the tale. Baum's successful authoring of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a "true" fairy tale is in many ways a moment of unusual success for the writer, made possible only because of its timeliness in release and the social and political climate of the American "folk" of 1900 – one primed for a voice offering consistency in ideology and expectations for normative behavior beyond that expected for children in polarized social statuses outside the borders of America.

FINDING THE AUTHOR

Time and again literary and cultural scholars comment on the "mystery" of the man behind the Oz series. Since at least the mid-1980s⁵, Michael Patrick Hearn has been working to compose a definitive biography for the author. And yet, more than thirty years later, Baum's adoring and inquisitive fans are still waiting for that biography to appear. Baum's life *is* a mystery in many ways. A number of collections around the country (and the globe) offer some insight into his personal correspondences, but rarely are they consistent in their picture of the man who penned them. Baum was, after all, a writer of things fantastic. His own versions of his history are plentiful and varied. As noted by Angelica Shirley Carpenter and Jean Shirley in their biography *L. Frank Baum: Royal Historian of Oz*, "Frank enjoyed making up stories for entertainment or publicity," (10) and so any bits of "history" from Baum must necessarily be taken with a grain of salt.

⁵ See Geraldine Luca and Roni Natov, "Researching Oz: An Interview with Michael Patrick Hearn," *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Vol. 11, No. 2. 1987. pp.51-62.

Based on Baum's tidbits, in various degrees of truth, a number of brief articles were written about the author during his lifetime. The publication of Martin Gardner and Russel B. Nye's 1957 *The Wizard of Oz and Who He Was*, along with the establishment of The International Wizard of Oz Club and its semi-scholarly magazine *The Baum Bugle* that same year, added to the public's knowledge some previously undiscovered works by and about L Frank Baum. But it wasn't until 1961 that Russell P. MacFall, with the assistance of Baum's oldest son, Frank Joslyn Baum, released the first official biography of the author – *To Please a Child*. Part memoir, part homage, part history, the pages offer an insight to this author of Oz both before and after his name was cemented into public memory. The MacFall/Baum text, despite its more questionably related sequences, remains for many the most recognized history of the man⁶. In 1973, Michael Patrick Hearn annotated *The Wizard of Oz* – the proposal for which Baum scholar Martin Gardner recalls as being received “unsolicited” (*Annotated* xii) by Clarkson N. Potter, the publisher of Gardner's *Annotated Alice* in 1970 – and included within his edition of the work an introduction of biographical note. Hearn's well-researched puzzle of Baum's history offers a more clearly constructed chronology for the man's life, with less romantic coloring than that given by MacFall. His sketch of Baum shows a man whose contributions to art and entertainment were plentiful and varied, but whose investments would later be characterized as those of someone who was “more of a Colonel Sellers

⁶ See Wolstenholme, Susan. “The Wonderful Wizards Behind the Oz Wizard.” *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier*, Vol. 32. 1997. pp. 89-103 for a discussion of the collaboration resulting in their biography.

than a John D. Rockefeller” (Hearn, “Discovering Oz” 70). The following year saw the release of Raylyn Moore’s *Wonderful Wizard Marvelous Land*, which offered a more intimate analysis of the man behind the celebrated Oz novels. Since Moore’s text, a number of biographical works centered on Baum and his family have been released. Most notably, these include Carpenter and Shirley’s 1992 *L. Frank Baum: Royal Historian of Oz*, Susan Ferrara’s 1999 *The Family of the Wizard: The Baums of Syracuse*, a 2000 issue (Vol. 30, No. 1) of *South Dakota History* edited by Nancy Tystad Koupal called *Baum’s Road to Oz: The Dakota Years*, Katharine M. Rogers’s 2002 *L. Frank Baum: Creator of Oz*, Rebecca Loncraine’s 2009 *The Real Wizard of Oz: The Life and Times of L. Frank Baum*, and (also from 2009) Evan I. Schwartz’s *Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story*.

Within these texts, each biographer offers a very similar tale of Baum’s time on Earth. Though each have their own focus – Moore’s considers Baum’s sociopolitical position and divides its time between Baum’s life and the life of his imaginary world; Ferrara’s examines the influence of his family on the infrastructure of Syracuse, NY, and the surrounding area; Carpenter and Shirley write for a more general reading audience, allowing for younger readers to also have access to Baum’s history; Rogers shares a literary narrative of Baum’s exploits; and Loncraine focuses her creative nonfiction on the landscapes which shaped the man and his writing – only Schwartz’s text contains a detailed discussion of a single period in the author’s life. Focusing his work only on the years 1880-1900, Schwartz’s biography offers the opportunity for the most critical assessment of Baum’s space for authoring *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

Against a backdrop of scholars who are often diametrically opposed in their recognition of Baum's formal knowledge of folklore and fairy tales, Schwartz outlines a period of Baum's life in which he suggests the author dedicated himself to a formal study of the genre. In discussing Frank's preparation for writing his first children's book, *Mother Goose in Prose*, Schwartz claims, "Frank researched the origins of these rhymes at the library as best he could. Like a storytelling Darwin, he studied the Galápagos of fairy tales – to uncover evidence of how each legend evolved over eons of bedtimes" (256). Schwartz's assertion, however, appears in no other source of scholarship.

Nonetheless, even without documentation, I would suggest that Schwartz's claim is not only plausible, but would be entirely predictable behavior from a man who spent his life hoping to be a figure of significance in both fame and fortune. In support of this idea, Chapter One, "The Man Behind the Curtain(s)," outlines the life of L. Frank Baum while highlighting his multitudinous career failings within the context of late nineteenth-century American ideology regarding manhood, success, and work in hopes of demonstrating a pattern of immersion in each position in such a way that would suggest affirmation of Schwartz's claim.

L. Frank Baum was a businessman; he was also the son of a businessman (and a shrewd one at that). Upon examination, his life can be read as a series of business ventures, each one approached with the same enthusiasm and devotion as the last, regardless of the likelihood for failure. Fairy tale authorship was no less attempted than any other career for Baum, as an opportunity to secure for himself a steady bank account and a place in the history books. The only difference between this particular career path

and all of the others is that, by some miracle, it was here that L. Frank Baum found real, lasting, incalculable success. He just didn't know it.

CONSIDERING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN AMERICA

As Seth Lerer writes, "The history of children's literature is inseparable from the history of childhood, for the child was made through texts and tales he or she studied, heard, and told back" (1). The world of children's literature, then, is by necessity one which originates in social ideas about children and childhood. When social views about childhood shift or become more refined, the goods manufactured for engaging with childhood also change. As discussed in Philippe Ariès often-contested work *Centuries of Childhood*, until the seventeenth century children were seen primarily as miniature adults-in-waiting; "One could leave childhood only by leaving the state of dependence, or at least the lower degrees of dependence" (26). Ariès locates the lengthening of that transition within the "modern concept of schooling" (328). As he explains: "Childhood was extended beyond the years when the little man still walked on a 'leading-string' or spoke his 'jargon', when an intermediary stage, hitherto rare and henceforth more and more common, was introduced between the period of the robe with a collar and the period of the recognized adult: the stage of the school, the stage of the college" (329). According to Ariès, schooling in the ways of the adult world meant dedicated preparation time for entering that world and dedicated texts for explaining how to do so successfully; these were written both for children hoping to graduate to adulthood and caretakers hoping to push their charges towards graduation. But whether the establishment of childhood comes from the education of children or the education of their parents, the

most necessary component for the creation of materials intended for engagement with childhood is time and space *for* childhood by adults. Hence, the creation of a literature specifically for children and the variety of that literature in style, quality, quantity, and purpose is directly connected to the acknowledgement of the child as a member of society worthy of that effort by the adult community. In other words, before children can become consumers, they have to become capital holders.

Lerer's *Children's Literature: A Reader's History from Aesop to Harry Potter* asserts that the functionality of literature for children began long before the commonly accepted modern era, and long before childhood was considered an identifiable stage of existence worthy of acknowledgment. Beginning his study with the literature of Aesop, whose "fables have been accepted as the core of childhood reading and instruction since the time of Plato" (35), Lerer traces the historical development of the literary field as one directly connected to our education systems – both informal and institutional – and their various incarnations, centering his study on the idea of literacy and the reader. While most children's literature histories begin in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Lerer insists upon much earlier considerations. He argues that through fables, religious narratives, and manuscript illuminations and marginalia written "for" and by adults, we can find "the child within the larger frame of adult life – to recognize that children and adults live side by side, and that the meaning of a 'children's literature' for medieval Europe lies inextricably linked to its ideals of literature for adults" (72). Lerer defines children's literature at the end of the Middle Ages as being "inseparable from

new ideals of family life and commercial success” (76). “It is inseparable, too,” he states, “from the rise of vernacular literacy and the book trade” (76).

For many children’s literature historians, the origin of the genre comes after that more modern establishment of the book trade in the seventeenth century. Despite earlier works like Malory’s *Le Morte D’arthur* (1485), which likely attracted a child audience with its robust tales of adventure, magic, and knighthood, or John Hart’s 1570 *A Method or Comfortable Beginning for All Unlearned* (the earliest identified pictorial alphabet), or countless texts written for adults but with interest for children, the start of children’s literature is most often associated with the mid-eighteenth-century work of John Newbery, chiefly because of the author’s claiming entertainment as part of his purpose and his marketing specifically towards child-consumers and their parents. However, considering Lerer’s history alongside more traditional modern-era explorations of children’s literature, two very important points can be recognized as common to all: first that exploring children’s literature means exploring attitudes about childhood, which gain and lose importance in proportion to the amount of time adults have to dedicate to children. And second, that that expendable time is a product of class, economics, religious and social ideologies, and the structure and status of the family unit for each moment in history.

In early America, finding time to write original literature for children see-sawed in focus and importance between those who looked towards Great Britain for cultural engagement and those who strongly desired to detach from their former monarchical control and establish products representative of an ideology that would come to be known

as distinctly “American.” As a product of this search for cultural identity, American children’s literature was (and, many argue, still is) deeply political and nationalistic. Gail Murray explains: “Children’s literature provides insights into the social milieu in which the work was developed and uncovers the values that society hopes to transmit to its children. Children’s books often tell us much more about the image of the ideal child than they do about real children” (xv). In the American colonies, real children were often caught in a position of being either the sure destroyers or the proud inheritors of the future of their new country.

Exploring the various voices in early American children’s literature certainly reveals the dichotomy in the adult-idyllic design for future generations. Uncertainty regarding what it was to *be* a good American meant those depictions varied greatly according to regional and economic factors. Rather than a history of children’s literature based on time, Peter Hunt suggests “chronology may be less important than an awareness of the relationship between childhood and cultural and historical change. [. . .] [I]t is possible to argue that children’s writers continually re-invent their fictions and forms in response to changing commercial and cultural constructions of childhood” (8). Therefore, examining children’s literature consumed in America involves understanding the culture of American adults and their construction of the culture of the American child. In an attempt to make clear the cultural position of children’s literature at the turn of the twentieth century, Chapter Two, “American Children’s Literature, *or* The Ideal Market for Ideology,” explores the complicated history of the literary field in America and examines the state and status of children’s literature during Baum’s periods as both

consumer and producer. Doing so allows for a clearer picture of the background from and against which Baum composed a literary fairy tale specifically marketed towards a child audience and demonstrates why doing so was such a financially responsible risk.

FINDING FOLKLORE AND FAIRY TALES IN AMERICA

Understanding Baum's inspiration for entering the world of fairy tale authorship requires more than interrogating the commodity of the fairy tale in terms of book sales. While much of Baum's life occurred during what many scholars call the "Golden Age" of children's literature – generally acknowledged to be the period between the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and the end of World War I – Baum's exploitation of reader interest in fairy tales involved his recognizing a much broader thirst for folk-based literature that occurred throughout most of the nineteenth century in America. Commercially speaking, beginning with the publication of Edgar Taylor's 1823 translation of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, retitled *German Popular Tales* and illustrated by George Cruikshank, public consumption of folklore and fairy tale collections constituted a considerable section of the literary marketplace. For American readers, popular appreciation for these tales suggested opportunities to use truly fictional stories in ways that would safeguard American children from the dangers of inappropriate fantasy while perpetuating ideas about American ingenuity and advancement through the "crude" narratives of less civilized peoples. Choosing to write within the fairy tale genre is a specific and intentional choice for Baum that suggests his involvement in an increasingly important public interest in the collection of folk narratives and the exploration of the elusive "American" folk.

Growing alongside popular interest in folklore collections and illustrated fairy tales for children were academic explorations in the fields of anthropology, ethnology, and philology. By the mid-nineteenth century much of the Western world was preoccupied with the study of man's beginnings. There was a broad scientism sweeping the country and attempts to collect data showing the superiority of the human race over the world's flora and fauna dominated academic studies. First addressed most completely in Charles Darwin's 1871 *The Descent of Man*, considerations for what the process of evolution might mean in terms of cultural advancement drew a great deal of European attention towards the "crude" traditions of non-European peoples. Now recognized as institutionalized ethnocentrism and racism to abate ethical concerns over colonization, the gathering of "exotica" in tales, legends, fables, and myths from colonized groups offered opportunities for "superior" European and European-American civilizations to pit images of the "savage" and the "civilized" at odds with one another, highlighting the intellectual and artistic superiority of themselves against the "simple" cultural specimens found in the rest of the world.

One shining example of this visible gathering of cultural displays can be found in the popular trend of "expositions" first occurring towards the end of the nineteenth century. These highly marketable events allowed for anthropological displays of "crude" cultures to be exhibited next to the "superior" modernity of the fair's hosts to showcase advancements in science, technology, industry, and art. In America, no event better articulates this practice than the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, Illinois. As discussed in Chapter Three in great detail, the organization of the Columbian

Exposition marked a significant moment in the study of folklore and anthropology in America. Conflicting definitions for what constituted “folk,” “folklore,” and folk “wares” played out in the presentation of “authentic” culture for a very broad demographic of visitors in a way that, I would argue, altered the American public’s perception of the field of folklore and the institution of “the folk.”

In this vein, Chapter Three – “With Folklore and Fairy Tales for All” – considers Baum’s participation in the 1893 World’s Fair as a resident of Chicago during this turbulent, and very public, time in folklore studies. Through an exploration of public discourse regarding folklore up until the time of Baum’s 1897 authorship of *Mother Goose in Prose*, the chapter outlines the desire of the American people to find a place in the highly visible world of folklore collection and for the people of Chicago in particular to demonstrate their city’s space in the intellectual advancement of the nation in that field. Furthermore, it begins a discussion regarding Baum’s status as an accepted folk collector and author with *Father Goose, His Book*, a status that encouraged positive American reception of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and its later enculturation as an *authentic* piece of American folklore, exactly the “modernized fairy tale” he hoped to write.

QUESTIONING AMERICAN FOLK GENRES IN *THE WIZARD*

To claim that Baum’s work operates as an authentic piece of American folklore, a *legitimate* fairy tale for the American people, could be a bold assertion in the view of some scholars, because it questions the nature of “folklore” in the context of tradition and form. Considerations for this genre often include notions of lore’s antiquity, its oral or

physical transmission, and specificity in its relation to a pre-existing, recognized folk group. These ideas sit in opposition to concepts like popular culture, mass production, commercial, modern, and public – all of which seem to well-describe Baum’s successful release of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. But, in thinking about definitions for folklore in America at the turn of the twentieth century, many of the standard generic conventions for form must necessarily be shifted or altered to recognize the unique spatial, temporal, linguistic, and technological reality of a country with less than 150 years of national history.

Noted folklore scholar Alan Dundes asserts, “Folklore is clearly one of the most, perhaps *the* most important, sources for the articulation and perpetuation of a group’s symbols,” a considerable force in the creation of group identity; “it is folklore which is responsible in large measure for creating ethnic identity” (*Matters* 8-9). Without a folklore of its “own,” as demonstrated through the separation of the lore of native American Indians and other racial or ethnic minority groups from characters seen as “American” in popular culture depictions (namely, characters who made explicit ideas that to be “American” one would need to be white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, hardworking, and financially successful – or at least moving toward being seen as such), the Anglo-American people were in search of a voice that could effectively represent “their” spirit of the nation in tales that filled the void left without traditional tales from antiquity.

Oral tale tellers operated in spaces in which the spread of the written word was impossible, and so the most efficient means to reaching a body of people was to publicly

perform for groups geographically close to one another. Early tellers occupied a sacred space in giving myths and legends to a people; folktales arising from these genres operated in the same fashion, as these genres speak to the civilizing practices of people bound by tradition and history – those who are socially, behaviorally, ethically, or morally similar. While historical scholarship in the field insists “real” fairy tales derive from these oral traditions, considerations for American fairy tales, I would suggest, must necessarily include the addition of print media. Through a discussion of folklore’s cultural functions and the adjustments necessary for operating within the unique social, historical, and geographical spaces of America, Chapter Four, “Examining *The Wizard: Interrogations of Genre*,” offers a theoretical foundation for the inclusion of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as an incredibly unique example of a literary invention that gained public acceptance as folklore in a way that allowed for its absorption into American folk ideology. This chapter interrogates important assumptions about sub-literary classifications, the nature of readers vs. listeners as intended audience members, the position of the printing press in the natural evolution of the storyteller, and nineteenth-century concepts of genre and form. It also includes reconsideration for what the term “folk” could embody in America at the *fin de siècle*, encouraging an acceptance of the slowly solidifying American middle-class as a folk group in need of its own folk heroes, a need displayed through the acceptance of Dorothy from Baum’s tale as well as other previously studied figures like Paul Bunyan.

Stemming from this discussion, the chapter offers an analysis of Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* using the tools necessary for analyzing any other piece of

folklore. Through that analysis, it makes suggestions for classifying Baum's piece as a legitimate fairy tale with considerations of traditional folkloric definitions for generic conventions, and it examines the temporally appropriate didacticism within the work for the tale's readers – most importantly, those examples offered to young American girls via the character of Dorothy. By placing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* firmly within the fairy tale genre, as part and parcel of the American folk ideology, necessary questions regarding its immediate significance arise and suggestions for reading its lasting impact can be made in the final chapter.

TRACING THE TEXT, FORMING THE WIZARD

A great deal of this dissertation centers on the generic categorization of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a fairy tale, and while infinite pages could be (and have elsewhere been) devoted to a more critical analysis of Baum's writing without discussion of such a categorization, the theory behind genre formation and fulfillment suggests that, because of Baum's authorial claim to genre in the work's introduction, the centrality of the text's reception, interpretation, and function must be recognized within the implied boundaries of that claim. Generic conventions do more than describe *kinds* of writing. As expressed in scholarship beginning with explorations of the triumvirate of poetic forms via Plato and Aristotle, genre defines our performance within and our expectations about any linguistic utterance. From the appropriateness of a court judge's handling of legal affairs to the paperback mystery novel in the grocery store, an understanding of genre allows readers/spectators/participants in language a sort of internal checklist for their reading strategies in any given situation, which in turn dictate the ways they respond.

Chapter Five thus begins with a discussion of the most critical arguments for understanding the social function of genre, as outlined by Anis Bawarshi in “The Genre Function,” with relation to Baum’s generic performance and the acceptance of that performance by the American public.

Fairy tales, in particular, do more than follow conventions in terms of genre. One of the genre’s defining characteristics speaks to its function and use in society. As often discussed by Jack Zipes, fairy tales become “a broad arena for presenting and representing our wishes and desires” (*Happily* 9). Fairy tales do more than just entertain us; they tell us about who we are – as individuals and as a people. Fairy tales we claim as our own contribute to ideologies steeped in nationalism, social hierarchies, gender expectations, and measurements for success and failure. Their mutability in specifics around universal psychic and social dilemmas allow for an infinitesimal array of textual constructions made relevant for readers and tellers at any point in time or space.

Fairy tales can be told and retold as needed: to illustrate a point, highlight a culturally significant moment, draw intimacy through tradition and nostalgia, or re-examine institutions sometimes dismissed or overlooked. More than any other literary creation, fairy tales are susceptible to subversion and “contamination” of their “authenticity,” the unending search for which, as folk scholar Regina Bendix discusses, can be seen as “a reaction to modernization’s demythologization, detraditionalization, and disenchantment” (8) of the narrative of “folklore.” But, in action, whether an adaptation or appropriation of a tale is recognized/authorized/widely accepted is relatively unimportant on the individual level of retelling and tradition. What is important

is the function that any retelling fulfills for a specific group of people in a specific time and place. Over time, when retellings are recognized *as retellings* (as Linda Hutcheon talks about the recognition of adaptation *as adaptation*), they contribute in some measure to the Text of the tale because they are, like adaptations, an “announced and extended transposition of a particular work or works” (Hutcheon 7). As Darwin discussed in the evolution of biological organisms, so fairy tales, too, are the products of changing times for changing needs.

Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is no exception to this practice. Since its publication in 1900 it has undergone hundreds of translations, transmediations, re-issues, re-imaginings, re-illustrations, re-tellings, and adaptations. It has been the subject of innumerable spin-offs, tie-ins, marketing schemes, political speeches, personal traditions, visual creations, creative explorations, fan idealizations, critical derision, dinner conversations, and academic debates. All of these things, what Gérard Genette would call “paratextual” events – “thresholds of interpretation” – create the architextural aura for the Wizard of Oz tale today. And somewhere deep inside all of that is Dorothy, “the Small and Meek” (Baum, *Wizard* 187). Through an examination of the most significantly recognized paratextual events for Baum’s tale, Chapter Five, “*The Wizard Leaves Its Mark: A Memetic Puzzle*,” attempts to disassemble the construction of Dorothy to find the place in which she was allowed to evolve into the character. Baum scholar Michael Patrick Hearn insists “feminists have naturally claimed [. . .] as one of their own” (*Annotated* 13). This chapter considers the practice of memetic absorption, as first discussed by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 *The Selfish Gene* and later applied to the

institution of the fairy tale by Jack Zipes in *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (2006). It considers the ways these meme-units branch out to include folk groups beyond Baum's 1900 intended audience and questions what happens when the "selfish meme" survives in a space that doesn't always accurately represent the text from which it flows. And, finally, this chapter considers the implications of re-reading, re-telling, or re-appropriating tales written for an entirely different group of people out of its temporal context, with all the weight of the paratextual and memetic history that so easily misrepresents the tales we utter forth in the name of tradition.

OUT OF OZ

One of the expectations readers have for fairy tales is that they have travelled or will travel across time and space to speak to the cultural needs of tellers and their audiences. Fairy tales are supposed to last. In today's ever-connected world, the movement of a tale from one cultural context to another can happen in a millisecond. Writing in *Breaking the Magic Spell* (1979), Jack Zipes suggests,

Whereas the original folk tale was cultivated by a narrator *and* the audience to clarify and interpret phenomena in a way that would strengthen meaningful social bonds, the narrative perspective of a mass-mediated fairy tale has endeavored to endow reality with a total meaning except that the totality has assumed totalitarian shapes and hues because the narrative voice is no longer responsive to an active audience but manipulates it according to the vested interests of the state and private industry. (17)

When considering the force of mass production and memetics on the ways we read tales like L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, what becomes most important is that we question the "totalitarian shapes and hues" reflected in our modern readings of the work and its many adaptations. It is beneficial for American society that we see Dorothy as plucky and strong and courageous and independent and kind. It is beneficial because we want her to stand as a role model for our young girls, as we believe boys can find role models in any number of fairy tale heroes. It is necessary that we carry on the tradition of reading or viewing the Wizard of Oz tale because, we believe, it says something positive about the impenetrable American spirit. Like the German readers of Hansel and Gretel, we need to see Dorothy as Gretel: as inventive, brave, and capable of saving herself and the men around her, too. To consider that Dorothy follows gender expectations that reinsert her into a domestic sphere that is sure to break her spirit because she knows it's what must be done, and so she follows the directions of those responsible for placing her there and not on a throne of her own, would be just as disturbing as considering Hansel and Gretel as resourceful children who are intentionally abandoned to die in the woods because they cost too much to feed. Gretel does, after all, send them back to the home where they were unwanted. How resourceful is that, really? Her brother isn't eaten, but they won't have anything to eat themselves back home, even if their father feels bad for sending them away. They are returning to die another day.

My conclusion for this dissertation considers the implications of re-reading, re-telling, or re-appropriating tales written for an entirely different group of people out of its temporal context, with all the weight of the paratextual and memetic history that so easily

misrepresents the tales we utter forth in the name of tradition. I suggest that tales that honor the narrative given by Baum as something that speaks to the strength of American women ignore the problematic intentions Baum offered through Dorothy's didacticism and the ways in which we have permanently shifted those intentions to fit our own, selfish, cultural evolution.

Absorbing a fairy tale as a fairy tale gives us the right, and the responsibility (traditionally speaking), to alter that tale as we see fit, so that it continues to speak to those ideological bits we find necessary to pass on to future generations. But it also makes it likely that we will continue our absorption of the characters in that tale until they become second nature to us, until we take their tale for granted, until we can read onto them whatever characteristics we'd like without shifting the words that are written about them because the work matters little in the shadow of the text. And when those tales are used as exemplum of role models for children for characteristics like "strength," or "bravery," or "independence," or even social concepts like "feminism," the gaps between what the work says and what we *make* the text say are dangerous places for children to tread. It is our responsibility to find them and fill them in.

CHAPTER I:
THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN(S)

“L. Frank Baum”

He failed at many businesses
But one.
A wizard storyteller,
Tales he spun.

And while it isn't
Certain
He's the Oz behind
The curtain,

He had magic
At his fingertips
Bar none.

- Jane Yolen

While L. Frank Baum is most remembered for the contributions to children's literature made through his Oz series, an exploration of his life beyond Oz reveals a man with a multitude of talents, the most remarkable being that of self-promotion. With, perhaps, the only common thread of his many pursuits in life being his desire to attain fame and fortune, Baum experimented with various roles in the world, sometimes with a new moniker with which to begin the journey. As Michael O. Riley writes, Baum was constantly drawn to some new project in his boyhood: “The unusual and important thing about those youthful projects is that they were not the passing fancy of an idle child in delicate health. He mastered each one to a degree that some internal idea of excellence

demanded, and rather than discarding any of them, each became part of the pattern of his life” (16-17).

It was not until he neared forty years of age that L. Frank Baum found his place as an author of children’s books, though the argument will certainly be made that even then he refused to remain settled in his person, choosing instead to reinvent himself under various pseudonyms, leaping from genre to genre time and again until his death in 1919. Just as he’d demonstrated in his failed attempts at success in youth, each time Baum reinvented himself as a writer, he did so with a demonstrable understanding of the trends and demands of the consumer culture emerging in American towns and cities at the beginning of the twentieth century. Though he may not have always correctly predicted the ways in which the economy would swing, Baum’s knack for recognizing successful products of both tangible and intrinsic value gave him a better chance than most at gaining the financial security he longed to achieve – a knack which can be at least partially attributed to his having lived in a remarkably unique time in American history for both childhood and consumerism. An examination of Baum’s life and his position in America reveals a pattern of self-direction in pursuit of fame, fortune, and personal recognition that would have only been possible for a man deeply in touch with American middle-class ideology and intensely cognizant of American consumerism in its many forms. It is with the same intensity that L. Frank Baum pursued his other career paths that he set out to write a “modernized fairy tale” in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and his habit of completely immersing himself in pursuit of success throughout his life makes the odds

quite good that the same sort of care and consideration were given in his attempt to attain fame as a modern fairy tale author.

COMING UP FRANKIE

Born on May 15, 1856, Lyman Frank Baum¹ was the seventh of Benjamin and Cynthia (Stanton) Baum's nine children² – one of only five to survive into adulthood. Several biographical accounts of the author, including one co-authored by his oldest son, say he suffered from a heart defect³; but, as Michael Patrick Hearn notes in the introduction to his 2000 annotated edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, “other members of the family denied it, and no known contemporary records confirm it” (110). We do know, however, that growing up in the cruel New York weather in a time of typhoid and influenza, his immune system was compromised at an early age, and he never quite recovered from even the commonest childhood cold. Because of his weak disposition, Frankie (as he was sometimes called⁴) often found himself playing indoors rather than exploring the wild woods with his siblings. Accompanied most days by his younger brother, Henry (who was called Harry), little Frank spent most days confined to

¹ Though he was named for his uncle, Lyman Spalding Baum, Frank never liked the name and experimented a number of times with dropping and abbreviating Lyman in his youth before settling on L. Frank in the publication of his children's writing (Hearn, *Annotated* xv). Evan Schwartz claims, “He loathed his first name, [. . .] as it sounded like ‘lying man,’ and so he usually had people call him by his more ‘honest’ middle name, Frank” (4).

² Cynthia Jane Baum (1843-1848), Oliver Stanton Baum (1844-1848), Harriet Alvena Baum (1846-1923), Mary Louise Baum (1848-1933), Benjamin William Baum (1850-1888), Edwin Clay Baum (1853-1856), Henry Clay Baum (1859-1916), and George McClellan Baum (1861-1863)

³ Most notably, this is the story given by Frank Joslyn Baum and Russell P. MacFall in *To Please a Child* (1961); *Also see* Moore (1974), Carpenter (1992), Loncraigne (2009), Schwartz (2009). Rogers (2003) hypothesizes an early contraction of rheumatic fever as the cause for Baum's long-term heart troubles (*Creator* 256).

⁴ Katharine Rogers notes the addition of “Frankie” to Benjamin Baum's records in the 1860 census (*Creator* 2).

his home. While this rather sheltered life might have been discouraging to other young boys, for Frank it provided the opportunity for daydreaming – a skill that would come in handy to an author one day – and he relished the chance to escape reality at even the earliest age (Hearn, *Annotated*).

Following trends in popular beliefs regarding childhood, Benjamin and Cynthia Baum doted on their children and offered them opportunities for personal growth and happiness. As discussed by Rebecca Loncraine in *The Real Wizard of Oz*, in the mid-nineteenth century,

the idea of childhood was changing. Reform movements that aimed to end child labor were making progress, and universal education was on the agenda. [. . .] Childhood was emerging as a distinct and elongated period of life. Not long before, children had been considered small adults who, after brief years of dependency, were to enter employment and take up adult roles as soon as possible. Now children were to be educated, and between lessons, they inhabited a world apart from adults, defined by play.

(49)

Play was something the Baums' young son understood very well. Frank was encouraged at his every whim.

He led, in many ways, a privileged childhood. Despite being born into a terribly dark time in his family's history,⁵ Cynthia and Benjamin's emotional instabilities rarely

⁵ Loncraine notes that a diphtheria epidemic hit Chittenango in 1855, killing his brother Edwin, two of his cousins, and many of the children in town over a period of three years.

affected their children's financial provisions. Benjamin was a hardworking man who had a knack for business: an eventually prosperous career in his barrel-making factory led to the acquisition of a number of oil fields (and an even more prosperous career), a hotel, and an opera house. In 1866, he bought a beautiful estate just north of Syracuse which Cynthia named "Rose Lawn" and moved his family into what would be Frank's most cherished childhood environment (Hearn, *Annotated*).⁶

Though Frank spent most of his early years at home, where he was taught by private tutors, in 1868 his parents felt he would benefit from a "proper" boarding school education and sent him away to learn at Peekskill Military Academy. As discussed by Rebecca Loncraine in *The Real Wizard of Oz*, "the education offered at Peekskill was progressive, varied, and 'modern' for its time. The fact that the Baum's chose to send Frank to Peekskill suggests they took education seriously and wanted their son to have a contemporary outlook on the world" (42). Beyond the more traditional school subjects of study, Peekskill "also emphasized the need for vocational, commercial education, which would have appealed to the business-minded Benjamin. Boys were taught bookkeeping, commercial correspondence, law, and economics, as well as Latin, Greek, literature, mythology, French, and German" (Loncraine 42). Still, the school was a military academy, and its policies on discipline and push for physicality were significant. As

⁶ Each of Baum's biographers points to a passage in *Dot and Tot in Merryland* (1901) in which Baum recalls this boyhood home as a "cool but sun-kissed mansion" which "seemed delightful after the formal city house."

Katharine Rogers explains, “It seems an odd choice for a dreamy boy with a weak heart; presumably they felt a need to make him more manly” (*Creator* 4).

While several versions of the boy’s time there exist, most say a health episode (possibly a psychologically-induced heart attack) brought about by the intense amount of stress from bullying boys and overbearing instructors, sent Frank home after less than two full school years⁷; “he found the teachers cruel, the discipline arbitrary” (Loncraine 43), and would not return. Once back at Rose Lawn, the boy resumed his in-house tutoring sessions. He would attend formal school only once more, when he and his brother Harry enrolled in a public high school (Syracuse Classical) for a year, but Frank never graduated and held disdain for formal education all his life (Hearn, *Annotated* xv-xvii).

Despite that disdain, Baum’s enthusiasm for learning – especially through literature – continued. Biographer Evan Schwartz, among others, describes Frank in contrast with his siblings as “the most imaginative of the bunch, inclined to lose himself in fictional worlds” (6). As is the case with many Baum biographers, Angelica Shirley Carpenter and Jean Shirley claim that “after he learned to read, he could often be found lying on the floor in his father’s library, absorbed in a book. [. . .] Frank read novels, especially those by British authors Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray. He also enjoyed fairy tales.” (14) Schwartz’s biography adds to Baum’s childhood library “Swift’s adventures, Grimm’s fairy tales, Bunyan’s allegories, Hawthorne’s romances,

⁷ *Id.* note 2; Hearn does not support this rationale and claims Baum was simply “unaccustomed to the spartan, often brutish masculine world of the boarding school” (*Annotated* xvi).

the meditations of Thoreau and Emerson, Twain’s humor, the fantasies of Lewis Carroll, and the American legends of James Fenimore Cooper” (7)⁸. It was Baum’s great interest in the power of printed words that carried his first foray into making something of himself – a task embodied by his father’s push for his own success and supported heartily through the mythos of the American man during the time in America in which Frank lived.

AMERICA: OPEN FOR BUSINESSMEN

A great deal can be said of Benjamin Baum’s determination in business and the impact that determination had on Frank all his life. As Katharine Rogers explains, “Although he suffered periodic reverses and was forced to mortgage or sell property, he always recovered up to the time that he became chronically ill” (*Creator 1*). Benjamin opened his barrel-making factory with his brother, Lyman, in 1859. That same year “oil was discovered in Titusville, Pennsylvania [. . .]. Benjamin recognized a splendid opportunity and joined the crowds who moved in to exploit the oil fields and develop the area” (Rogers, *Creator 2*). L. Frank Baum’s father:

began acquiring oil fields, including a particularly profitable one at Cherry Tree Run, a few miles south of Titusville. He later bought property between Bradford, Pennsylvania, and Olean, New York, where he helped to develop the hamlet of Gilmour and built a hotel and an opera house.

⁸ Despite the loss of Baum’s final home in California (Ozcot), Maud and their sons kept this library intact. It includes a portrait of Andrew Lang which he kept in his study (Rogers *Creator*).

[. . .] He was listed in the city directory of 1864 as a “Dealer in Petroleum Oil.” But he had other interests as well. He dealt extensively in real estate—city houses and lots, farms, a sawmill with adjacent timberland. He traded stocks and had an office in New York City. He established the Second National Bank in Syracuse in 1863 and was its director or president until 1872. In 1866, he organized Neal, Baum & Company, Wholesale Dry Goods, probably to provide a business for his daughter Harriet’s new husband, William Henry Harrison Neal. Benjamin also took responsibility to finding work for his younger brothers, as well as, when the time came, his son Frank. (Rogers, *Creator 2*)

Himself the son of a businessman who was bankrupted into becoming a Methodist minister, Benjamin Baum was, by all accounts, a self-made man – a role model to his son, glorified all the more by the popular literature held most prominently in memory today by the heroes of Horatio Alger Jr., with whom young Frank would have undoubtedly been familiar.

The mythos of the self-made man exemplified in Alger’s writing – perhaps most significantly in *Ragged Dick* (1868), Alger’s third and most famous novel – offered the sorts of rags-to-riches stories first made famous by that most illustrious self-made man Benjamin Franklin in his *Autobiography* nearly one hundred years earlier. Alger’s unlikely heroes consumed their time with work and self-schooling, moving outside of the elite institutions of higher education to operate in a “man’s world” of back-breaking work and strong moral character; the embodiment of these would, at some point in Alger’s

tales, earn them an opportunity to be granted reprieve from a life of hardship and moved into a financial or social status more dignifying of their hard work and laudable morality.⁹ Alger's characters are indicative of a larger trend in popular children's literature that will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter: one that, in short, contains narratives featuring characters who exhibit exemplary behavior in children that is characteristic of American idealism in connection to hard work, perseverance, reverence for adults and for one another, and a strong (Christian) moral compass. The proliferation of this sort of didactic literature comes, in part, due to the ever-so-quickly expanding national ethos of "American" values. As relayed by Frederick Douglass in his 1895 lecture "Self-Made Men," the virtue of industry as outlined by Franklin far exceeds the need for "luck" in men who are capable of achieving success in the world: Douglass exclaims, "Opportunity is important but exertion is indispensable" (553).

Outside of the world of fiction, Benjamin Baum and his son(s) would have been overwhelmed by the non-fiction material produced which created a mythos of American manhood wrapped in self-reliance, entrepreneurialism, and success. As explained by John Cawelti in *A History of Self-Made Manhood: The Ideal of the Self-Made Man in*

⁹ In "The Rhetoric of Masculinity: Origins, Institutions, and the Myth of the Self-Made Man," James V. Catano explains that "the stress on self-education often placed Alger's stories at odds with the popular, more entrepreneurial vision that stressed a different sense of self-fulfillment. The difference between individual growth as defined by traditional nineteenth-century programs of higher education (and Alger) and personal economic success as defined by the industrial revolution was not missed by those outside the colleges' hallowed (and class defined) halls. The class distinctions underwritten by a traditional college education were both recognized and scorned by many in the rising entrepreneurial class, whose handbooks for success had a different version of self-making to weave into the myth" (424). Baum's position in a middle-class, entrepreneurially driven household that rarely involved their children in formal education, may be indicative of a similar attitude wary of what many self-employed viewed as the unnecessary "elitism" of those institutions.

Nineteenth Century America, “Guides for young men who sought to make themselves a place in the world were a staple of the publishing industry, and the self-culture movement, an institutionalizing of the self-made man’s particular method of educating himself, was one of nineteenth century America’s leading contributions to educational philosophy and practice” (2).

The grandeur surrounding the success of these mythical men was not unique to American society in the nineteenth century. As noted by Cawelti, a similar attitude regarding self-determination for upward mobility existed in England, but to a much different degree (8). In England, the self-made man was a cultural hero for the working-class youth; however, deeply divisive social strata left the plausibility of these narratives a matter of pure fiction rather than the relatable possibilities read into the same tales by American youth. Historically speaking, the likelihood for upward mobility in America far surpassed that of any other developed nation during the nineteenth century. Blessed with the anonymity of new beginnings, Americans did not have to contend with family histories of failure or with generational poverty condemning them to the working-class ranks of which their ancestors may have been members. As sociologists Melanie Archer and Judith R. Blau explain, “Social origins mattered relatively little when there was so much diversity, and respectability could be traced no more than one or two generations” (31). This freedom and the modicum of restrictions placed on American inventiveness allowed for increased interest in entrepreneurialism – what Archer and Blau term the “central theme of a middle-class ideology of success” (29) – and a rapid expansion of non-manual labor job opportunities ripe for those willing to take the inherent risk of

working for profits rather than wages was made possible in the post-industrial settings of most urban American locations.

Benjamin Baum was just such a man to take those risks, and his timing for such couldn't have been better. An examination of historical data on salaries in America reveals that “wages (in real dollars) increased about 50% between 1860 and 1890 [. . .] [creating] rising expectations, an eagerness to participate in urban culture, and a genuine expansion in opportunities” (Archer 30-31). Living just outside of the booming Syracuse, New York, the Baum family found room for expansion that lifted them from their manual labor as barrel makers to non-manual investors in the ever-growing oil industry. As explored by Gary Kornblith, “The mid-nineteenth-century concept of the self-made man [. . .] epitomized success in the world of modern capitalism, where the ultimate criterion for achievement was profit, not skill” (469). Amassing land, a fine residence, and presenting himself in a way in which middle-class status could be identified, the son of a traveling minister firmly cemented his place in the middle-class and never looked back. Benjamin's positions shifted frequently – a pattern not uncommon for a nineteenth-century man¹⁰ – and his continual hard work paid off handsomely for a time. All the while, his young son Frank looked on, finding in his father a model for what success could really offer in terms of stability, recognition, and status. With a role model unafraid to change occupations to remain in touch with the needs of the people and ahead of the

¹⁰ Citing studies from Katz (1975), Thernstrom (1973), and Griffen & Griffen (1978), Archer and Blau offer further exploration into the patterns of middle-class working men in their article “Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century America: The Case of the Middle Class.” There, they discuss the occupational shifting of middle-class men as common, “albeit often within the same social class stratum” (29).

next growing trend, L. Frank Baum began his first venture towards fame and fortune at the age of fourteen and retained his father's dynamism in opportunity-seeking until his death.

FINDING A FANCY

By all biographical accounts, L. Frank's first venture into the world of production came after a boyhood trip accompanying his father into Syracuse for business led him to a window, behind which a printing press was in operation. Rogers claims Baum "was so fascinated by watching the old owner work that he lost track of time, and he resolved to become a printer or a newspaper man" (*Creator* 4). Regardless of the reality of Baum's plans for the future elicited from that day, the sight left a significant impression. As MacFall claims, "Frank talked so much about his experience in Syracuse that his parents soon paid some attention to this new interest. Always an indulgent father, Benjamin sought out a dealer in printing supplies on his next trip to New York and bought a small foot-treadle press, fonts of type, ink, and paper" (25). Frank would make his own words to read.

Though the idea of setting type may seem far from entertaining to today's children, as Rebecca Loncraine explains, in the mid-1800's "toy printing presses were becoming popular, driven by the new craze for children's amateur journalism" (49). After all, the concept of childhood "play" was still somewhat new, and ideas about what a market for child's things might be filled with often skirted the boundaries of play and work: "Sometimes child's play emerged as a version of adult life in miniature, in which children mimicked grownups. A market for commercial toys grew in the mid-nineteenth

century, and companies manufactured small versions of adult products [. . .] The child's printing press, including ink and paper, was another such toy" (Loncraine 49).

After Baum satisfactorily mastered operation of the press and taught his brother Harry the same, the two began publication of a monthly newspaper. Called the *Rose Lawn Home Journal* and first appearing in October of 1870, the four-page print was mostly composed by L. Frank and included a combination of fiction, poetry, history, and even bits of news taken from national magazines. Loncraine suggests the monthly "reveals Baum's early fondness for wordplay and silly puns, and for scary stories, but it also reveals that he and Harry were deeply curious about the world, intrigued by its nature on any scale" (49). Katharine Rogers outlines the July 1, 1871 issue as containing:

a mock pompous introduction by Frank and Harry, a story by Washington Irving taken from *Salmagundi*, a complimentary letter from 'A Neighbor' (perhaps by Frank), riddles and jokes, 'To a Spray of Mignonette,' a story called 'Three Curious Needles' that looks borrowed, verses 'By the Editor' on the 'Cardiff Giant,'¹¹ and seven advertisements, including one for the dry goods business run by his sister Harriet's husband. (*Creator* 4-5)

¹¹ Occuring just outside of Syracuse in Cardiff, NY, the "discovery" of the Cardiff Giant is often considered one of the biggest hoaxes in American history. On October 16, 1869, workers digging a well discovered "a petrified giant," news of which sparked national interest and led to an influx of curious visitors who paid to see the man in the ground. But before experts could analyze the findings, "a tobacconist named George Hull announced that he was responsible for it," having paid an artist to create the statue after "an argument with a Methodist preacher about how he should understand the Bible" led the man to consider what people would believe without proof (Loncraine 44-45). Despite the revelation of the hoax, the Cardiff Giant continued to draw interest, attracting a great deal of press and inspiring an equally popular "fake of the fake" attraction in the travelling collection of P. T. Barnum.

The publication resembled any number of local papers, with a standard format and a recognizable font; but while Loncraine suggests that “advertisements for local businesses appeared alongside the stories and articles, to mimic the business angle of a commercial paper,” (50) Carpenter and Shirley note that at least a few of the ads were legitimate, as a number of “Syracuse stores bought advertisements in the paper, and a lawyer and veterinarian advertised their services” (17). Even at fifteen, Frank recognized the power of good marketing. “He and Harry advertised in the *Journal* that they could print ‘cards, programmes, handbills, letterheads, billheads, etc.; at the lowest prices!’ And so they did, especially after Frank got a much better press in 1873” (Rogers, *Creator* 5). That a boy so young should recognize the power in print advertising and should adopt language of competitive pricing in soliciting his own services is, indeed, indicative of the kind of eye towards profits Baum would keep all his life. No doubt the result of the boy’s observant nature and his father’s continual interest in business, Baum’s early love for writing found tangible value in his ability as a salesman. Despite his enthusiasm for the *Journal*, the publication’s prominent position in his attention dwindled quickly when Baum migrated towards an area of interest for which he perceived his first opportunity for notoriety in published materials.

In 1872, following trends in public interest, Baum began collecting stamps. It was, as Katharine Rogers describes, “with his usual enthusiasm,” that Baum “promptly established a journal, *The Stamp Collector*, a review of the latest stamps with criticism of other amateur papers that dealt with the subject; published an eleven-page *Baum’s Complete Stamp Dealers’ Directory*; and joined with William Norris, a traveling

salesman based in Albany, to form a mail-order business in foreign postage stamps” (5). Now just sixteen years of age, Baum applied his growing knowledge of publishing with his skill for writing to create a magazine with a more specific audience. As Loncraine suggests, “Written in what the journal called ‘boy style,’ a new note of self-assurance leaps from its pages” (54).

That young Frank should choose stamp collecting as his focus for writing is not surprising when the position of the hobby in American interest is examined in finer detail. Historian Steven M. Gelber outlines the social stratification made plain in the leisure of stamp trade, asserting that stamp collectors were, by and large, those members of American society who were more likely to take on “many of the key roles of actors in the market economy, [playing] out various conflicts embodied in the larger society in the philatelic arena” (“Free” 742). Gelber suggests that these early stamp collectors were “acutely self-conscious of the ways in which their activity mimicked the real world of commerce. They appropriated the language of the commodity market and used it to both praise and criticize their leisure of activity” (742-43). For a young man so heavily surrounded by business and productivity, stamp collecting would have been a natural point of interest. As Gelber describes in greater detail in his text *Hobbies: Leisure and the Culture of Work in America*, stamp collecting allowed participants to blur the line between work and play, childish fascination and adult understanding. Because of the economic value of the items being traded, the amassing of collections required skilled knowledge of the complex relationship between supply and demand for postal usage and increasing values for enthusiasts driven by scarcity and novelty – an understanding which

placed these collectors' hobby in a category Gelber calls "productive leisure," an activity which speaks as "an affirmation of the work ethic" (155) of the dedicated collector. *The Stamp Collector* ran in 1872 and 1873.

Despite his monetary interest in printing nonfiction, Baum's creative interest in the literary founds its way into the journal via an advertisement for *The Empire*, "a First Class Monthly Amateur Paper" (Rogers 5). According to the ad, the paper was "to contain 'poetry, literature, new stamp issues, amateur items, etc.'" (Rogers 5).

Biographies from both MacFall and Moore cite the publication as having run for two years, from 1873-1875; thereafter, MacFall suggests the publication was discontinued "when its youthful proprietors developed new interests" (27). However, as discussed by both Hearn and Rogers, "since no issues seem to have survived, this enterprise may never have materialized" (Rogers 5). Nevertheless, its planners appear to have been Frank and Harry Baum in collaboration with Thomas G. Alford¹², a fellow classmate at Syracuse Classical School in 1873 with whom the Baum boys are assumed to have pooled resources to purchase the press from which Frank delivered his print jobs and ran his stamp collecting publications.

It is during this same period that Baum's biographers also make note of an apparent attempt at long-form fiction writing. As related by Schwartz, Baum "confided in his sisters, telling Hattie and Mattie that he 'longed to write a great novel that should win [him] fame'" (7). As Loncraine explains it, Harriet

¹² "Tom Alford, son of a former lieutenant-governor of the Empire State and later a noted New York City newspaper man, was publisher and Frank was editor," according to MacFall and Baum (27).

showed it to their father and encouraged him to keep writing. [. . .] His family encouraged his literary interests but also encouraged him to focus his attention on business. Although his father and family supported his eclectic enthusiasms, they also believed he should direct this dynamism, inherited from Benjamin no doubt, toward clear product and profit rather than to the pure creative pleasure of writing a good story. (54-55)

As echoed by Rogers, the existence of this novel is confirmed when Baum “thanked his sister Harriet¹³ for approving it in his inscription to her copy of *Mother Goose in Prose*,” the first book of fiction he published as an adult (63).

In the mid-1870s, while the young Baum explored his creative interests, his artistic curiosity drew him in another direction: toward the stage and a career as an actor. As Rogers writes, “Frank took to haunting the theaters in Syracuse, avidly studying the actors’ stage business, speech, and gestures” (6). In the same way he studied what made a good journal, the young man studied what made a good performer, showing the utmost interest in a subject he would revisit time and again: the art of presentation. Determined then to pursue a career in the theatre, Baum approached a number of local companies asking for a chance to perform. He was denied until, as the oft-related story goes, he found a troupe leader who saw an opportunity to take advantage of the young boy. Baum was promised roles in a great number of plays, provided he could bring his own well-

¹³ The name of the sister for whom L. Frank Baum wrote this inscription is not consistently document among his biographers. While both Loncraine and Rogers claim the inscription was made to “Harriet,” Schwarts offers “Mary” (aka “Mattie”) as the recipient, as does Hearn.

stocked costume trunk. As Rogers tells the tale, L. Frank and his mother had the task of convincing his father to invest in the boy's career. However, his father's suspicions were great; Benjamin supported his son's venture only "on the condition that Frank use a pseudonym, since the name *Baum* was respected in the community" (6). Agreeing to do so, "Frank ordered several thousand dollars' worth of the finest velvet and silk garments, trimmed with lace and gold fringe, from a noted New York theatrical costumer" (Rogers 6). Upon his trunk's arrival, taking the name George Brooks, Baum left his home and was warmly welcomed by the troupe in Oneida, New York. In *A Brief Guide to Oz*, Paul Simpson explains that it took only a few days before Baum's costumes began to disappear, as one by one his fellow actors found themselves in great need of borrowing (and forgetting to return) the elaborate pieces. Within a matter of weeks, Baum returned home empty-handed, having only performed a few walk-on parts (5).

Following this dejection, Baum turned his attention to what his family agreed was a more predictable money-making interest, perhaps as a result of their encouragement, but also likely stemming from a new-found fear after a period of financial difficulty for his father – invisible to young Frank before then – erupted at home. Taking risks like those his father took left opportunities for failure. In 1873, failure came: "The New York Stock Exchange went into a panic due to the collapse of banks that had been overlending to railroad companies. The exchange closed for the first time in its history, for ten days. The crisis sparked a chain reaction of bankruptcies, including Benjamin's Second National Bank" (Loncraine 55). Overwhelming debt and bankruptcy looming, the Baums were forced to put their beloved home up for sale. As Loncraine notes,

putting Rose Lawn up for sale was the culmination of a tension that ran through Baum's childhood between ambition, dynamism, wealth, status, and privilege on the one hand, and creditors, debt, and impending bankruptcy on the other. Beneath wealth and success there always lurked profound, unpredictable insecurity for Baum's family, and this would shape Frank's volatile attitude toward money in the future. (55)

Indeed, after the crash of 1873, Baum chased fortune from one end of the country to the next, "choosing to focus on the economic and social demands being placed on him" (Schwartz xii) rather than on his boyish dreams of fame in writing. After his crushing loss on the stage, George Brooks retired and L. Frank Baum returned to his family home to gain more practical business experience through work in his brother-in-law's profitable wholesale dry goods store, Neal, Baum & Company. While the overwhelming stress caused by the crash of the exchange and the loss of their family fortune sent Benjamin Baum into the grip of chronic illness, Frank and his siblings were left to take care of business at home. For the first time in his life, money would play a central role in his decision making process.

Frank spent a year working in the family-run business, but he would not stand to be an "assistant" for long. Observant as always, he once more recognized a financial opportunity which might also offer him room for recognition and status. As Hearn explains, "While his brother Benjamin oversaw the family's oil and real estate interests, Frank returned to the farm to establish B.W. Baum & Sons, breeders of fancy thoroughbred fowls" (*Annotated* xvii). With the same enthusiasm he had given to

studying and claiming expertise in stamp collecting, Baum threw himself into the poultry business. He devoted his energy towards the breeding of Hamburgs, small black birds with brilliant but subtle secondary coloring. They were more aesthetic than productive – too small to feed on and not good with egg laying – but Baum’s dedication allowed him to make a name for himself by establishing “Baum’s Thoroughbred Fowls,” as being “widely known throughout the Mohawk Valley” (Moore 27). As Hearn explains it, “he quickly built the business into one of the largest of its kind in the state. Frank Baum seemed to be literally everywhere” (*Annotated* xvii). To ensure recognition, he “helped found the Empire State Poultry Association in late 1878 and became its first elected secretary, organizing its first two annual fairs” in Syracuse, at just twenty-two years of age (Rogers 7). As discussed by Katharine Rogers, “Frank must already have impressed people as personable and competent, for when he attended the Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Poultry Association in Indianapolis in January 1880, he was elected to its executive committee” (7).

Not content to leave all creative work behind him, and recognizing room for expanding financial gains and notoriety, Baum founded *The Poultry Record* in March of that same year. Much like the journal he’d created for stamp collecting, the paper criticized (and borrowed) the work of rival trade journals – imitating what worked for others in sales and content. Additionally, Baum contributed editorial columns, the focus of which later earned him recognition as “one of [the] most active and enthusiastic fanciers” of the day by the leading journal for the field, *The Poultry World* (qtd. in Rogers 7). His reputation elicited his being commissioned for a lengthy article in the

journal, serialized in 1882, which eventually became his first commercially published book, *The Book of the Hamburgs, A Brief Treatise upon the Mating, Rearing, and Management of the Different Varieties of Hamburgs*, from the publishing house of H. H. Stoddard in 1886.

While a great deal of Baum's success in the world of poultry breeding can be attributed to his diligent work on the farm and in scientific field research – according to Moore, he even developed “several new strains” of the birds during this time (27) – a very particular instance of education he received beyond the farm can, perhaps, be credited for some of his new-found effectiveness in having been received as an expert. After his return from the terrible acting debacle, Baum's uncle and aunt, Adam Clarke Baum and Katherine Gray, returned to Syracuse and began performing in local theatrical performances; L. Frank found himself once more haunting the theater doors. And when Katherine began teaching elocution in town, Hearn claims Baum was “one of her prize pupils” (*Annotated* xviii). Though this particular interest in Baum's life is not the topic of scholarly analysis, it can be said that the nature of elocution in the late 1800s offers deep insight to the kind of understanding Baum would have had to possess to do well in such a course.

As discussed by Thomas O. Sloane, in an article written for *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, elocution education in nineteenth-century America can largely be considered Delsartian. Named for French singing and acting teacher Francois Delsarte, this particular elocutionary system “was brought to our shores by his student, the American actor Steele Mackaye (1842-94). Started by men, this system – like most of the

unpublished, classroom, tutoring, and performance activity of the elocutionary movement generally – was promulgated largely by women” (307). Delsartism in America, as most commonly recognized in the work of Lewis Baxter Monroe, “relied more on intuition than on analysis for grasping the meaning of a text” (Sloane 306). In this period, elocution oscillated between being a subject that gave mechanical direction for the presentation of speech so as to render oneself truthful (as an actor must in performing a role, a politician in giving a speech, or a participant in any given conversation) and one that could be used to accompany methods for analyzing literature, as the subject was first approached as only one of five principles in rhetorical studies by Demosthenes in ancient Athens. This intermediate period in elocutionary study, offered in nineteenth-century America via Monroe’s grand influence, taught students “that the outward assumption of the stance and gestures of emotion aroused their corresponding inner state, both in the performer and in the audience” (Sloane 307). As Sloane explains, “Delsartians had the broadest of all aim: Monroe, for example, in a moment of enthusiasm exclaimed that Delsartism offered ‘the key to the universe’” (307).

For Baum, an already keen observer of gesture and voice, a subject which offered him the opportunity to critically consider how varying his presentation of these would allow him to impact his reception by others, gifted him with an increasingly intellectual understanding of presentation in creating an identity, an ethos. It certainly stands to reason that Baum’s interest in this particular system of elocution – Katherine Gray’s employment of which is the most likely presentation in her classroom as being typical of female elocutionists of the day “who not only appeared in public performances but often

served as itinerant teachers, set up private practice, founded their own schools, or joined established faculties” (Sloane 307-8) – underpins much of his adult lifestyle: his systematic shifting in personal presentation and the adoption of whatever opinions held the greatest popularity for any given moment are real world examples of an elocutionist at work.

With what would have given him a new-found confidence in presentation, gesture, and the power of influence, in 1878 Baum tried once more to enter the world as an actor. This time, however, he achieved at least a modicum of success. As Rebecca Loncraine explains, “Now twenty-two, Baum was tall and slim, with clear gray eyes and a strong nose that pointed down to a great, bushy moustache that curled upward at each end. He explored New York, looking the part of the man-about-town in a velvet coat, smoking fat cigars that he could hardly afford” (60). Through his convincing presentation, no doubt, Baum earned a spot in a theater troupe. Taking the stage in “one of the company’s most notable successes” (MacFall 32), L. Frank joined Albert M. Palmer’s Union Square Theater in New York for a role in *The Banker’s Daughter*, a “tale of financial intrigue, a story of threatened bankruptcy and the effects of this on family life and romance” (Loncraine 61). Though the play’s material would have reminded Baum of the struggles he faced in his life at home, he distanced himself from that real life drama (perhaps also protecting his family’s anonymity for fear of failing a second time) by once again concealing his identity, using the stage name Louis F. Baum. The play ran for one hundred nights.

While in New York, Baum had his first taste of freelance journalism, working for a stint with the *New York Tribune*; as asserted by Rogers, “through his father’s influence” (8) Baum was encouraged to write articles to make financial ends meet. He toured briefly with a troupe in Pennsylvania and, while there, picked up work with the *Bradford Era* – a newspaper still in print today. But even though these writing opportunities provided him with some reliable income, Baum’s desire for greater earnings and for notoriety kept him in the theater. As Evan Schwartz relates, “To really make a living in the theater, he must have thought, it would help greatly if one could actually own the theater” (22).

Lucky for Baum, his father also recognized the money to be made in operating a theater. After Benjamin Baum purchased his land for oil excavation and refining, he constructed in the small oil towns built from his workers, a series of opera houses. After all, workers and their families needed to be entertained, and good money was to be made in towns where there was little else to do besides go to the theater. As Carpenter and Shirley write, “Benjamin Baum made Frank the manager of these theaters, and soon he gave the opera houses to his son” (21). But there was difficulty in maintaining attendance consistent enough to support the travelling acting troupes that would fill the stage. In an attempt he likely marketed as being “cost-effect” but internally acknowledged as being a perfect opportunity to showcase his own theatrical genius, the young Baum (now twenty-five) decided to start an acting troupe of his own. As a sort of “home base” for his operation, L. Frank convinced his father to build Baum’s Opera House in Richburg, New York, in 1881. Michael Patrick Hearn explains, “It would serve not only as a showplace for his histrionic talents but also as a home for various plays of his own composition. But

his luck was against him: Baum's Opera House opened on December 29, 1881, and burned down March 8, 1882" (*Annotated* xviii). L. Frank did not, however, allow this setback to deter him from staking a claim on a profession in the theater.

Baum's personal interest in Shakespeare led him to produce some of the bard's lesser known plays in Richburg. However, the population of the oil town was generally uninterested in the traditional performances. If the author can be believed, his knowledge of the audience's taste grew after an episode in which, performing *Hamlet* for a room full of uninterested oil workers, a member of Baum's acting group (playing the ghost of Hamlet's father) fell through a hole in a makeshift stage and was so overwhelmingly received with laughter that the stunt had to be replayed several times (MacFall 34). Once more flexing his elocutionary skill, Baum constructed a play worthy of his audience's full attention. On May 15, 1882, a new Irish melodrama opened on his stage. *The Maid of Arran* was both written by – songs, score, and script – and starred Louis F. Baum, a thinly disguised L. Frank who hoped his work might appeal to the largely Irish-immigrant based population of the oil workers. It was an adaptation of a popular novel called *A Princess of Thule*, by the Scottish author William Black; MacFall credits Baum as having "made a period-piece of melodrama of rapid action, sure-fire situations and sentimental characters calculated to win the tears and the applause of the sentimental audiences of the time" (38).

With its "highly sentimental dialogue, plot, and music," the play was mostly a success (Moore 49). Baum's performance in particular received good reviews from the

critics¹⁴, and the troupe packed their trunks and took the show on the road later that year. Baum worked hard to promote his work. He stayed close to the critics for notes which might signal a need for change; he performed only in places where the audience would likely have sentimental attachment to the story; and he never missed an opportunity to self-promote with supplemental purchasing opportunities for his patrons: an 1882 song book entitled *Louis F. Baum's Popular Songs as Sung with Immense Success in His Great 5 Act Irish Drama, Maid of Arran* offers one example. His careful attention appears to have paid off; upon their return to Syracuse for two nights in February of 1883, MacFall quotes the *Journal* as having said:

The *Maid of Arran* . . . was presented with much smoothness and good dramatic effect. Since it was brought out in this city, it has undergone pretty thorough polishing and has been thereby much improved. The company . . . now makes the most of it, giving great force to its principal parts. What the play lacks in strength it made up in superior finish. . . .
Tonight autograph albums are to be distributed with the programs. (37)

During his early *Maid of Arran* days, on the advice of his father, Frank had relinquished control of the company to his uncle, John Wesley Baum, as manager. Additionally, his aunt Katherine (Baum's former elocution instructor) took a role in the

¹⁴ MacFall credits a local Syracuse reporter with saying, "Mr. Baum is to be congratulated [. . .] not only for his successful interpretation of the leading character, but on his good judgment in selecting such excellent support" (35). Others, however, more commonly cite criticism of the company for overacting, while Baum's part was presented "very quietly and handsomely" (Loncraine 65). Loncraine further cites an *Oil Echo* notice that read: "Mr. Baum has a fine presence [. . .] a handsome countenance and. . . and ease and grace in his stage movements" (65). He was stating as having shown "himself a complete master of the role" (Loncraine 65) – not a surprising feat for a star elocutionist.

travelling production so that, as MacFall explains it, “she would be in a position to keep a friendly eye on Frank, who was so young for so much responsibility” (36). Frank Joslyn Baum quotes his father as having recalled, “Aunt Kate [. . .] was already well known as an elocutionist. [. . .] She had been giving public recitals for many years and was in demand at social gatherings as an entertainer. She turned out to be an excellent actress as well and became a favorite with our audiences” (36). Encouraged by the success found in Kate and the company on stage, and no longer concerned with the financial details of the tour, Frank found time for more congenial public outings. It was during this period he met and married Maud Gage – daughter of women’s rights activist Matilda Joslyn Gage and abolitionist Dr. Henry Hill Gage – despite their being an unlikely pair of dreamer and realist. Maud accompanied him on tour after their marriage in November of 1882, but by the time of the troupe’s return to Syracuse in March of 1883, she was pregnant and determined not to keep her life on the road¹⁵.

Frank’s own desires to continue the tour were never fulfilled. MacFall explains, “Sometime in 1884, John Wesley Baum, [. . .] became seriously ill, and a bookkeeper was employed to take over his responsibilities. Frank habitually paid little attention to money, but the more practical Maud soon noticed that the weekly checks were becoming smaller and smaller” (53). Though she insisted Frank and John investigate, Frank was

¹⁵ Consistently described as such, their marriage was a shining example of success in love. Acknowledged as a bit overly-romanticized in his depiction of his father, Frank Jr.’s account seems an accurate one of his parents’ relationship as Maud would often recall “peace and harmony had always graced her home, but those who knew the family best felt this was true only because Frank, from the time of their marriage until his death thirty-seven years later, allowed her to have her own way with the household, the children, and the family purse. Only because of his easy nature and because he remained all those years very much in love with her, was he able philosophically to accept her often unpredictable temper” (MacFall 47-48).

“busy writing another play, *The Queen of Killarney*, which had been commissioned by Joe Scanlon for production in Rochester, and by the time [John] and Baum found gross mismanagement and such inadequate book-keeping that it was impossible to make an audit” (MacFall 53), their days were numbered. The book keeper disappeared before the investigation was finished. Despite a relatively well-sold tour and a highly attended return to Syracuse, as related by Schwartz, “it was all downhill from there, as the tour management kept up the bookings without keeping up with the payroll” (73). L. Frank’s tour was over.

The failure of this acting troupe marked the first of a number of financial mistakes made by Frank or those he trusted. Though he may have inherited his father’s dynamism and enthusiasm for entrepreneurialism, possessed incredible intuition for popular trends, and honed his skills in reading his audience for presentation and delivery, Baum lacked the kind of business sense necessary to stay afloat in a tricky economic climate. While his biographers often describe Maud as having “the upper hand at home, [. . .] controlling their personal finances” and the discipline of their four sons (Carpenter 29), Frank clearly felt the pressure of a man who must provide for his family’s financial well-being. Letters to his mother regularly address his overwhelming sense of responsibility to his wife and children; he wrote once, after Cynthia Baum offered assistance in a time of financial distress to Frank and his young family, “While I shall live I shall *somehow* manage to provide for those dependent on me, and I shall never burden you, although I know your love would not consider it a burden” (qtd. in Schwartz 246). Nevertheless, Baum’s return to Syracuse and the dissolving of his theatrical company stand as the inaugural example

of a series of unfortunate events in his life, events not even his authorship in *Oz* could entirely overcome, as they were often the result of his own irrational leaping headfirst into new careers without considering their fiscal practicality.

In 1883 Baum partnered with his uncle, Adam, to establish Baum's Castorine Company which marketed "an axle grease invented by his brother Benjamin, then a chemist in Buffalo" (Hearn *Annotated* xx). Baum acted as the salesman for the company, relying on his talent in writing and presentation to target buyers for the new lubricant. In typical L. Frank fashion, he marked this period of his life with a new public title.

Katharine Rogers notes "an advertisement in the *Courier* of July 9, 1883, announced the opening of a store dealing in all types of lubricating oil. [. . .] The proprietor was L. B. Baum, evidently a misprint for L. F." (17). Though a misprint of Baum's initial is likely, his history of altering his name makes possible the intentional shift from "F" to "B." His use of initials-only as his listed moniker could echo his father's successful presentation; Benjamin was consistently listed as "B.W. Baum" in his public dealings. The use of a "B" could easily serve as a connection to Benjamin Baum, his father and the successful Syracuse businessman, and to Benjamin (William) Baum, his older brother and inventor of the oil being sold.

Though purely conjecture, it is also possible that refraining from publishing his preferred name offered L. Frank a shield from the finality of his life as he saw it in the Syracuse storefront. Adopting a new identity in business would not be new, after all, and as Schwartz explains, "selling axle grease was not what Frank Baum had in mind for his future. But he saw it as a temporary arrangement. He [still] hoped to get his show back on

the road on another tour” (75). That dream crashed violently, however, when – as MacFall explains –

word came that the town of Gillmor had burned, and with it Baum’s theater and the costumes, scenery, and properties for *The Maid of Arran* and other plays. By the time all accounts had been settled, Baum’s realty holdings, including the string of small theaters acquired from his father, the production rights of *The Maid of Arran* and all his other ready assets had been sacrificed. (54)

Just a few months later, in December of 1883, Baum’s first son (Frank Joslyn) was born. With his birth, L. Frank released his dreams of stardom and tried to settle firmly into family life as a salesman.

As fate would have it, Baum would not remain settled for long. Very soon, his run with poor luck continued in unimaginable ways. His father was involved in a serious cart accident, and he went to Germany for more extensive care than he could receive at home. In 1886, his brother Benjamin died unexpectedly from pneumonia, and his father followed him in 1887. His father’s business funds, being managed by his uncle “Doc” during his father’s absence, were all but totally lost by an inept clerk, as discovered by L. Frank who found the man had committed suicide at a desk in the store upon returning from a sales trip one morning in 1888. And in the midst of all this turmoil, the world pressed further responsibility on Baum’s shoulders when Maud delivered their second son, Robert Stanton, in 1886. With nowhere else to turn, he sold the store to the Stoddard

family for capital to start new somewhere else, though the money did not offer his family significant gains (MacFall 57).

A visit to Aberdeen of the Dakota Territory offered what L. Frank hoped would be an opportunity to turn over a fresh leaf. Several of Maud's family members had settled there over time, and she felt comfortable being closer to them in case of trouble¹⁶. Furthermore, Baum saw in Aberdeen the kind of landscape he'd need to find the financial security necessary for raising his family in a way that might allow him to gain recognition and status within the community. In a letter to Maud's brother – Clarkson Gage, who was already operating a store on Main Street in the small town – Baum writes that in Aberdeen

he saw an opening for a high-class variety store, "a Bazaar, selling fancy goods, sporting goods, outdoor games . . . amateur photography goods, fancy willowware, cheap books and good literature, stationary, toys and crockery specialties, velocipedes . . . etc. Not a 5¢ store, but a Bazaar on the same style as the 'Fair' in Chicago (on a much smaller scale). [. . .]

With his usual enthusiasm, he sketched out ambitious plans for promoting his wares by starting a camera club and interesting people in lawn tennis.

He would also be on the lookout for investment opportunities. He went on

¹⁶ Clarkson Gage, Helen Leslie Gage, and Julia Gage Carpenter were Maud's sisters and brother. "Clarkson Gage was one of the founding settlers of Aberdeen in Brown County [. . .] Helen Leslie Gage and Helen's husband, Charles, also named Gage, moved to Aberdeen in 1887 and invested in property throughout the area," while Julia and her husband James D. "were less successful. In 1882, they had taken a homestead near Edgeley, about seventy miles north of Aberdeen, in what would come North Dakota. Julia was miserable there," due to the extreme weather of the area and the isolation it caused. (Rogers 19)

to reveal his discouragement with his present situation in the East, where intense competition “keeps a man down . . . In this struggling mass of humanity a man like myself is lost.” In Dakota, on the other hand, “there is an opportunity for a man to be somebody . . . and opportunities are constantly arising where an intelligent man might profit.” “Aberdeen is destined one day to be a good city, and it *may be* a metropolis,” so that it seemed like a good idea “to throw my fortunes in with the town.”

Despite his record of disappointments, Baum was still determined to pursue success as a businessman, as his father had, and was still confident of finding lucrative opportunities. (Rogers 20-21)

Aberdeen seemed just the place: a small town with raised wooden sidewalks, an exciting Main Street with swarms of shops and people, and a proud strand of electric lights to show it off at night. According to M. P. Hearn, it was “not the typical one-horse frontier town one read of in dime novels. It was founded largely by energetic, college educated young men and women from the East who were seduced by the promise of cheap land but did not really know what to expect out west” (“Hub City Nine” 9). Because of the unique demographics of its population, Aberdeen more closely resembled an established urban market than that of a pioneer’s place. By the time L. Frank and his family arrived, there were a wide variety of stores, print-presses, hotels, theaters, and a handful of social clubs like those offered on the east coast.

Following his brother-in-law’s lead as a store owner, Frank opened Baum’s Bazaar on Main Street, where it operated for three years. Ever the dreamer, the Bazaar

offered all of the things Frank Baum found enticing – treasures from foreign lands, sweet treats, toys and games, and the most unique array of gadgets and gismos available – in the hopes that people who had what they *needed* would be enchanted by the things that they *wanted*. Schwartz describes the way Frank “relished” the task of convincing people to buy what they didn’t need: “The knack for creating belief was one of his talents, honed in his playwriting and salesmanship. In this respect Frank was ahead of his time. [. . .] He knew that objects alone don’t sell. What sells is the *story* that attaches to the object” (133). It was a novel concept for Aberdeen, a store run on goods of desire and not necessity, and its aura complemented well the owner and operator who was given to entertaining crowds (especially children) with his wildly exciting stories.

As he had done in New York, Baum presented himself as a man who ought to be selling fine dreams. As described by MacFall, “adults who came to the store noticed that the tall, slim proprietor was exceptionally well dressed. They admired his tailor-made suits and high button, black patent-leather shoes, and they took as a sign of prosperity the heavy gold watch chain spanning his waistcoat” (61). This image is difficult to reconcile with a man who moved to the area with very little wealth of his own and dwindling family wealth back home in Syracuse. Baum understood, however, that to sell unnecessary luxuries he had to be a man of luxury himself and instill in his purchasers a desire for emulation. He arrived prepared to “promote it ambitiously, bringing out a small printing press to issue daily advertising bulletins and starting camera and sports clubs in order to interest people in his fancy goods,” (Koupal, “1888-91” 204) just as he’d hoped to do. At first, his hard work paid off handsomely; as Hearn explains, “nearly one

thousand people passed through Baum's Bazaar that first day, but his holiday opening in December was even more impressive with twelve hundred visitors" ("Hub City Nine" 11). Still, visitors didn't always mean items were being purchased. To ensure sales, Baum needed to make his store and himself an integral and exciting part of the Aberdeen community.

Aberdeen was a great place for a man who wanted to be known; it was "ready to challenge any Midwestern metropolis in social and economic enterprise" (Hearn "Hub City Nine" 10). Frank and Maud "quickly made friends [. . .] and enjoyed the card parties and dances that constituted the social life of the town" (MacFall 62). To increase his notoriety and bring more visitors into his store, he needed something more. "On the morning of 14 May 1889, a group of ambitious young businessmen met at the Hagerty and Paulhamas real estate office to look into the possibility of establishing a local professional baseball team in Aberdeen [. . .]. Times were good, and these local heavy hitters were seeking another means of boosting their community" (Hearn, "Hub City Nine" 5). Naturally, Baum was in attendance. As described by Hearn,

He so impressed his fellow businessmen with his enthusiasm and ideas for the new club during their first meeting [. . .] that they not only elected him secretary of the Aberdeen base ball team but also appointed him to the constitution and by-laws committee. Baum knew that baseball was good for Aberdeen and good for business. Not only was Baum's Bazaar going to provide the Hub City team with its uniform and other equipment, it was

sure to sell plenty of Spalding's baseball goods during the season. ("Hub City Nine" 12)

Once again, Baum's training in presentation and intuition for public desire led him to notoriety and a leadership role in a career with which he had no experience. "Although never much of an athlete himself, he may well have played a little ball back in Syracuse and Peekskill or watched the Syracuse Starts, the first major league team in central New York" as a boy (Hearn, "Hub City Nine" 12); and yet, Baum's position afforded him the supreme vote in all dealings for the new professional team – the Hub City Nine.

In typical Baum fashion, he arranged an extraordinary showing of public support: a grandstand to rival that of St. Paul and neighboring fields was built, players were hired and salaries paid, "Baum took the chairmanship of the executive committee of the South Dakota League [. . .] to appoint salaried umpires and draw up a schedule of games," (Hearn, "Hub City Nine" 18), and advertisements and marketing schemes ran wild. "The Hub City club sought the widest attendance possible and made a special effort to get ladies to come. Women generally stayed away because the vocabulary employed on and off the field was often salty and considered inappropriate for mixed company. The club directors forbade profanity or any other offensive conduct" (Hearn, "Hub City Nine" 18). With women in the stands, Baum could ensure the rising tide of business for all Aberdeen's stops, which would certainly include a stop in Baum's Bazaar for something unusual.

However, also in typical Baum fashion, a fatal flaw cut the team's history short. Despite a championship season for the Hub City Nine, "in the end, the club was a loser.

[. . .] The club's mistake was to keep the players on salary despite the lack of games at season's end; inactivity was expensive. [. . .] The *Aberdeen Evening Republican* revealed on 11 October that the local baseball club lost one thousand dollars" (Hearn, "Hub City Nine" 38-89). Baum caught a great deal of negative publicity for his poor management of the team; though he was not the club's treasurer, he was the face most known to the public. And the Hub City Nine never played again. According to Hearn, "there is no record that Baum's Bazaar was ever paid the \$93.61 the Base Ball Association had owed it since July 1889" for uniforms and gear ("Hub City Nine" 39).

Baum's timing was terrible. Despite brining in large crowds for an entire year, L. Frank's dream-filled retail space buckled. A drought that summer caused dwindling profits, and the large group of unprepared Dakotan settlers had no money for extravagances. "They were homesteaders who had never farmed before. [. . .] When they first moved to the West, these pioneers intended to sell their claims within a few years for fabulous prices and then return to the East wealthy men and women. Most of them never did" (Hearn, "Hub City Nine" 10). His sister-in-law, Helen Leslie Gage, said the Bazaar proved to be just "too impractical a store for a frontier town" and had been stocked by a man who "had let his taste run riot in his choice of the eastern markets" ("L. Frank" 269). Though Aberdeen's population was largely similar to the towns of Baum's childhood in its social desires, "no one was much interested in buying Japanese umbrellas, bric-a-brac, or fresh-cut flowers during the drought" (Hearn, "Hub City Nine" 40). Even if they'd wanted to, there was no money to pay. As articulated by Suzanne Rahn, "as Aberdeen sank deep into depression in the late 1880s, few new enterprises could have made a profit

here” (5). Hoping for better times ahead, Baum extended too much credit to his townsfolk and “turned over his entire interest in the store to his wife to offset his creditors” (Hearn, “Hub City Nine” 40). It was too late. The store went bankrupt in 1891.

It was at this point that L. Frank turned to writing once more. As historian Nancy Tystad Koupal describes it, “with two or three dailies, four or more weeklies, and two ready-print businesses, Aberdeen offered tempting possibilities to a lifelong scribbler” (“Road” 50). He purchased one of the four local newspapers, *The Aberdeen Pioneer*, and took the position of editor very seriously – writing nearly all of the content and using his knowledge of design to help improve advertisement sales. Koupal, in her 2000 *South Dakota History* article “On the Road to Oz: L. Frank Baum as Western Editor,” offers suggestions for Baum’s inspiration in the careers of Mark Twain – the Missourian who “attained a national literary reputation by writing humorous stories for the *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City, Nevada, after coming west to find his fortune in timber or mining” (50) – and local legend Fred Hadyn Carruth. Carruth established the *Estelline Bell* in 1883: “Its tall tales and satirical ‘Dakota Gossip’ column made Carruth known statewide and beyond. [. . .] Baum appears to have set about to achieve the same thing” (Koupal “Road” 50). Despite condemning editors like Carruth, who followed the railway to the West and set up shop wherever the settlers stopped, Baum did not dismiss the validity of newspaper editors who later found careers at larger publications.

L. Frank took his job as a local paper editor very seriously, enthusiastically donning “the mantle of western editor to publish a newspaper in the best interests of his community and [offering] ‘counsel and guidance in the obtuse and intricate political

issues which are constantly cropping up in this remarkable country” (Koupal, “Road” 57). He reported as he could in a straightforward fashion, with carefully combed boiler plates purchased to fill national news and carefully constructed local reporting to keep the paper relevant and immediate in the eyes of its readers. The *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer* allowed Baum to stretch his elocutionary skills while acting in a role he felt was both necessary and significant in his town; he was the giver of news, the keeper of secrets, the decoder of difficult times. For Baum, his position as editor of what he hoped would soon prove the best paper in Aberdeen offered him a position of authority and notoriety. His previously attained skills in print and advertising encouraged the publication’s subscription numbers to soar.

Additionally, the *Pioneer* offered Frank an opportunity to blend the nonfiction of local and national news with the fictional characters of his choosing – characters through whom he could speak to his audience more directly and with less risk of alienating himself from the community because of his sometimes radical ideology. As discussed by Koupal,

the most intriguing voices that Baum used weekly to explore the vagaries of politics and the hopes of Aberdonians occurred in his "Our Landlady" and "The Editor's Musings" columns. The latter usually appeared on the editorial (fourth) page, while "Our Landlady" might appear on the first or last page but most often on the fifth (social and local news) page. This placement indicated that Baum proffered the unpredictable exploits of his semiliterate landlady as entertainment, but the vocal boardinghouse keeper

Sairy Ann Bilkins frequently expounded on the same topics as the editor, giving him an alternative persona through which to explore issues. Baum was staunchly Republican; the landlady converted to the Independent (later Populist) party for all the wrong reasons. Uneducated but strong on common sense, Mrs. Bilkins also gave the editor a female voice through which to explore the issue of woman suffrage, a topic to which he dedicated many column inches in his regular editorials. He also examined the issue less directly in the "Editor's Musings" columns, where the tone was serious, reflective, and, unlike some of his editorial arguments, usually noncombative. While editor/publisher Baum and Mrs. Bilkins strongly supported Aberdeen and urged a political and civic agenda designed to create a metropolis from a prairie town of two to three thousand residents, the musing editor discussed religion, tolerance, the occult, modern literature, the superiority of western women, merchandising practices, and schemes for creating a happy family life.

("Road" 62)

The employment of these voices also allowed for a wider range of public opinion to be shared with a wider demographic of audiences where many of those same opinions existed. Baum is cited, for instance, as having written editorials after the death of Sitting Bull and the massacre at Wounded Knee in which he calls for the eradication of all

Native Americans¹⁷. However, the presentation of this racial hatred falls in stark contrast to his later fiction in Oz. Given the frequency with which Baum offers radically differing opinions on social and political topics, the “real” feelings of the author are too difficult to discern. Koupal notes, “The reader comes to suspect that Baum’s *Pioneer* was carefully positioned to be both Republican and prohibitionist in order to partake in the boom” happening in Aberdeen at the time (“1888-91” 208). Ever the elocutionist, Baum utilized his knowledge of audience and presentation to illicit the emotions necessary for gathering the largest readership at the most opportune times. In the *Pioneer*, Frank’s comedic fictional characters often overshadowed his delivery of the morose news from around the country, and his paper flourished because of it. The dissolving town of Aberdeen, however, could not continue to support Frank and his family on newspaper subscriptions for long.

And so, once again, L. Frank Baum moved his family to what he hoped would be a greener pasture. Harkening to the call of frequent wire stories extolling the great future for the city of Chicago, the Baums (now with four boys in tow – Harry Neal, b. 1889, and Kenneth Gage, b. 1891, came in Dakota) returned to the East. This time, however, Frank struck for gold, hoping to follow his successful venture in the *Pioneer* by immediately pursuing a career as a newspaper man. Landing a job with the *Chicago Evening Post*, he managed to support his family on his writing alone for a little while; but, as Koupal’s work demonstrates, Baum was not a talented reporter. Baum’s writing abilities could be

¹⁷ “Editorial” *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*, Dec. 15, 1890 and Dec. 20, 1890

adapted for the editorials he'd written in Aberdeen, but Chicagoans didn't lack for talented editors. Though Frank inserted himself in the Chicago Press Club and worked to make his name better known, the job lasted for less than a year.

“By fall he capitalized on his experience at the Bazaar in Aberdeen, persuading the Siegel, Cooper and Company department store to make him buyer for the crockery department” (MacFall 78). Though the salary was low, the position allowed Baum to rub elbows with men of importance. A relationship he established with an executive from Pitkin and Brooks, “a wholesale company whose salesmen showed its stock of fine china and glassware throughout the Middle West,” led to a position as a traveling salesman, “working on a liberal commission with railway and hotel expenses paid” (MacFall 79). MacFall charts these as lonely years in Baum's adulthood, as the immense amount of travel associated with the job was often discussed by the author and those who knew him well as the saddest of times he spent away from his wife and children. Regardless of these hardships, Baum's knack for presentation and delivery, combined with his clear understanding of people's desires, made him a fantastic salesman. His profits meant that Maud and the boys lived far more comfortably than they had in some time. Additionally, the long hours he spent travelling by train left plenty of time for reading, writing, and dreaming – though the profitability of his writing was nonexistent. As Rogers explains, Baum “kept trying to find some type of writing that would support his family and relieve him from the drudgery of selling china” (*Creator* 54). Most of the work, however, was rejected: “he kept a sad little account book he called his ‘Record of Failure’ [though] he experimented with comic, sentimental, and supernatural stories in an attempt to discover

what he could do and what would sell” (Rogers, *Creator* 54). A few light verses and stories sold to the Chicago *Times-Herald*, but there was nothing of significant financial worth. As discussed by Loncraine, Baum wrote a number of stories for adults that “explored the morality of the brutal economic competition of the late Gilded Age” (150). While the stories were “morally challenging,” they were also “not particularly well written. Baum’s writing came to life in tales about new technologies, magic, the occult, and the natural world” (Loncraine 151); but public interest in the magic of technology had yet to truly ignite, and the stories drew no attention. Then, in the late 1890s, “the heavy physical demands of his [sales] job brought out symptoms of heart strain” and Baum “was advised by a specialist to find less fatiguing work” (Rogers, *Creator* 50).

CALCULATED CREATIVITY

As the story goes, Baum’s career in children’s fiction was first encouraged by a competition his mother-in-law found in a juvenile magazine. Most elaborately described in Schwartz’s biography of the man, Baum’s first writing venture came from Matilda Gage’s reading about “a contest announced in the *Youth’s Companion*” in February of 1895 for which “a rich prize of \$500 was being offered for best original short story; \$250 was offered for second place and \$100 for third” (251-52). According to Schwartz’s account, “these extraordinary sums seized her attention, and she naturally thought of her daughter Helen and her son-in-law Frank, who were considered the best writers in the extended family. Mrs. Gage had always urged Frank to write down the stories he would tell to his sons and other children in the neighborhood. But now her insistence turned into beseeching” (252). The tale in this particular biography emphasizes the possibilities for

financial compensation as the greatest motivating factor for Matilda's urgency, claiming, "What especially captured Matilda's interest was the magazine's hint that there was such great demand for these kinds of stories that it would even purchase many of the best ones that didn't win the prizes" (252). Schwartz writes, "Apparently young people were so hungry for inspirational reading that it was actually a possibility to make something of a living writing for this market" (252). Schwartz additionally suggests that this financial compensation was the most significant factor for L. Frank Baum as well. "Frank gave only secondary consideration to whether his talents were well suited to any particular line of work. He believed he could do most anything, and he was usually right. He proved to be competent across many different fields" (253). While Schwartz's suggestion that Baum's earliest fiction publication was motivated, first and foremost, by the opportunity for financial wealth has been largely ignored by scholars, if consideration is given to Baum's history in the pursuit of business and profit, coupled with the fact that he had been recently discouraged from continuing his rather profitable career selling fine china, the claim seems unavoidable.

Frank's first book of fiction to be published was a collection of expanded nursery rhymes called *Mother Goose in Prose*. Upon completion of the work, Baum utilized his well-honed networking skills to get the book published rather quickly. Michael Patrick Hearn claims that Baum, "like so many other novice authors, [. . .] submitted his manuscripts in vain to various publishers in the East," (*Annotated* xxvii) before finally being picked up by Chauncey L. Williams of Way & Williams – whom Hearn describes as "one of the most innovative, and impractical" publishers in Chicago (xxvii). As Hearn

explains it, Williams “wanted to commission the up-and-coming young Philadelphia illustrator Maxfield Parrish to do a new edition of the old nursery rhymes; but when he read Baum’s tales of Mother Goose, he decided to publish that instead” (xxvii). However, Paul Simpson’s work, *A Brief Guide to Oz*, suggests that a connection between Williams and Baum already existed. Simpson claims Baum met Williams via Opie Read in June of 1897. This connection through Read, “another member of the Chicago Press Club to which Frank belonged” (Simpson 13), seems a far more likely history of the publication’s beginning, as the chances of a novice writer being chosen to author a book for an already up-and-coming illustrator are much smaller than those of a writer with connections to Williams through a mutual friend and professional organization being chosen for the job. Regardless of the relationship’s history, Baum entered a publishing agreement with Way & Williams, and *Mother Goose in Prose* was released in 1897, including “fourteen black and white drawings by Maxwell Parrish” (Simpson 13) and Frank’s stories for Mother Goose’s rhymes and their fictional origins.

In the same way Baum considered popular taste as a youth – following trends in stamp collecting and the breeding of fancy fowl before constructing his journals, or the particular needs of an Irish-immigrant audience before beginning *The Maid of Arran* – and as an adult – considering the audience in the advertisements for his Bazaar, his baseball game attendees, and his newspaper readers before beginning each new venture – Baum’s presentation of *Mother Goose in Prose* exhibits the voice of a man who understood his task well before beginning. Schwartz documents the ways in which the author hoped to “take a new and different look at the most popular children’s stories of

all time,” (256) and he did this in what he felt was, at the time of his writing, a proven formula for success: Baum presented his “collection” as the work of a scholar. It is in this preparation that Schwartz alone claims:

Frank researched the origins of these rhymes [. . .] to uncover evidence of how each legend evolved over eons of bedtimes. When he couldn’t find the answers, he’d simply make up dialogue and situations to fill the gaps. He wrote an introduction, marveling how these verses are never forgotten and how through these bizarre poems “one generation is linked to another by the everlasting spirit of song.” (Schwartz 256)

More than working to establish himself as an independent scholar on the subject of Mother Goose (a significant portion of the introduction is spent outlining a very detailed history of her “origin” from the storytellers of America, England, and France, and outlining the history of publications carrying her tales to children everywhere), Frank used this introduction to align himself with two necessary audiences: everyday readers and academics. Not surprisingly, considering Baum’s history in rhetorical compositions, the introduction for *Mother Goose* displays mastery of language necessary for creating an ethos of authorial belonging. And, when examined in relation to other, more successful, fairy tales in print at the time of its publication (and given his record for thoroughly immersing himself in the literature and attitudes surrounding the fields in which his earlier pursuits lay), Schwartz’s assertion that Baum methodically studied his new genre and its history before writing *Mother Goose in Prose* takes on a significant air of plausibility.

Baum begins his “Introduction” with a discussion of the ways in which “those things which are earliest impressed upon our minds cling to them most tenaciously” (*Goose* 2); and moves on to explain how “the snatches sung in the nursery are never forgotten, nor are they ever recalled without bringing back with them myriads of slumbering feelings and half-forgotten images” (2) – relying heavily on the emotional impact in his description of the readers’ actions. He writes, “We hear the sweet, low voice of the mother, singing soft lullabies to her darling, and see the kindly, wrinkled face of the grandmother as she croons the old ditties to quiet our restless spirits” (2). Here, Baum’s writing is reminiscent of the 1823 Edgar Taylor introduction to *German Popular Stories*, a work he read often as a child – and, one can only assume, as an aspiring author who hoped to create his own captivating collection. Frank recalls, as did Taylor, the reader’s early exposure to fairy tales and their connection with the sweeter images of childhood.

Additionally, he places himself as a *knowledgeable* reader through a discussion of the collection of Perrault. He details the history of the collection, pointing to the recently discovered knowledge that Perrault had a predecessor in Straparola, and also takes time to describe the “old lady holding in her hand a distaff and surrounded by a group of children listening eagerly” on the cover of that text (3) – a collection, he later notes, of which “Mr. Andrew Lang has edited a beautiful English edition” (4). Within his introduction, Baum touches upon the text that first encouraged fascination with collecting traditional tales, the history of those tales before the Grimm brothers’ work, and the most up-to-date reading in terms of well-respected fairy tale authorities. Baum knew fairy tales

would sell, but he had to make sure he could establish himself as a “legitimate” fairy tale authority to gain the trust of potential readers.

The concept for these Mother Goose tales was not the only work Frank presented to Williams for publication. In fact, in 1896 he had applied for copyrights of two titles for collections of children’s stories, “Tales from Mother Goose” and “Adventures in Phunniland” – a collection of short stories which were published in 1899 as *A New Wonderland, Being the First Ever Account Ever Printed of the Beautiful Valley, and the Wonderful Adventures of Its Inhabitants*, and later reissued as *The Magical Monarch of Mo* (1903) in favor of the more alliterative (and much briefer) title. *Mother Goose in Prose* enjoyed “moderate success [which] encouraged the publishers to consider following it up with *Adventures in Phunnyland*, but unfortunately they went bust before they could print it” (Simpson 14). An uncanny inversion of the witch’s gingerbread house of “Hansel and Gretel,” Phunniland was a place “where candy grew on bushes, the rivers flowed with milk and cream, and it rained lemonade and thundered in a chorus from Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*” (Hearn, *Annotated* xxvii). At the time of his copyright applications for the two works, Baum’s mother-in-law had convinced him “they would make his reputation and might be as successful as *Alice in Wonderland*” (Hearn, *Annotated* xxvii).

The brief taste of success for *Mother Goose in Prose* followed by defeat in his lost publisher was nothing new for L. Frank Baum. He had, many times, been close to doing something grand only to have his dreams fade before him. And the man had already conceived of what he believed would be a more economically viable option for

his writing. Though he had not yet decided to give up pursuing a career in fairy tale authorship, L. Frank returned to his experience in retail and his understanding of presentation to expand on an article he'd written for the *Pioneer* called "Beautiful Displays of Novelties which Rival in Attractiveness the Famed Museums of the World." There, Baum "found romance in the merchandise available in Aberdeen stores" and praised the "harmonious arrangements of neckties" and "artfully careless display of shoes" in the windows of Strauss and Shaft (qtd. in Rogers, *Creator* 55). According to Hearn, "he had noticed on his travels from town to town the need for a practical guide to designing storefront windows. So, with Williams as publisher, he founded *The Show Window*, a periodical for window trimmers, in 1897" (*Annotated* xxviii). With his usual enthusiasm, Baum poured his energy into the journal and it was quickly adopted by the trade as its "official organ," encouraging the establishment of the National Association of Window Trimmers. As its creation was largely at the insistence of Baum, he was elected their first secretary at the first annual convention in Chicago. Described by Hearn, "Baum insisted that he was putting out an *art* magazine and filled it with photographs of many of the most important department stores in the country, many of which he must have taken himself. It was an expensive journal to produce, and Baum provided most of the copy, even some of the advertisements" (*Annotated* xxvii). And in 1900, while preparing for the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, he gathered and expanded various articles written in *The Show Window* to produce *The Art of Decorating Dry Goods Windows and Interiors*, a "well-illustrated treatise sold only by subscription" (Hearn, *Annotated* xxviii). Additionally, he self-published and privately printed ninety-nine

copies of a book of verse, illustrated by Denslow and a few others, called *By the Candelabra's Glare: Some Verse* in 1898.¹⁸

Baum's work in children's literature, however, was not over. In fact, it had just begun. The connection he'd made with Chauncey Williams proved to be a saving grace in rescuing his fiction career. Though Hearn's timeline for when Baum joined the Chicago Press Club differs from others, he connects a meeting through the organization in 1898 with Baum's first introduction to "many of the city's most important writers and artists. Among them was William Wallace Denslow" (*Annotated* xxix). The two made fast friends and, in late nights together, began drumming up plans for a sequel to *Mother Goose*. It seemed to Baum that his formula for collected old tales was a good one. What was lacking was the spectacle of presentation, the very subject of his last year's work. The collaboration with Parrish had worked, but it didn't represent the level of success Baum thought he could achieve. With the help of Denslow's grand visions, however, and a tweak to Baum's writing perspective, there was magic to be made.

Just a few short months later, *Father Goose, His Book* had been drafted and illustrated. A collection of *new* nursery rhymes which closely follows the traditional structure and employs traditional characters within new scenarios is based on the premise that "Mother Goose" has left the children alone with "Father Goose" during her pursuit of becoming a "new woman." All alone at story time, it is up to Father Goose to satisfy the

¹⁸ Hearn's bibliography for Baum notes, "Many of the selections first appeared in the Aberdeen *Saturday Pioneer* and the Chicago *Sunday Times-Herald*. Several verses were reprinted in *Father Goose, His Book*" (*Annotated* 383).

children's desire for tales. Both timely and traditional, the book had all the makings of a successful production. However, as noted by Carpenter and Shirley, "The book of poems was hard to sell because of a radical idea: Frank and Denslow wanted color on each page. In those days illustrations were usually black and white. Color printing raised the price of a book, and lowered the publisher's profits" (49), yet Baum knew that to be successful they had to have something dazzling and unique. In an attempt to publish the book themselves, the pair approached George Hill to be their manufacturer. Denslow's recent work for Hill's firm (George M. Hill Company) encouraged the man to take a closer look at the project. With the agreement that Baum and Denslow pay for the color plates, Hill offered not only to manufacture the book, but to take on publishing it. As Michael Hearn explains it, in 1899 "Hill produced a stunning volume unlike anything else then on the market. [. . .] The first printing of 5,700 copies quickly sold out, and several more printings were soon exhausted" (*Annotated*, "Introduction" xxxvii). Baum's knowledge of presentation proved successful, despite the risk involved with printing, and *Father Goose, His Stories* was the best-selling picture-book of 1900.

It was after the success of the *Father Goose* collaboration that Baum and Denslow set out to write a "modernized" fairy tale in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. As the novel will be discussed in intense detail in Chapter Four, the most significant information regarding its publication in terms of Baum's career path is the consideration that it was written with the explicit purpose of fulfilling what Baum saw as an open gap in genre for which he now felt qualified to write. It was in his "Introduction" to *Father Goose, His Stories* that he first suggested the possibility of building on older tales to create new,

more modern ones to carry forward. “There is a fascination in the combination of jingling verse and bright pictures that always appeals strongly to children,” he writes (*Father* 3):

The ancient “Mother Goose Book” had these qualities, and for nearly two centuries the cadences of its rhymes have lingered in the memories of men and women who learned them in childhood. The author and illustrator of “Father Goose” have had no intent to imitate or parody the famous verse and pictures of “Mother Goose.” They own to having followed, in modern fashion, the plan of the book that pleased children ages ago – and still pleases them. These are newer jingles and pictures for children to-day, and intended solely to supplement the nursery rhymes of our ancestors.

Ever the salesman, in this introduction Baum does three things: first, he cross-promotes the sale of his book with Parrish. By referencing the older title, he both places this new collection within that tradition already established *and* encourages readership of *his* version of those tales, as implied by his use of the phrase “the famous verse and pictures,” for which he hopes he and Parrish have set the most recent standard as none before offer a “famous” picture in a collection for Mother Goose. Secondly, he highlights what makes his work unique, following “in modern fashion, the plan of the book that pleased children ages ago” (4). This work promises not to denigrate the traditional rhymes, but simply add to them – a “supplement” to “our ancestors” – placing Baum and Denslow’s work as next in line for lingering in the memories of their readers. And, finally, in his use of “jingling verse and bright pictures,” Baum makes note of the most

striking feature in the collection: the uniqueness of Denslow's illustrations and the spectacle of color.

In *Mother Goose in Prose*, Baum tested his ability to present himself as a scholar of traditional stories who could offer an updated, upgraded retelling of those tales. This first attempt at fiction proved somewhat successful. Then, in *Father Goose, His Book*, Baum tested the flexibility of his audience by creating new, modernized tales for well-established traditional characters – a revision for the classics – and enjoyed his first best seller. And so for his third work, a second collaboration with Denslow, Baum would push the audience even further. He would create a totally new fairy tale, free from those monsters that haunted him as a child, and free from the nagging voice of the overtly didactic who troubled his ability to taste the adventure of his heroes. To do so, he would need a captivating hero, a simple and timeless story, and a new twist on a well-liked model for his writing: enter, Dorothy.

Though there are a number of conflicting stories about the manner in which *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was originally composed – some claim Baum built the story each week in tales to his sons and their friends; others claim that the story came to him all at once, and he rushed all of the children away from him, furiously writing on anything he could find, including envelopes and stray bits of paper – it is well documented that after finishing his manuscript in October of 1899, Baum framed the pencil with which he had written the story and wrote in the frame: “With this pencil I wrote the manuscript of *The Emerald City*.” He felt confident that the work he'd written would cement his name in the history books. In preparation for publishing that work, understanding fully the

implications of the terms he chose, Baum composed the “Introduction” for the work, in which he boldly claimed it as a “modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out.” Finding what I will later define as a space for sentimentality and memory, Baum intentionally inserted himself as an author with knowledge and history within the genre.

Though his legacy suggests Baum found his calling in Oz, history shows a very different tale. Rather, in children’s fiction Baum immediately continued his quest to become a fairy tale author. In the same year that Baum and Denslow released *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* Baum released two, more “practical” money makers for Hill in *The Navy Alphabet* and *The Army Alphabet*, as well as his bound edition of the earlier trade journal articles in *The Art of Decorating Dry Goods Windows and Interiors* for the Show Window Association, before publishing *A New Wonderland* (a retitled *Adventures in Phunniland*) with illustrations by Frank Ver Beck. In 1901, he published three fairy-tale-esque works: *American Fairy Tales* (serialized in the *Chicago Chronicle* and other newspapers) *Dot and Tot of Merryland* (another collaboration with Denslow), and *The Master Key; An Electrical Fairy Tale, founded upon the Mysteries of Electricity and the Optimism of its Devotees* with illustrations from Fanny Cory. Though none of these were as successful as *The Wizard*, his persistence continued with *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* in 1902, wherein Baum returned to his successful model of utilizing a character with which his audience had some familiarity and a sense of tradition. Nevertheless, the book did not achieve Oz-like fame.

As previously discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, Baum turned his attention to the stage for a musical adaptation called *The Wizard of Oz* in June of 1902. Carefully cross-marketing, he and Denslow agreed to a re-branding of the novel in 1903 under Bobbs-Merrill as *The New Wizard of Oz*. Reunited with his love for the stage, and seeing an opening in public interest for stage-adaptations – a genre with which he had some previous experience in *The Maid of Arran* – Baum turned his attention to soliciting his work on other adaptations. However, when that failed, he revisited Oz for the novel *The Marvelous Land of Oz* in 1904 and an attempt at a staged musical adaptation in *The Woggle-Bug* in 1905. In between the two, Hearn cites a book and lyrics composition with Paul Tietjens (Baum’s collaborator for *The Wizard* on stage) for *Father Goose* in August of 1904, but notes it having never been completed. Hearn notes no less than eleven works for the stage written by Baum before the failed 1905 production of *The Woggle-Bug*, and as many as twelve from 1905 to 1912, none of them having ever been produced (*Annotated* 388-89).

Steeped in the failure of his playwriting, Baum persisted in his fairy tale pursuit, authoring *Queen Zixi of Ix* in 1905 which “imitated the lavish use of color in *The Wizard of Oz* even to its binding” (Hearn, *Annotated* xlvi), *John Dough and the Cherub* in 1906, and *Father Goose’s Year Book: Quaint Quacks and Feathered Shafts for Mature Children* in 1907. Though *Queen Zixi* is often lauded as one of Baum’s most inventive fantasy/fairy tales, not even there could the author succeed in overcoming public interest in Dorothy. Returning to the cash cow once more, Baum began the Oz series in earnest in 1907 with *Ozma of Oz* illustrated by John R. Neill, with whom he had formed a

relationship through *The Marvelous Land of Oz* after splitting with Denslow in 1903¹⁹. He released a “rearranged and enlarged version of the 1901 edition” of *Baum’s American Fairy Tales; Stories of Astonishing Adventures of American Boys and Girls with Fairies of their Native Land* in 1908; and, later that same year, pressed his luck with another Oz book in *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*. When *Dorothy* proved successful in sales, Baum hitched his horse to the Oz buggy for two more installments in 1909 (*The Road to Oz*) and 1910 (*The Emerald City of Oz*), at which point he attempted to cut off all future adventures by ending the novel incapable of his having any further contact with the land of Oz – communication cut off after Glinda the Good Witch made the land invisible to all beyond its borders to save it from future invasion.

As noted by Katharine Rogers, “Oz books following *The Wizard of Oz* did not receive so much critical attention, as perhaps should be expected in the case of sequels. The number of reviews tapered off, from ninety-seven or ninety-eight for *The Land of Oz*, [. . .] to seventy-three for *The Emerald City of Oz*; and the reviews tend to be in Midwestern and less prestigious newspapers” (173).

Continuing to search for the next space wherein he could achieve the ultimate successes for a bestselling author, Baum began experimenting in other genres. As was his habit in youth, he adopted pseudonyms for these ventures – though now he was, in some ways, protecting his own name from the spoils of failure. Ever concerned with presentation, L. Frank adopted new

¹⁹ In his *Annotated Wizard of Oz* (2000) “Introduction”, Hearn explains that, although the exact reason for the split is unknown, a variety of plausible reasons linger: that the relationship was no longer economically beneficial, that a degree of animosity existed between the two thanks to critical reviews of *Wizard* questioning whose contribution was most responsible for its success, or that, as he quotes Maud Baum in saying, “Denslow got a swelled head, hence the change” (lii).

identities that best captured the feeling of each genre, names which allowed him to “look the part” of someone with whom audiences could find a degree of authenticity in their books. In 1905 and 1906, as Schuyler Staunton, Baum wrote two adult novels within the romance genre: following trends with American fascination with foreign lands, *The Fate of a Crown* and *Daughters of Destiny* “take a young American to Brazil and involve him in a melodramatic revolution” (MacFall 224). They were well received, but Baum did not pursue any additional adult-specific fiction. Then, in 1906, Baum cast a wide net, beginning four new series from four very different personas, starting with the first of his many works aimed for teenage girls: *Annabel, A Novel for Young Folks* under the name Suzanne Metcalf. As MacFall explains, “its unabashed exploitation of the threadbare ‘rags to riches’ plot was popular enough to encourage Reilly and Britton to ask Baum to follow up its success with similar books” (225). Under the name Laura Bancroft, he wrote a group of texts for very young readers; as Edith Van Dyne, a series of adventure books for girls called *Aunt Jane’s Nieces*²⁰; and who better to write a series of adventure books for boys than Captain Hugh Fitzgerald, author of *Sam Steele’s Adventures*?

These collections each represent major trends selling in American children’s literature at the turn of the century; Bancroft, Fitzgerald, and Van Dyne offered Baum enough success to encourage second volumes in their series in 1907; Van Dyne continued in 1908. But Captain Fitzgerald was, perhaps, too hyperbolic an adventurer for Baum’s tales for boys; in 1908, under the name Floyd Akers, he reissued the first and second books as the first and third in a series

²⁰ Carpenter and Shirley quote the contract between Baum and his publishers for *Aunt Janes Nieces* in *L. Frank Baum Royal Historian of Oz*. As it reads, “Baum shall deliver to The Reilly and Britton Co. on or before March 1, 1906 the manuscript of a book for young girls on the style of Louisa M. Alcott stories, but not so good, the authorship to be ascribed to “Ida May McFarland,” or to “Ethel Lynne” or some other mythological female name” (80). Though not stated, the characters to which Reilly & Britton point have names which are similar in character to Baum’s Sairy Ann Bilkins from “Our Landlady” columns in *Pioneer*, suggesting the firm was familiar with the voice in Baum’s past and his convincing “female” persona.

called *The Boy Fortune Hunters*, adding a new second installment of Akers' own. The Akers series continued yearly until 1911. Bancroft dropped production after her 1907 release but did manage one more piece, also in 1911. Van Dyne, however, continued yearly from 1906 until 1918, just one year before Baum's death. Though she ended the *Aunt Jane's Nieces* series in 1915, she began another the next year named after Baum's sister (*Mary Louise*). Like the Oz series from Baum, Van Dyne's work also required a ghost writer to carry on the narrative beyond L. Frank's death.

Under his own name, Baum continued to publish fairy tales – *The Sea Fairies* (1911), *Sky Island* (1912), and collections of prose and verse based on his previously celebrated work (*Baum's Own Book for Children; Stories and Verse from the Famous Oz Books, Father Goose, His Book, Etc., Etc. With Many Hitherto Unpublished Selections*, 1910). Additionally, he began a series based on the “Daring” children, but Hearn explains the series was abandoned when “he and the publishers lost interest” (*Annotated* 384). With none of this work giving him the star power he'd received from *Wizard* and its stage production, Baum returned again and again to Oz. After financial difficulties in 1912, *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* (1913) restored Baum's connectivity to the magical land and ushered in new installments each year until his death: *Tik-Tok of Oz* (1914), *The Scarecrow of Oz* (1915), *Rinkitink in Oz* (1916), *The Lost Princess of Oz* (1917), *The Tin Woodman of Oz* (1918), *The Magic of Oz* (1919), and *Glinda of Oz* (1920). As Hearn notes, a fifteenth book (*The Royal Book of Oz*, 1921) was released with credit given to Baum as its author, “but was entirely the work of Ruth Plumly Thompson, who publishers Reilly & Lee appointed as the next Royal Historian of Oz to carry on the yearly tradition of a new installment in the series” (*Annotated* 385).

Still, throughout the last two decades of his life, Baum tried to venture beyond his position as children's author. Perhaps his inability to remain content arose from the labels of general frivolity for children's literature at the turn of the twentieth century. Despite an overwhelming surge in its production, and phenomenal development in its critical and creative space, most readers and academics still viewed the genre as a relatively blasé task for an author. Regardless of his reasons, Baum's movement to do *more* and be *more* than a children's author was as whole-hearted as any other endeavor he made. As explored in *Wonderful Wizard Marvelous Land*, "If Baum can be said to have had an obsession, certainly it revolved around this inability to summon back the opulence and security of the past. Except, of course, in fancy" (Moore 44). Unfortunately for Frank, like any other endeavor in his past, his lack of business sense and less-than-firm grip on the reality of his projects often landed him and his family in financial crisis. Perhaps best summarized in the words of Raylyn Moore, "if ever a man was unable to use money to advantage, it was Baum, and he exhibited his ineptitude again and again" (43).

According to Martin Garner, "in 1905 [Baum] purchased Pedloe Island, 80 miles off the [California] coast, and announced to the press his plans to convert the island into a miniature land of Oz that would serve as a playground for youngsters. An eleven-year old San Francisco girl was appointed Princess of Oz" and plans for statues of Oz characters were discussed heavily in the press ("Royal Historian" 32). Investment in what would have been the country's first theme park sounds like a plausible venture for a man as immersive in his tasks as L. Frank Baum. However, as Raylyn Moore contests, "no Pedloe Island in this location (or in fact any other location on the Pacific offshore) shows

on any map of the area or in any standard reference, including the ultra-thorough Coast and Geodetic Survey published by the U.S. Department of Commerce. Nor is there any other piece of land of this description in the general area” (67). Talk of Baum’s Land of Oz never got past the planning stage. While it is possible that “Baum’s investment, along with the plan” was “lost during one of the many crises” in his life (Moore 67), the announcement of the future park may also “have been little more than a publicity stunt to promote the sale of the second Oz book,” *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, released the year before with less success than its predecessor (Gardner, “Royal Historian” 32). That kind of spectacular promotion would not be implausible given Baum’s love of spectacle and notoriety.

For a period of time in 1905, he and Maud travelled extensively in Europe and Egypt, making a trip up the Nile River on the money gained from *The Wizard* novel and play. Upon their return, Baum edited a book of letters written by Maud to her friends and family back home in America called *In Other Lands than Ours*, adding his own work in photographs from their journey. While travelling, the two stopped in Paris for a time where Baum found himself in the business of learning about the new rising industry in making movies. The most disastrous of these ventures, by far, was his 1908 attempt to capitalize on the information he learned about film in combination with the country’s latest fascination with travelogues. His creation, *Fairylogue and Radio-Plays*, as described by Mark Evan Swartz in *Oz Before the Rainbow*, “epitomized both Baum’s endless creativity and his lack of financial acumen” (162). As further explained by Swartz, in the production

Baum functioned as the onstage narrator, presenting a travelogue of some of the fairy lands – hence the term *fairylogue* – that he had created in his books. Like many other lecturers of the time, he illustrated his talk with both films and slides. The twenty-three films in the show all had been shot in the Chicago studio of the Selig Polyscope Company and then sent to Paris, where they were hand-colored by Duval Frères. There is no clear explanation for the term *radio-play*. It is likely just another example of Baum’s whimsy – using the word *radio*, which connotes something transmitted by radiant energy, to refer to his fairy film so as to make them seem exotic and technologically modern. (162)

That technical content, as described by Allen Eyles, was “by the standards of its day [. . .] somewhat primitive,” though “some movie magic was used in the picture, such as stop-action photography and superimposition” (60). Hearn, however, calls the films “remarkable by the standards of 1908 when they were filmed” (*Annotated* lxvi-vii). L. Frank’s multimedia work combined the author’s love of technology, film, theatre, and his authored children’s literature in what Hearn labels “a complex advertising campaign for Reilly & Britton Oz books and another fairy tale illustrated by John R. Neill, *John Dough and the Cherub* (1906)” (*Annotated* lxvi).

After Baum “incautiously poured more of his own capital than he had risked on any of his prior plans” into the work, (Moore 64) *Fairylogue and Radio-Plays* opened in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on September 24, 1908. As presented by MacFall, the production was successfully received, as a “genial reviewer in the *Chicago Tribune*”

wrote, “The idea is a new one, and with Mr. Baum’s charming whimsicalities as its base proved to be well worth while” (248). Though Baum’s hefty investment in spectacle suggests he hoped to wow his audience through technological inventiveness, the same reviewer quoted in MacFall found the author the most interesting portion of the show, noting: “Mr. Baum reveals himself as a trained public speaker of abilities unusual in a writer. His enunciation is clear and incisive and his ability to hold a large audience’s attention during two hours of tenuous entertainment was amply demonstrated” (257). However, as Raylyn Moore explains, the production, which “was already proving far too expensive for its returns before it left Chicago theaters, did move to New York City, but was given up as a bad job shortly thereafter” (65). During the same year, Baum anonymously published an adult “novel of intrigue set in contemporary Egypt” called *The Last Egyptian* (Moore 70). Just as with his *Fairylogue*, the costs associated with its production were greater than the profits made in its audience.

As discussed by Katharine Rogers, “It took the Baums years to recover from the financial disaster of the Radio Plays” (*Creator* 175). Unable to pay his debtors, Frank and Maud downsized their estate by selling a winter cabin in Macatawa, Michigan, and their Chicago apartment, and then moving to a rental home in Los Angeles, California. Despite these losses, L. Frank suffered an even greater defeat when, still incapable of paying his creditors, “on August 1, 1910, he signed a contract acknowledging that he was unable to settle his year old debt to [. . .] his major creditor, and would therefore sign over to him his copyrights and royalties on all his books published by Bobbs-Merrill – *The Wizard of Oz*, his most popular book, and nine others” (Rogers, *Creator* 175). As Rogers

notes, “The royalties from 1910 to 1916 amounted to \$10,000, which should have more than covered the debt, but Baum never got any more money from his Bobbs-Merrill titles” (175).

Considering these failed ventures, L. Frank’s return to Oz in 1913 with *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* becomes unavoidably financial in its motivation. Even the author’s introductory tone shifts in its presentation. As previously discussed, Baum’s earlier novels addressed his readers in the manner of a kindly father figure, then as friend and co-author of the fantastical tales. However, *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* “Prologue” begins the stage in Baum’s Oz authorship in which he is “through the kindness of Dorothy Gale of Kansas, afterward Princess Dorothy of Oz, [. . .] appointed Royal Historian of Oz” (*Patchwork* 15). Thereafter, his prefatory material becomes increasingly systematic and cross-promotional. Each offers a reminder of adventures from the previous text (or two), followed by a brief summary for what its story contains; they end with an interest-peaking series of suggestions for future Oz tales, combining Baum’s sense for audience and his ability in marketing with increasingly less of the congenial spirit offered in his previous works. In *Tik-Tok of Oz* (1914), for example, Baum writes a note “To My Readers,” offering a preview of the text to come and ending with:

So, if Dorothy keeps her word and I am permitted to write another Oz book, you will probably discover how all these characters came together in the famous Emerald City. Meantime, I want to tell all my little friends – whose numbers are increasing by many thousands every year – that I am grateful for the favor they have shown my books and for the delightful

little letters I am constantly receiving. I am almost sure that I have as many friends among the children of America as any story writer alive; and this, of course, makes me very proud and happy. (*Tik-Tok* 8)

He signs the note “L. Frank Baum” from “OZCOT,” his home in California. However, by the time of publication for *Rinkitink in Oz*, just two years later, the personal note from the author has disappeared. In its place is a brief section called “Introducing this Story.” It offers a single paragraph summary of the adventures to come and a single paragraph of pre-emptive advertising: “If I am permitted to write another Oz book it will tell of some thrilling adventures encountered by Dorothy, Betsy Bobbin, Trot and the Patchwork Girl right in the Land of Oz, and how they discovered some amazing creatures that never could have existed outside a fairy-land. I have an idea that about the time you are reading this story of Rinkitink I shall be writing that story of Adventures in Oz” (*Rinkitink* 1). Though the “Introducing the Story” for *Rinkitink* still ends with a personal address – “Don’t fail to write me often and give me your advice and suggestions, which I always appreciate. I get a good many letters from my readers, but every one is a joy to me and I answer them as soon as I can find time to do so” (1) – the practice of including such an address ends after this book. Baum’s last Oz novel, *Glinda of Oz* (1920) contains no note at all. Only an advertisement for available Baum books in the Oz series prefaces the text.

In the midst of Oz, Baum tried one final path to stardom in California. Though he had returned to the stage in a failed adaptation of *The Tik-Tok Man of Oz* in 1914, Baum still longed to see his narratives in action. Living in Hollywood at the dawn of the American film industry, he “sensed the change in popular taste and moved with the time.

He turned to the rising medium – movies – which was beginning to bring his quiet little Hollywood village out of the obscurity of the orange groves and into the glare of Kleig lights” (MacFall 257). With the enthusiasm expected of Baum, he promoted heartily the good opportunities for Hollywood fortunes in local papers. He joined the Los Angeles Athletic Club and, there, “met many men connected with the movie industry” including “cowboy star Will Rogers and actor George Arliss” (Carpenter 108). With his friends, L. Frank formed a small group within the club called the Uplifters. They would occasionally perform plays for the other members of the club, many of which were written by Baum. And, as Carpenter explains, “soon the Uplifters began making movies together, based on Oz books” (109). Loncraine writes, “Baum believed that the magic of his modern fairy tales could be perfectly translated onto the screen, using the illusion techniques of trick films pioneered by Méliès. [. . .] Moving pictures were an ideal medium through which Baum could renew and reenergize the Land of Oz” (257).

Per his usual style, Frank “became president of the new Oz Film Manufacturing Company” (Carpenter 109) in 1914. However, differing from his previous business ventures, “instead of investing his own money in this company, Frank Sr. received stock in the company (and thus a share in the profits) in exchange for the movie rights to his books” (Carpenter 110). Produced four years after his failed *Fairylogue* films, these shorts were “set up by Baum to ‘produce quality, family-oriented entertainment suitable for children’” (Swartz 71). Though he poured no money into the films – single reel productions called *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, following the novel by the same name but adding a love story; *The Magic Cloak of Oz*, a retelling of his 1905 *Queen Zixi of Ix*; and

His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz, a “patchwork plot pieced together from numerous Oz books” (Loncraine 258) – Baum was no less dedicated to their financial success than any other production of his narratives. Mark Swartz writes that making a short film was “probably the only success story to derive from *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*” (72). The book had not sold well, but the reel was picked up by Paramount Pictures in 1915. Hopeful for success, the Oz Film Manufacturing Company carried on with their production of the remaining two films before the box office opened on their first. Frank was met with failure for the last time in his life: “partly because it was perceived very much as a movie for children,” *Patchwork* did poorly in the theaters and Paramount “refused to accept the other two films in the cycle, which Baum had already made” (Swartz 74). The productions for the three films totaled more than \$23,000. He was once more in financial ruin. Baum’s health deteriorated quickly after the dissolving of the film company. He suffered a stroke in 1918 and died in his home in California on May 6, 1919. “He left Maud with cash in the bank amounting to exactly \$1, 072.96” (Schwartz 303).

Given the romanticized legacy of L. Frank Baum and his work, considering his authorship of the Oz series as being the result of a very good salesman in need of money may remove some of the sentimental nostalgia for readers. However, as discussed by Raylyn Moore, “There is no real indication anywhere that he ever regarded even his Oz material as anything but a means to some other end” (75). Their romanticization is largely the result of generations of readers inflicting on the series their own ideas about who the Royal Historian of Oz really was. As quoted by Schwartz, Baum’s obituary in

his hometown *Syracuse Journal* read, “L. Frank Baum made balm of failure. [. . .] He kept everlastingly at it” (303). This review of his life, one in which a man worked tirelessly to be really good at so many things, offers an understanding of Baum’s dedication to each of the career paths he tried to take. Formally trained in the art and power of presentation, and raised in a home with a father for whom giving up was not an option, L. Frank set out to make a name for himself. In at least one case, he succeeded in doing just that. Though the reality of Baum’s likely motivation behind the continuation of Dorothy’s adventures in Oz is less in tune with the author’s lofty goal to write “a modernized fairy tale” as he states in his “Introduction” to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, more than one hundred years after its publication, he seems to have succeeded in adding that American fairy tale to public memory. Its lasting influence continues to shape American culture and the imagination of children today and promises to do so for the foreseeable future.

In considering the path of Baum’s career as an author of fiction – up to the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and beyond – it must be remembered that he was, above all, a man skilled in presentation. That he should choose to write children’s literature is an entirely natural selection for a man like Baum – an incredible salesman who, without a doubt, understood the desires of American buyers and the ways in which those desires could be satisfied with goods. An examination of that literary climate in the next chapter will make clear the demands under which Baum would write – within a market booming with opportunity and begging for something both different and *American*, a market he read with skill and enthusiasm. Furthermore, an examination of

popular interest in folk and fairy tales in the third chapter will make clear the motivation behind Baum's very specific choice in genre.

CHAPTER II:
AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE,
or **THE IDEAL MARKET FOR IDEOLOGY**

“All children’s books are about ideals. Adult fiction sets out to portray and explain the world as it really is; books for children present it as it should be.”

--Humphrey Carpenter, *Secret Gardens*

In the introduction to *Children’s Literature* from Blackwell, noted scholar Peter Hunt locates the study of this literary field in “a parallel universe to the world of canonical literature, a universe of very large texts with a massive cultural influence [. . .] and in many ways more complex, more *difficult* to talk about than other literatures” (2). Hunt’s assessment of the complexity of children’s literature certainly rings true when examining the range of scholarship offered on the field and its history. More than works which locate the emergence of children’s literature as a distinct literary classification, texts regarding the history of children’s literature must additionally contend with defining the genre’s boundaries: are works of children’s literature those texts written specifically *for* children, or are they simply works *read by* children? (Or *to* them?) These questions make less clear the path for determining when the genre materialized as its own point of literary creation, but they also bring into focus valuable points of interrogation regarding the form and function of an already complex classification.

Contributing to that complexity is the acknowledgement that children’s literature written *for* children operates on an author/reader dynamic not necessarily present in other forms of literature. As expressed by Deborah Cogan Thacker, “While all literature is

based on a power relationship, and all is dependent on a shared understanding of language, children's literature is based on a relationship that is less equal than that between adult reader and adult author" (3). That is, the assumed position of the author as instructor – relying on a tradition of didacticism – always already¹ positions the child as student. In this way, the presence of the authorial voice in narration and framing materials can hold particular importance when studying these texts, as this dissertation intends to show. As Thacker elaborates, "One of the purposes of reading, and of stories, for children, is to admit them into an adult language system and, thus, one of the defining features of children's books is the tendency of the voice of the narrator to acknowledge the reader's 'apprenticeship' to the written word" (3-4). Because apprenticeship necessarily requires a master, exploring children's literature means exploring author/reader relationships in a way unique from other genres, as it involves not only studying the literature itself but, in a far more cynical examination than that required of literature written for adults, also studying the economic, social, psychological, and ideological motivations of its creator *for* its creation. As expressed by Claudia Mills, when considering children's books, "whether or not their authors are on record as seeking to advance a didactic agenda, and even when their authors are on record as refusing to advance such agenda, it remains the case that all literature advances values and must be

¹ The term "always already," sometimes written "always-already," here is used in reference to Louis Althusser's concept that ideology shapes consciousness: "Individuals are always-already subjects" (119) in that their call to existence comes within a set of predetermined expectations out of the culture/ideology in which they are born. In this case, the author-teacher/reader-student relationship always-already exists because of the dominant ideology that childhood is a time of learning and growth and that children are necessarily in need of knowledge from their elders to succeed in that growing.

judged at least in part on the values it expresses” (5). By considering children less able to comprehend a language-system ruled by adult authors, and in greater need of translation by adult voices, we render them more capable of being manipulated by covert (or overt) lessons in ideology through their consumption of textual and paratextual materials.

The work of L. Frank Baum is no different in its need for interrogating an adult author’s motivations for creating texts for children; in Baum’s case, this means not only printed texts, but stage productions, toys, journals, and a whole host of other material (re: *commercial*) supplements to encourage readership and, as this dissertation asserts, assimilation to the values and social norms presented as ideal within those texts. Baum’s work must be understood as existing within an already transforming body of literature for children in a country with a complicated history for producing such work. By examining Baum’s work in children’s fiction as a calculated business venture by an already practiced businessman, his choices in audience and genre become less risky than those of authors pursuing success in other forms of fiction writing. When placed within the history of children’s literature as a whole, but particularly within the context of *American* children’s literature, Baum’s commercial and artistic influences for composing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* grow clearer. An exploration of Baum’s ideologically-based motivations for composing the text is the subject of a later chapter.

LANDING IN AMERICA, SINNERS ONE AND ALL

Primarily the result of Puritan ideology, widespread literacy was achieved by early settlers and their children in the New World largely because the ability to read anything gave a person the ability to read the Bible. This allowed for closer study of the

word of God and a greater chance for living a pure and godly life. According to Gail Murray, “Primary responsibility for literacy training was assigned to parents. [However], whether through ignorance or overwork, some families must have been derelict in their duties, because in 1647 the Massachusetts Assembly passed the first colonial law requiring that children become literate” (9). There had been no laws in England on literacy. However, as expressed by Murray, “Puritan clergy and laymen knew their noble experiment in creating the City on the Hill depended on a pious and educated following” (9). Without accessibility to schools like those on British soil, New England families made education a home-based affair, and their children made learning to read an important early priority, and they did so with good reason: their eternity depended on it.

Manuals on childrearing and family care, sermons, and printed pamphlets focused on early piety for all. As Gillian Avery explains, “the family unit was assuming a new importance. The writers of books about family government described it again and again as a church and a commonwealth in which the father was responsible for the spiritual welfare of each member” (18). Puritan parents were responsible for educating their children in the ways of the church, and Puritan children had moral responsibilities with grave consequences if left unfulfilled. According to Kimberley Reynolds, this stemmed largely from the Puritan belief that “humans are born sinful as a consequence of mankind’s ‘Fall’” (npag). Because of this central idea to their faith, “much of the earliest children’s literature is concerned with saving children’s souls through instruction and by providing role models for their behaviour” (Reynolds).

Although published abroad, the Reverend John Cotton's 1646 *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes*² is classified by Murray as "undoubtedly the first children's book written in the American colonies" (5). Self-charged with introducing the children of the colonies to Puritanism, Cotton's work was comprised of sixty-four catechisms – a series of questions and answers to be memorized – for living a good and godly life. While *Spiritual Milk* was not the only book available for instruction, "few colonials had time to pen works for children, and those who did faced great challenges in acquiring the technology and royal permission required to have the works printed. Well into the eighteenth century, most children's literature was imported directly from England" (Murray 3). These texts were largely biblical in their focus, like printings of John Weever's 1601 *An Agnus Dei* (translated *A Lamb of God*), a miniature "thumb Bible" that presented the New Testament abridged and in rhyming couplets, or Thomas White's 1660 *Manual for Parents*³, which contained a Puritan primer for youth later reprinted as *A Little Book for Little Children*. According to Murray, these primers and catechisms were "by far the best-selling children's works produced in the American colonies" (5). Because of the large number of Puritan sects in and around Massachusetts Bay, "every family constituted a potential market, even the more middling classes. The primers embody the pedagogical philosophy

² Full title: *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes; in either England: Drawn out of the breasts of both Testaments for their Souls nourishments: But may be of like use to any Children*

³ Full title: *A Manual for Parents: Wherein is Set Down Very Particular Directions in Reference to the Baptising, Correcting, Instructing, and Chusing a Calling for Their Children: to which is Added A Little Book for Children: Wherein Besides Several Instructions, and Encouragement, Several Examples.*

and moral values of the era as well as set forth the doctrinal positions of the dissenting sects” (Murray 5).

However, despite the ready space and funds (limited though they may have been) reserved for books instructing little ones, fiction was entirely absent from the family library. “It was untrue, therefore a lie, and therefore damnably wicked” (Avery 26). Rather, prose narratives for young Puritans relayed “real” stories of children with exemplary behavior who met an early death; these conversion tales were designed to further turn readers’ thoughts towards God. Among them, James Janeway’s 1671 *A Token for Children*⁴ outlined the pious deaths of thirteen godly children who greeted the end of life joyfully because of the promise it held in eternity. It was so greatly received in the colonies that Cotton Mather compiled a supplement to the work with stories collected from the Massachusetts Bay area in 1700⁵. Gruesome though they may sound for today’s child audiences, for the Puritan sects, the early and complete devotion of their children to the teachings of God was imperative for their securing a favorable position in Heaven. In a time when childhood mortality rates were high, this focus on early conversion was essential. As discussed by Seth Lerer:

It is easy to demonize the Puritans. [. . .] And yet the Puritans clearly loved their children. Their progeny fascinated them: their growth, their

⁴ Full title: *A Token for Children: Being An Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths of several Young Children*

⁵ *A Token, for the children of New-England, or, Some examples of children, in whom the fear of God was remarkably budding, before they dyed, in several parts of New-England: preserved and published, for the encouragement of piety in other children*; Boston, in N.E.: Printed by Timothy Green, for Benjamin Eliot, at his shop, under the West-end of the Town House, 1700.

education, and their lives as readers. Under the aegis of the Puritans, children's books became a new and separate kind of literature. They emerged as an expression of Puritan culture itself, an extension of larger publication projects keyed to spiritual education and moral growth. [. . .] There was a kind of moral literacy to the Puritan movement, a sense that books could shape lives. Only through reading, through performing the catechism, and through reflecting on exemplary narratives could the child be prepared for heaven, whenever the invitation might come. (81-83)

In Puritan literature and its reception, we find two important notes for the future of American children's literature, particularly that literature among which Baum appeared: first, in its encouragement for material success through hard work and vigilance, Puritan literature for children first idealized those traits as integral to Americanism. As Gillian Avery explains, Puritanism in England was favored by "merchants, tradesmen and the self-employed, who attributed their prosperity and ascendancy over papist countries to the fact that Protestantism had purged religion of 'the slavery and incumbrances' of antiquated doctrines and ceremonies. To them thrift, industry, and the accumulation of wealth were the cardinal virtues, and poverty very nearly a crime" (14). Furthermore, "This ruthlessness, this almost religious veneration for success, the certainty that prosperity could be equated with godliness and therefore rose and fell with the behavior of the population, was part of New England from the very start, as was the detestation of idleness" (Avery 14). This ideal of the hard-working American and the wickedness of poverty held through to Baum's time of entrepreneurial fortune-

hunting and continues today to be a strong tenet of American ideology. Despite countless narratives and studies on the irrationality of an ideology which assumes poverty is a direct result of laziness, even twenty-first-century Americans focus on hard work and material gain as a measure of success, a concept central to our national identity.

Second, early conversion tales offered suggestions for meaningful narratives for authors of children's literature in later generations. Regardless of its harrowing accounts of child deaths, Janeway's *A Token for Children* remained popular in America into the nineteenth century. The reason for this popularity, as discussed by Avery, may lie in the work being "the first book [child readers] had encountered that told stories of children" (31). Not only were children central to the stories, they were heroes "manifestly more holy than their elders, some of them as young as five years old, gloriously holding the stage" (Avery 31). This Puritan literature considered the necessity of self-identification between reader and character for emotional (and ideological) impact. For American children's literature of the future, a central characteristic would remain the inclusion of child characters for child readers. Baum's Dorothy is only one example of a child who (eventually) shows more wisdom than the adults around her, but the motif is plentiful in works of children's literature even today.

CLEANING THE SLATE

As Lerer explains, "The Puritans saw childhood as a vital but passing phase of life," (84) one in which a born sinner could be made to follow the path to salvation through memorization, recitation, and continual studying of biblical texts. In England, however, popular views of childhood were changing. While those changes would

eventually reach American soil, they would not do so without first being filtered through the ideology of the Puritans. Moving towards the time of Baum, two philosophical texts would greatly influence the ways in which children were perceived: John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile, or On Education* (1762).

The 1693 publication of Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* continued to encourage a focus on childhood as an integral period for teaching morality. However, in complete opposition from the born-sinner child of the Puritans, Locke asserted that children were innocent blank slates, *tabula rasa*, awaiting the instruction and guidance of adults. The careful instruction of children could lead to better contributing members of society. One important tool for that instruction was the mastery of child literacy. Locke's insistence that "children may be cozened into a knowledge of the letters; [and] be taught to read, without perceiving it to be anything but a sport" urged a shift in British children's literature of the eighteenth century (116). Upon Locke's suggestion that a new reader should receive "some easy pleasant book" to read, "wherein the entertainment that he finds might draw him on, and reward his pains in reading" (117), offering the Aesopica as an example, the literary market in Great Britain expanded in its production of fable reprinting like those of Aesop as well as *Reynard the Fox*, originally published in 1555.

The same Lockean philosophy regarding childrearing also encouraged growth in fictional tales of exemplary children. For Locke and his followers, the child was a malleable being, one for whom the greatest teaching tool was experience in conquering

morally difficult situations, and for whom literature could offer those experiences vicariously through characters whose moral compasses always pointed them in the right direction. As Avery writes:

Indeed, one could well argue that the governing epistemology of children's literature has been, since the early eighteenth century, deeply Lockean. By denying the possibility of innate ideas, Locke and his followers transformed the child into a product of his or her education. And by focusing that education on sensible experience, writers of children's literature could tell stories of growth as encounters with things of this world. (105)

Additionally, Locke's encouragement for children's authors to accompany their work with pictures to further entertain and educate children as readers, meant greater investment in printing, presentation, and image quality, which eventually led to the book many scholars point to as the first text written specifically for children as leisure readers: John Newbery's 1744 *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*⁶. With its combination of pictures, stories, rhymes, and lessons – both moral and fact-based – Newbery's book promises “instruction and amusement” in its title. While *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* is nearly universal among scholars in its designation as the “first” work of children's literature, M. O. Grenby insists “Newbery's role has been exaggerated” (4). Pointing to the work of

⁶ Full title: *A Little Pretty Pocket-book, intended for the instruction and amusement of little master Tommy and pretty Miss Polly: with two letters from Jack the Giant-killer: as also a ball and pincushion; the use of which will infallibly make Tommy a good boy, and Polly a good girl*

Thomas Boreman as well as that of Mary and Thomas Cooper, Grenby demonstrates that “other London author-publishers pre-dated and competed” with Newbery with success (4).

Regardless of whether he was “first,” Newbery’s legacy is undeniable. Attributed most directly to his well-honed skills in marketing, the Newbery name quickly became associated with the very best in children’s literature. For the first (recordable) time, Newbery tapped in to the exploitation of the child’s best interests as a vulnerable entryway to parents’ pocketbooks. This same formula would direct Baum’s authoring of children’s literature and its marketing more than two hundred and fifty years later, as well as the work of many (arguably all) children’s authors to come. In England, the combination of lower mortality rates, increased attention to child development, and developments in the industry of the book trade made the market prime territory for new material goods for the betterment of parents and their little ones throughout the eighteenth century.

Following Newbery, a great number of authors wrote works for children in which the lessons came secondary to the entertainment provided. Sarah Fielding’s 1749 *The Governess, or Little female academy, Being the history of Mrs. Teachum, and her nine girls* offered the first full-length book of original tales written specifically for children. And, attributed to Oliver Goldsmith (but possibly the work of Newbery), *The History of Little Goody Two-shoes* serves as an example of a tale in which children who were poor in material possession were rich in moral fiber and found themselves rewarded by the end of their stories. “Unlike in the Puritan tales of pious children,” however, “the reward for

good and moral lives in Newbery's books was not a holy death or the promise of heaven but achieving respect and material well-being" (Murray 15). Those rewards would later make the books popular with American audiences, where a general movement towards a more secular society appreciated the tangible gains made through the characters' hard work and good behavior – similar in effect to the work of Horatio Alger in Baum's time. Towards the end of the century, the Kilner sisters, Mary Ann and Dorothy, contributed works which personified objects and animals for the first time. And Maria Edgeworth, after partnering with her father for *Practical Education* (1798), penned brief didactic tales consisting of mostly dialogue. Continuing to fill the demands of Christian families, authors like Anna Letitia Barbauld wrote *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781) as well as a series of domestic tales, *Evenings at Home* (written with her brother, John Aikin, in 1792). And, in a style that would spark considerable attention from American evangelicals in the nineteenth century, Hannah More, a founder of Sunday Schools, published her "Cheap Repository Tracts" beginning in 1795 – more than 400 pamphlets with brief moral stories for the education of children.

A common thread among these eighteenth-century writers is their avoidance of some very particular elements of fantasy. In his discussions on proper literature, Locke insists that children be spared from hearing any tales that include "impressions and notions of spirits and goblins, or any fearful apprehensions in the dark" (138). Though Locke acknowledges the effectiveness of using fear to deter children from poor behavior, he suggests that "the remedy is much worse than the disease; and there are stamped upon their imaginations ideas that follow them with terror and affrightment" (138). As

explained by Murray, “Before long, writers for children came to distrust ‘fairies, enchanted castles, hobgoblins, romances,’ and the like because they filled the child’s mind with ‘improper ideas’ and were indeed ‘baneful poisons’” (18). Instead, writers like those previously mentioned in eighteenth-century England focused on Locke’s insistence that children were imbued with rational thought, and that considering children rational beings would allow them to exercise that thought; doing so in entertaining ways would simply make children more likely to accept the lessons they were given, leading to better prepared generations in the future. Therefore, children should receive stories which sparked their imaginations in terms of reader identification but did not insult their rationality or make them fearful of the world through radical means of fantasy.

It should be remembered, however, that Locke’s methods of education were set forth to accomplish reader acculturation to his own, very specific, ideology. As Grenby reminds us, Locke “was concerned that supernatural tales were the province of servants and the poor, and one of his main aims was to remove children of the middle and upper classes from the influence of their social inferiors” (“Fantasy” npag). In the rigidly divided social classes of England, Locke’s ideology was deeply appreciated by those readers who valued their children’s proper social placement for the future. Peasant tales told by nannies would certainly not fit the bill for teaching future aristocrats. As Jack Zipes writes in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*:

The oral tale had flourished for a long time in villages and nurseries, part of the popular discourse, part of a discourse between governesses and children of the upper class. It had even seen literary light in the mass marketed ‘blue

books' distributed by peddlers for consummation by peasants and the lower classes. However, it was disdained as a literary form by the aristocratic and bourgeois classes until [. . .] it could be codified and used to reinforce an accepted discursive mode of social conventions advantageous to the intelligentsia and ancien régime, which made a fashion out of exploiting the ideas and productivity of the bourgeoisie. (3)

While the appropriation of fairy tales for teaching French courtly ideology was already taking place in the works of Charles Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy, using similar literary modes in English ideology would come into vogue in children's literature in the nineteenth century; eighteenth century British literature for children was largely written without fantastical elements, save the occasional personification of an animal or everyday object, the purpose of which, according to Lerer was "to connote not just the toys of the nursery or the bedroom, but the objects of experience that teach sensible and moral action" (106). All objects and beings were, in some sense, creations of God and could therefore be considered spiritual teaching tools.

In America, with its deep-seated Puritan roots, the 'lies' of fantasy were even less likely to be well-received. There, the turn to entertainment in children's books took much longer to come to fruition. Despite a number of diverse settlements spreading throughout the land, as Avery explains, "Culturally New England was the dominant colony then, and it was not just the Puritans' emphasis on hard work, thrift and material gain, but their deep-rooted distrust of leisure and of the imagination, and their abhorrence of fiction (the 'sporting lie' as they termed it)" that determined the development of American books for

children for quite some time (2). That dominant ideology led to what seems a more natural shift in American children's literature: the development of non-fiction texts via schoolbooks.

Pre-dating Locke's insistence that children be offered examples and experiences to learn good morals, the introduction in 1687 of the *New England Primer* offered children a variety of readings in which to experience some autonomy in their education. Courtney Weikle-Mills, writing on one such component of its many editions, suggests "its emphasis on the literacy of the individual believer anticipated a shift toward self-government and the reader's participation in the creation of meaning" (412). First used in the home as a method of teaching children basic religious tenets, "children became familiar with the *Primer's* contents within the context of family worship services, which regularly included recitation and drilling in the catechism" (Weikle-Mills 417). The *Primer* expanded to include, alongside those religious teachings, illustrated alphabets and readings in a variety of academic subjects; but even the presence of these less church-focused educational messages showed great reverence and devotion to Puritan ideology. Linking letters with moral lessons, the *Primer's* "alphabetic imagery would govern educational practice well into the nineteenth century" (Lerer 84); their presence also shows an increase in American interest in the use of companion images in children's texts. And, as Avery explains, "Its effect on children who rarely saw pictures is almost impossible to imagine in a world where images are toppling the printed word. The thumb-nail engravings were crude, blurred and often baffling, but the very mystery was appealing" (29). The same would be true of Baum and Denslow's use of color plates for

spectacle in the illustrations for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. That new technology, too, would hold mystery and appeal for early-twentieth-century readers.

According to Avery, “By the eighteenth century large numbers of Americans played no part in organized religious life. Even in New England, the best-churched region, with its tightly knit communities and compulsory church attendance, it is probable that not more than one person in seven was a full church member” (42). Still, as explored by Leonard S. Marcus in *Minders of Make-Believe*, “The Puritan belief that indulgence in fiction represented a fateful misuse of the essential life skill of reading set a pattern for what was to remain the central debate about juvenile literature through the time of the Civil War, with reverberations lasting well into the next century” (2). There was no room for fantasy in literature necessary for raising children who might one day lead a great new nation. This is not to suggest that works of fantasy didn’t exist. In cheap chapbooks, those rag-printed small-scale books designed to be read until they fell apart and peddled by every press and door-to-door book salesman across the country, brief retellings of traditional fables and fairy tales written in simple language for an audience of poor readers, which often included children, continued to provide written expressions of folk and peasant culture as they had in England since the sixteenth century. These were not, however, considered specifically children’s literature, nor were they considered “proper” reading material for any colonist hoping to gain success in the New World. Still, examinations in this mode of textual delivery can provide important insight into American popular culture. Victor Neuburg’s *The Penny Histories: A Study of Chapbooks*

for Young Readers over Two Centuries offers an excellent compilation of facsimiles for seven such texts and information regarding their presence in the colonial home.

According to Murray, it was the imported work of John Newbery that “became one of the principal vehicles through which philosopher John Locke’s ideas about child rearing and the psychology of learning were introduced in America” (17) in the second half of the eighteenth century. Recognizing the Puritanical stronghold on American children’s literature, Newbery published, in addition to his toy books, a number of “serious-minded books for the young” (7) for American distribution. “Wading cautiously into the colonial market’s uncharted waters,” Marcus explains, Newbery “advertised an assortment of the latter, more traditional little volumes as early as 1750 in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*” (7). His astuteness in marketing, and his obvious understanding of Puritan ideology meant Newbery’s serious books would sell well on New England’s shores; and once his name could be trusted, his fiction was an easy sale, too.

The acquisition of several Newbery toy-books by Boston publisher Isaiah Thomas in 1779 and their subsequent sales led to the works being pirated for an American audience. With no international copyright laws in place, Thomas’s doing so was entirely legal and sparked a practice which would, unfortunately, discourage new American voices in children’s literature for some time to come (Marcus 8). Thomas was only one of a number of New England printers whose presses found their start in reprinting British texts. Rosalie Halsey explains that in America “the art of writing for children was so unknown that often attempts to produce child-like ‘histories’ for them resulted in little other than novels on an abridged scale” (79). Thomas’s own contribution, however, came

in the form of a home-made library of reprinted works only slightly altered for an American audience. Though the works were neither original nor American, their printing secured regular sales as the Revolutionary War raged on. As Halsey asserts, “The prejudice against anything of British manufacture was especially strong in the vicinity of Boston; and it was an altogether natural expression of this spirit that impelled the Worcester printer, as soon as his business was well established, to begin to reprint the various little histories” (104). Beyond borrowing Newbery’s authorship, Thomas co-opted a number of his marketing schemes, the very thing M. O. Grenby insists made Newbery’s legacy outweigh those of children’s authors coming before him. Newbery was “the first successfully to commercialise books for children, and he used a simple but durable formula: the encasement of the instructive material that adults thought their children would need within an entertaining format that children might be supposed to want” (Grenby 4). Newbery used references in his tales to other material goods sold by his company, offering suggestions for everything from Dr. James’s Fever Powders (the sales from which earned him a small fortune) to both previous and upcoming publications. Newbery understood the power of tangible goods beyond books for roping in child readers, as is evidenced by the inclusion of gender-directed toys with *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*. Thomas, too, understood that the sales of his bookstore were significantly dependent on the demands of children and the culturally perceived needs of their parents, and he regularly used the adventures of his young heroes to reference other characters and the books already in print and forthcoming from the Thomas printing house.

The success of Thomas's reprints demonstrated to American publishers the profitability in marketing literature for children which encompassed a variety of forms, and a plethora of other British-authored reprints came to American child readers. Among these, the words of Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Sarah Trimmer, and Maria Edgeworth offered stories with which American children could deeply identify. "These authors brought a softer tone to the rather sterile discourses that had passed for children's literature before Newbery and, consciously or not, embodied the prevailing ideology of middle-class domesticity" (Murray 20). Edgeworth's work in particular "was probably more influential in America than in her own country" thanks to her focus on "alert, independent, socially minded young people, taking an informed interest in the world around them and learning from experience" (Avery 65). As Avery explains, despite American distaste for the novel because of its penchant for running wild with falsehoods, "Edgeworth novels [. . .] seem to have occupied an entirely separate level [. . .] often cited as one of the few instances where there was any good to be gained from reading [fiction]" (67). Still, Avery claims, "it was the moral and instructive content that appealed to those in authority; the literary excellence, if they did recognize it, would have seemed irrelevant" (67). As expressed by Murray:

British female authors fueled and shaped the development of American children's literature in fundamental ways. They assumed that all experience was premised on moral choices and that the socialization of the young into a morally correct social order was a female responsibility. With the decline of the Puritan hegemony in education, children's literature

assumed the role of inculcating morals and defining behavioral principles.

The language of those works helped shape and reshape the ethos of female domesticity and motherhood throughout the nineteenth century. (21)

These early reinforced concepts of gender roles in American households certainly continued through Baum's lifetime, as the push for women's rights began its long and continuing journey, and gained greater importance in the post-Civil War literature for children, after the dissolution of the national church and the push towards recognizing the importance of the family domicile in shaping good men and women was in full swing.

Near the end of the eighteenth century, American voices began to experiment with the kinds of stories found in the work of their British peers. However, Avery suggests these works "show little national feeling," with "no strong sense of place, no apparent difference in manners or daily life," and may be difficult to differentiate from "a forgotten English book" (2), sometimes making it hard to discern a modified reprint from an original text.

What did become increasingly distinguishable in American children's literature were the readings offered to children in schoolbooks. Determined, after the American Revolution, to maintain the patriotic fervor gained through independence, many statesmen began to advocate for universal education of American children in ways that emphasized American virtues. This resulted in the printing of *The History of America, Abridged for the Use of Children of all Denominations* in 1795 and an increased interest in authoring texts to foster a new nationalism in future generations. Noah Webster had, in 1783, utilized interest in American nationalism and children's education to publish and

widely distribute the *American Spelling Book*, the first volume of what would be a progressive set of textbooks designed to teach children everything from the alphabet and its sounds to an appreciation for works by both classical and contemporary authors and men of importance. According to Murray, Webster “intended that the reading material be instructive in Republican virtues and morals. He dropped the biblical aphorisms of early New England primers and introduced students to American history, standardized American spelling, proper behavior, and his own brand of evangelical Christianity, all at the same time” (28). Later challenged in popularity by the reading instruction methods and texts of William Holmes McGuffey in the *McGuffey Eclectic Readers*, Webster’s work ushered in a new era of children’s educational literature which no longer settled on the church as the only institution to be respected; now, the morals and virtues of the new republic should be equally upheld by all. Webster’s success, however, is also representative of a widespread identification with Christianity as being central to American identity, a notion that would gain powerful influence at the start of the next century through the establishment of American Sunday schools and a wave of evangelicalism that urged a renewed interest in religious ideology as a basis for childrearing. It would take another war, and another rush of American nationalism, to encourage a surge in domestic authorship of children’s fictional literature and a new-found desire by American printers to give those authors a means of publication.

Meanwhile, in Great Britain, another shift in understanding childhood was underway. Following the publication of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s 1792 *Émile*, Romantic authors began exploring the possibilities that writing for children might offer them in a

time when they felt the world had become increasingly utilitarian in its life and artwork. *Émile* tells the story of a fictional child who is allowed to develop naturally without interruption from parental instruction in morality and who, by simply following his natural instincts, manages to preserve all of the unique attributes of childhood innocence and grow into a better man than those who are repeatedly drilled with directions of good behavior. In the beginning of what has been called the Cult of Childhood, early nineteenth century British literature began to reflect Rousseau's attitude of child purity and its powerful influence in directing the lives of adults back towards an innate morality and spirituality. As discussed by Kimberley Reynolds, "In the hands of Romantic poets such as William Blake and William Wordsworth, childhood came to be seen as especially close to God and a force for good," (npag) an image which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, would have enormous impact on the literature of Baum's childhood and his own parents' method of childrearing and family management.

DRILL AND REPEAT

As explored by Anne Scott MacLeod, in nineteenth-century America, "rapidly changing social conditions accelerated and intensified the process that made children the objects of so much adult interest, hope, and anxiety. Nationalism and optimism, reforming zeal and a concern for the perpetuity of democratic institutions, all contributed to the extraordinary attention Americans turned upon their children" (*Moral* 9). A survey of nineteenth-century children's literature reveals a grand explosion in the quantity and quality of works available to American children from American voices. Not quite ready for the full enculturation of Rousseau's ideal child, American children's literature was,

nonetheless, evolving. While the earliest Puritan settlers wanted to free themselves from the religious climate in England, the colonists had continued to consume British literature through imports, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century a growing number of people wanted to distance themselves culturally from their former English experience. This meant cultivating a new American experience. However, uncertainty in the future of American publishing laws and the professionalization of authorship led many printers to continue to import or, more often, adapt and reprint British tales to fit American concepts for less risky investments. This meant a great deal of the fiction and schoolbooks read by American children were still of British origins. But as Gillian Avery asserts, the War of 1812 “sent publishers of recreational books in search of home talent, just as the Revolutionary War had encouraged the growth of American schoolbooks” (77). After embarrassing defeat in their efforts to extend American military control in Canada and free American maritime trade from restrictions, the boundaries of the New Republic were officially set and a national drive to define the greatness of its people pushed the publication of new literature directed at its youngest citizens.

In the most widely read work of 1800, *Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington*, Mason Locke Weems (better known as Parson Weems) capitalized on national interest in the recently deceased George Washington, the nation’s first president, and christened “the idealization of Washington’s character, as well as the laudatory style with which Americans would compose political biographies for decades to come” (Murray 31). Weems greatly elaborated (and highly fictionalized) tales of the man’s rise to greatness and met with immediate criticism for having done so. However, as discussed

by Murray, “Weems apparently knew his audience, one hungry for the exploits (true or not) of a great man who also embodied both the rustic and republican virtues that many Americans idealized. [. . .] Weems wrote the American *Aeneid* with his reformulation of the founding story of America, complete with Revolutionary origins and heroes” (31). Though respectable historians of the day would never repeat Weems’s exploitative tales in works written for adults, the mythical history continued to appear in children’s literature throughout the antebellum period, with voices like Anna Reed and Peter Parley repeating some of the better known tales to further childhood fascination with the successful early American, many centering their lessons on what Weems listed as Washington’s greatest virtues: “Religion, patriotism, magninmity [*sic*], industry, temperance, and justice” (qtd. in Murray 31). For many early American children’s authors, the push for proper ideology was far more important than the need for historical accuracy.

By and large, the most popular method of delivering texts to children in the nineteenth century came in the form of the periodical, though early attempts at the medium fared less well than those after the Civil War. Devoted to the education of children in language appropriate to their level of understanding, *Children’s Magazine* (1789) became the first American publication directed to young readers. It was nearly a complete reprint of a British periodical from the year before called *The Juvenile Magazine* edited and published by John Marshall. Though the *Children’s Magazine* lasted only four months, it began a string of publications with similar intentions to provide children with information and entertainment suitable in both the language and the

lessons provided for American youth. Scholar Pat Pflieger's fantastic online collection "Nineteenth-Century American Children & What They Read" (www.merrycoz.org) offers, though not exhaustive, an incredibly thorough annotated bibliography for many of them. But while periodical literature provided children with something dependably "new" to read, rather than confining their literary experience to schoolbooks or their parents' bookshelves, much of the work provided was reprinted from other (British) magazines or newspapers; a gap in independently published original American content for children still existed.

That gap found a voice in the man who would become the most recognizable early nineteenth-century children's author in America, Samuel Griswold Goodrich. *The Tales of Peter Parley about America* (1827), written under the pseudonym Peter Parley, introduced child readers to an adult narrator and hero who spoke directly to them. The book begins: "Here I am! My name is Peter Parley! I am an old man. I am very gray and lame. But I have seen a great many things, and had a great many adventures, and I love to talk about them" (9). Complete with illustrations, Goodrich used the book to explore what he recognized as "a growing market for American children's literature, one that recognized the necessity for early learning, achievement, and moral exactitude" (Murray 33). During his lifetime, Goodrich authored more than one hundred titles under the Parley pseudonym. Avery explains: "There were not many topics on which he did not aspire to instruct [. . .]. And he poured out streams of facts, whether he knew anything about the subject or not. His information was nearly always attractively presented, often compelling, though usually misleading and frequently wrong" (79). In each work, as

described by Murray, “Goodrich employed the same techniques of speaking directly to the reader, explaining events or describing sights in simple, direct language, and highlighting moral principles” (33). Additionally, Goodrich showed disdain for fantasy and fairy tales, claiming British author Hannah More as his closest influence in writing; a distrust of highly-imaginative fiction still loomed over the land (Marcus 22).

Along with Goodrich, a number of authors searched for ways to expand upon the storylines available to use in didactic children’s fiction while “adding their own distinctive American flavors to produce a viable American children’s literature” (Murray 34). As expressed by Murray, “Their ability to conflate a nondenominational Christian moral theology into behavioral instructions, couched in story form, became the hallmark of most literature for children in the early Republic. [. . .] Good behavior received its just rewards; naughty children got lost in the woods, drowned, were attacked by wild animals, or fell ill” (34). Julia Marie Child, for example, who founded the *Juvenile Miscellany* in 1826, continually worked to provide children with literature that would promote American values and Christian morality. These goals often meant continuing to forego elements of fiction that might romanticize the child or promote fantasy. Speaking on the choice of children’s books in a parenting manual written in 1831 (*A Mother’s Book*), Child writes, “The books for young people should as far as possible combine amusement with instruction, but it is very important that amusement should not become a necessary inducement” (86). As Gail Murray explains, “Like the early textbooks, this literature served to allay fears that the Republic might disintegrate because of moral laxity or simple ineptitude and confirmed for parents that the moral backbone of American culture

remained firm” (34). As the new nation moved further away from its dependence on British imports and firmly shifted to an industrial capitalist economy, demand increased for literature and material goods that would promote independence and a strong work ethic for children who would contribute to the success of that new economy. *Juvenile Miscellany* is certainly representative of this aim. Carolyn Karcher explains, “Through sermons, dialogues, biographical sketches of bourgeois heroes, and stories of children whose industry, frugality, and perseverance overcome all obstacles, Child and her contributors drive home the message that sound work habits and austere living will earn their rightful reward” (95).

As explored by Murray, “at the same time that these expositions of middle-class virtues and the cultivation of a well-defined set of sound habits found their way into children’s literature, so did another set of equally powerful didactic suppositions” (24). The Second Great Awakening launched a wide-spread return to Protestant Christianity and its centrality in creating good citizens in much of the Western world. Led in America by the work of the Reverend Robert May, who moved his London-based Sunday School movement to Philadelphia in 1811, evangelical supporters (mostly female) worked tirelessly to establish what would become the American Sunday School Union (ASSU) which, by its official founding in 1824, served “over 720 separate Sunday schools” across the country (Murray 36). However, the results of May’s efforts in America differed greatly from what he had achieved in Great Britain. As explained by Avery, “From the start it had been the practice of *all* respectable American parents to send their children to Sunday school, whereas in England the schools were more for the poor and ignorant and

did not expect to take the offspring of the prosperous, educated classes” (6). Unbound from the strict social stratum of their English peers, American children worked on relatively equal footing in terms of upward mobility and opportunity for success. As the attainment of good moral character was seen as integral to achievement, and once more centered on involvement with an emotional connection to Christianity, the necessity for religious-based schooling was less likely a final option for the poor and more likely a blanket desire for all “good” parents.

The publishing practices associated with these schools, created by the American Tract Society, aimed “to supply evangelical literature to the entire accessible population of the United States [. . .]. The Society began publishing tracts for children in 1827, and by the end of May 1828 had put out 239,000 copies” (Avery 98). In an even more impressive number, “by 1830, the ASSU could claim that six million copies of their publications had been sold” (Avery 99). The advent of the public library system in America and public interest in literature for children led the ASSU to establish Sunday school libraries in every town; in many smaller towns, these Sunday school libraries served in place of public libraries and restricted the reading of rural citizens to evangelical Christian tales that often included the early conversion of a once-wayward child whose piety led to the conversion and salvation of their friends and family. Unlike their British counterparts, American Sunday school tales were offered to children for whom interaction with the adult world was common, hard work was expected, and material gain the sure sign of a godly life. The moral tales found in these tracts differed relatively little from those of the Puritans nearly two hundred years earlier.

Motivated by the evangelical revivalists and the middling class market opening to literature written in similar styles, authors like Jacob Abbott worked to combine “entertaining didacticism and Protestant morality” (Murray 38). Like Child, Abbott’s name held value in American households because of his previous success in a parenting manual – *The Young Christian* (1832) – which gave him the reputation as “something of a specialist on children” (Murray 38). In the same ways that the work of John Newbery capitalized on the desires of parents to give their children what they needed while fitting the lessons in formats children might want, Abbott’s literature was seen as necessary for discerning parents and found significant success in sales and demands for reprints. His stories “reflected the common middle-class assumptions that the country was solidly Protestant and that cultural values were dependent upon upholding Christian beliefs upon which most citizens could agree” (Murray 39). Religion in Abbott’s work comes as a natural assumption on the part of the child hero. There is little need to harp on the religiosity of the protagonist, as their astute morality already suggests their having a Christian ethos. “His books seek more to inculcate social virtues such as obedience, forbearance, tolerance, diligence and orderliness. His aim was to produce capable, self-reliant children who questioned, discovered and thought for themselves. There was a characteristically American slant to this – knowledge brought money” (Avery 89). His most significant contribution to children’s literature came in the form of series books which offered multiple tales containing the same central character. Abbott’s “Rollo” series, beginning in 1834 with *Rollo Learning to Talk*, paved the way for later authors (including Baum) to consider their ability to further develop and complicate the lives of

characters with which child readers could identify, offering opportunities for greater sentimental attachment to works that chronicled the adventures of heroes who became like old friends to their audiences over time. Catherine Sheldrick Ross asserts, “For novice readers, series books provide scaffolding. It is easier to get into a new book if some of the central characters are familiar and if the reader knows in advance the kind of story to expect” (199). Abbott’s success served as a grand example of demand for that reader experience in a group only beginning to really demonstrate their potential purchasing power. His impact on children’s literature in the twentieth century, when series books dominated the market, is readily apparent.

As demonstrated in the work of Goodrich, Child, and Abbott, early nineteenth-century American children’s literature offered little variance in tone and purpose. Daniel Rodgers explores the way the children’s literature of this period “was built on tales consciously shorn of the dramatic and fanciful elements on which a child’s restless imagination was feared to fester. Instead children’s story writers filled their stories with deliberately commonplace events, a pervasive reasonableness, and insistent moral choices” (357). Following the drill-and-repeat instructional method popular at the time, there was little reason to deviate in this formula; by providing children with consistency in their fiction, these authors could have high expectations that the most significant points of American ideology – hard work, integrity, self-governance, and Protestantism – would be absorbed by the impressionable minds of their young readers. As expressed by MacLeod, “American children’s fiction before 1850 told plain and sobering stories of

rather nice children making predictable childish errors of judgment and learning appropriately from the consequences” (“Rational” 142).

And yet, beyond the world of children’s literature, the social and political climate of the United States could not have been more unpredictable. A rapidly shifting and growing population, increased reliance on industry and mechanical progress, growing tensions with regards to slavery and both racial and gender inequalities, and the battle for keeping up with the pains placed upon public institutions and governing bodies due to these changes meant a great deal of anxiety was present in American households across all regions. While adults composed a surge of children’s literature to teach children “how they expected them to behave, what they wanted them to value, [and] where they wished to see them seek happiness or fulfillment,” (MacLeod, *Moral* 11) these authors “less directly and less consciously, in descriptions of reality and admonitions to the young [. . .] also revealed the kind of apprehensions [they] felt about life in their era” (11). As a result of these apprehensions, while the nation moved closer to the War Between the States, children’s literature began to feel the effects of Rousseau’s romantic theory on the innate purity of childhood. These authors began to use “sentimentality toward children to arouse public concern for the young victims of what they saw as a crisis in American urban society” (MacLeod, “Rational” 144). Quick tales by the popular columnist “Fanny Fern” (Sara Parton) in periodicals aimed at children like *The Youth’s Companion* (est. 1827) warned child readers of the urban poor, the orphaned street urchin, and the terrible misfortunes awaiting children much like themselves in a tone similar in emotional implore to the conversion-based Sunday school tracts of the ASSU. The romanticization

of childhood as a place of innocence and purity was gaining in popularity and made for more compelling arguments towards a return to the pre-industrial communities becoming popular in the idealizations among British Romantics like Christina Rossetti, John Ruskin, and William Morris, prominent members of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. These social criticisms, presented as moral lessons to America's youngest citizens, urged a return to the importance of the family and the home in better shaping the future of a broken nation. The depiction of the family as a safe haven from the uncertainty of the outside world became central in the literature of American authors. Writing in 1857 on the "Customs, Manners, Habits, Etc." of American families in the early nineteenth century, Adam G. de Gurowksi observed, "Americans stand out the best in the simple domesticity of family life" (5). That image, too, inculcated itself as part of the essential American experience – the sanctity of the family home as experienced through familial love and devotion – and would become a prominent motif in American children's literature forevermore. It was into this climate, just five short years before the start of the Civil War, that L. Frank Baum was born.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

Baum's birth in 1856 places him at the very beginning of what most scholars call the "Golden Age" of children's literature, a period from about the 1860s to the 1930s. While his earliest experience with literature was likely influenced by the literature of his parents' choosing – presumably a combination of tales written by moralists and educationalists with a strong distaste for fantastical fiction, alongside the work of better known British authors, and collections of English fairy tale translations and nursery

rhymes – the American novels and short fiction of his literate years before leaving his family home (roughly 1861-1880) were varied and plentiful in their tone and form, but maintained their strong moral didacticism. Recognizable in all of this literature was an intense optimism for the future. As Avery explains, after the war, “for American youth the possibilities for advancement seemed unlimited; the world was there to be conquered. Writers did not look back wistfully at the past, but concentrated on present achievement and expectation for the future. [. . .] For the young American who was prepared to work and to learn, there were no limits” (105).

Speaking to the national climate at the time, Murray writes:

The Civil War [. . .] dramatically altered politics, the economy, regional singularity, and demographics. The devastation it created, the entry in American life of the emancipated person of color, and the slow recovery for the rest of the white South composed part of the story of America between 1850 and 1890. The rapid expansion of business and industry in the North and the hastening of westward expansion completes the story of America in this era. (51)

The dichotomy of these two, often equally exciting and anxiety-inducing events, continued to focus American attention on self-restriction and the safety found in a gentle and well-led family unit. Publishers found a greatly expanded opportunity for the economic support of a literary marketplace in post-Civil War America, in many respects due to the cultural influence from Great Britain on middle- and upper-class white consumers. “Victorian domesticity so valued shared family activities that reading aloud

became common, so that children often heard stories that were far beyond their reading abilities. Thus the line that separated adult and child fiction in the mid- to late nineteenth century became less blurred” (Murray 53), as evidenced by the overwhelming profitability that books written for children gained after the war and the great number of publishing houses which listed child-friendly texts among their offerings.

As Carl Bode explains, the industrial revolution benefited the production of a number of consumer goods, including the printing business. “As a matter of fact, the first half of the nineteenth century has been pointed out as one of the greatest two periods in the entire development of typography” (Bode 110). After the introduction of these technological developments, with cheaper material costs, significant national interest, and the growing abilities to distribute to a widely-spaced geographic audience, family-friendly reading material was in mass production and quickly in vogue.

While not all of the literature from the period could be deemed acceptable “literature” by the standards of the slowly solidifying American middle-class, a shift in attitudes regarding material intended to be shared with young people is readily apparent through the inclusion of children’s book reviews in many of the most respected literary magazines written for adults at the time. Included in these periodicals were the likes of the *Atlantic*, *Harper’s*, *Scribner’s*, and the *Nation*. As Beverly Lyon Clark outlines in *Kiddie Lit*, “Even in the 1890s the editor of *Harper’s* claimed to print nothing ‘that could not be read aloud in the family circle.’ During the last four decades of the nineteenth century these journals devoted considerable space to reviews of children’s literature” (49). Critical attention and the allowance of grace given to those authors who would

steady themselves to write this most necessary literature for training the nation's bright young minds meant that an increasing number of "serious" authors found financial success in their work for children as the twentieth century drew near. This expansion in the children's literary scene can chiefly be seen as following two trends in genre, each of which maintained didacticism on what, by then, could be considered "American" virtues: they were generally tales of domesticity or tales of adventure.

Following the end of the Civil War, tensions increased between the more socially conservative adult generations and the more socially progressive generations of American youth. Experiences with the devastation and destruction caused by a battle on domestic soil had left adolescents with a firm grasp on the urgency of industry and progress in returning their nation to some form of order. Memoirs from the period often include emotional descriptions of families ripped apart over disagreements on social policy as well as visual descriptions of the aftermath of those divisions in the psychological, financial, and sometimes physical deterioration (especially in soldiers who experienced deformity from battle wounds) of the people in and around their communities⁷. Furthermore, the entrepreneurial spirit of young Americans held relatively few inhibitions, and their willingness to once again find intrigue and satisfaction in the material and cultural imports of Great Britain left what Marcus identifies as "a home-front war between the generations" (33). Just fifty years earlier, Americans had

⁷ See Garold Cole's well-constructed bibliography *Civil War Eyewitnesses* (UofSC Press, 1988); and *Lessons of War: The Civil War in Children's Magazines*, Ed. James Alan Marten (Scholarly Resources, 1999) for further reading.

vehemently urged the production of an American literature; returning to Great Britain for a perceived superior cultural experience was unnerving. Afraid of intensifying what was considered a natural tendency towards rebellion in youth, a growing number of publishers wanted to create “a new juvenile literature that while morally responsible was also adamantly nonprescriptive, a literature that showed respect for young readers’ intelligence and trust in their already having acquired a basic understanding of right and wrong, and that on occasion might serve up tales of rebellion to satisfy vicariously the urge for the real thing” (Marcus 34).

The quick publication of that literature came in a steadily increasing number of periodicals dedicated to juvenile readers. According to Marcus, “By 1865 nearly every major American book publisher of the era – Harper, Putnam, Appleton, and Scribner, among others – published, or would soon publish, at least one magazine. No new house with ambition to rise to the top could afford not to participate in the trend” (35). There were nearly 400 magazines for children founded before 1873 (Pfleiger). Within them, many publications continued to carry the strictly moralizing tales of their predecessors; but those runs seldom survived. Instead, publications like *Our Young Folks: An Illustrated Magazine for Boys and Girls*, a youth’s magazine from the publisher of the *Atlantic Monthly*, declared themselves “a new kind of magazine dedicated to placing literary excellence over moral instruction” (Marcus 36). Perhaps best described by the well-respected editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine* from 1873-1905, Mary Mapes Dodge, the editors for these texts understood what needed to be altered in the literature for American youth. Dodge writes:

Doubtless a great deal of instruction and moral teaching may be included in the pages of a magazine; but it must be by hints dropped incidentally here and there; by a few brisk hearty statements of the difference between right and wrong; a sharp, clean thrust at falsehood, a sunny recognition of truth, a gracious application of politeness, an unwilling glimpse of the odious doings of the uncharitable and base. (352)

Dodge's writing, and that of many of her contemporaries, worked to enliven didacticism with warmth, adventure, and plausible depictions of real life.

In one of the most popular early periodicals, *Oliver Optic's Magazine: Our Boys and Girls*, the widely known children's author William Taylor Adams, writing under the pseudonym Oliver Optic, offered fiction predominantly addressed to young men.

Stemming from the increased necessity for men to find skilled, industrial work farther away from the family homestead, the identity of the American male was shifting from a man "walking the land or taming the wilderness," to one with "entrepreneurship, business acumen, and professional skills" (Murray 67). As Murray explains, "By mid-century, physical prowess, assertiveness, and business success stood as the paramount values that male authors admired, and hence those values were lifted up in the fiction they produced. Moral messages and behavioral precepts continued to appear, but only on the road to adventure, not as didactic teachings in and of themselves" (67). Optic's tales of adventure highlight the quick-witted American boy, ready to meet whatever challenges lay before him with strength and virtue. While the settings for these adventures might place those boys in foreign lands or on the sea, the moral behaviors expected of them are no less

conservative than the exemplary tales of the previous generation. Like Peter Parley before him, Oliver Optic's pen was tireless in creation; he, too, authored more than one hundred texts for an enthusiastic audience of American youth.

The spirit of adventure found additional space in the flashier work of Horatio Alger, whose tales of poor and destitute boys differed in their almost complete exclusion of parents in "adventures bordering on the sensational" (Murray 72). By the time *Ragged Dick*, was published in 1868, Alger's formulaic rags-to-riches plots had become par for the course among American adventure tales and later became the springboard from which the "bad boys" of American children's literature were launched. In each of his works, Alger's unlikely heroes find themselves in a morally complex situation in which they must identify the most virtuous solution and carry it out, regardless of the laws of man that may be broken in doing so. In return, they are richly rewarded in material and social gains, often at the hands of a generous benefactor or a newly discovered rich relative. However, while Alger "disposed of the sentimental, pious child of English and American didacticism," he "retained a clear focus on middle-class morality. Alger's boys were *good* boys in a *bad* environment" (Murray 72). And they continued to formulate for child readers the identity of the American male: well educated (and self-taught), industrious, adventurous, loyal, economically minded, and morally sound.

Susan Warner's 1850 *Wide, Wide World* is regularly cited as founding the domestic fiction writing of the time. While her character development and plotline pale in comparison to those constructed in adventure tales (or even in religious tracts), quick sales to enthusiastic audiences urged other authors to consider the new girl-reader as a

marketable demographic for writing. As discussed by Murray, in domestic fiction “women or girls usually served as the superior moral force, guiding others (usually male) to a reformation of their character through long-suffering devotion, acts of charity, prayer, and tears” (54). Following in the same didactic tradition as Barbauld and Edgeworth before them, American female authors of domestic fiction utilized the power of maternal love, the sanctity of the family home, and the need for early piety. Showing some evolution in the depiction of children, “this domestic fiction emphasized girls who occasionally failed in exemplary behavior. However, their failures were reformatory and they used their heightened piety to influence others” (Murray 55).

What might still be the most recognizable domestic novel in American literature today also comes from this period. Charged by her publisher to write a book for “girls” to rival Optic’s “boy” books, Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* (1868-69) serves as representative of the gendered expectations for American mid-century girls. The story of four sisters during their coming of age years is often chosen to show the unrecognized complexity of the domestic novel and its heroine, citing Alcott’s use of slang, ambiguity in the gender performance of her central character (Jo Marsh), a lack of religious references, and the assertiveness with which she imbibes female work and social participation. However, through the continuation of the *Little Women* story in a series of related novels, *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo’s Boy’s* (1886), Alcott’s once-adolescent girls fall in line with acceptable gender roles for women in marriage and motherhood. As Gail Murray asserts, Alcott “seems to say that remaining childlike is ultimately more interesting and more satisfying” than growing into a woman’s place (65). This concern

for the confinement of adult womanhood is reflected in the memoirs from the period in which the change in their gender-defined social expectations took place once young adulthood was reached. As MacLeod expresses, “General consensus in America held that woman’s sphere was moral rather than intellectual, domestic rather than worldly; her power was indirect; her contribution to the world was through husband and children, her reward their love and respect” (*American Childhood* 4). For children, however, the world was less gendered, and “many American women could and did look back to their childhood years as a period of physical and psychic freedom unmatched by anything in their later life” (MacLeod, *American Childhood* 4).

Alcott’s remaining personal correspondence shows little artistic interest from the author to write a sequel to her novel; instead, they reveal her publisher’s pressure to continue the tale of *Little Women*, as the series book was an incredibly popular format of delivery for children’s literature by the latter half of the nineteenth century. Though sometimes, as was the case for Alcott and Optic, the subject of the series dictated their acceptance by middle-class readers – showing recognition of middle-class values closer to the upper, genteel class Americans held in high regards – the rapid production of tales during this time also led to a variety of less refined subjects in literature read by the children of the working class. The “dime novel” of the mid- to late nineteenth century offered popular and sensational reading for adults, but with simple plots and elementary vocabulary their likely readers were the less educated poor and young factory workers. Heavily employing motifs that would come to populate the genres of romance, horror, and the western, these quick-print books were cheap, formulaic, and consistently high

sellers. And while the unreformed criminals and morally troublesome heroes in these adult-centered novels were met with great disapproval from the white middle-class readers of the day, their popularity and marketability with the rest of the country paved the way for the next iteration of child-heroes, the American “bad boy.”

What began as a farcical poke at the “good boys” like those found in Optic’s tales evolved quickly into a new staple of American children’s literature when Samuel Clemens, writing as Mark Twain, recognized the enthusiastic acceptance of his not-so-good boys by young readers and published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876. Twain offered, through his thoroughly round characters, an example of what Jani Barker calls “virtuous transgressors,” heroes who acknowledged the complexity of childhood and what it meant to be a “good” boy or girl. As Barker explains, “Narrative perspectives began to align more closely with those of child characters as well as implied readers. Morality would still lie at the heart of children’s literature, but transgressive behavior was no longer seen as synonymous with bad character; good-hearted children could be shown as engaging in amusingly naughty behavior” (102). The utilization of these naughty heroes considered the idea that “a perfect protagonist would less fully attract reader’s identification, thus compromising the text’s ability to help them work through moral and ethical issues” (Barker 101-2).

Though the bad boys of Twain’s novels are certainly a step away from the exemplary characters of Alger and Optic, the purpose of the work still remains thoroughly didactic. Despite their streaks of mischief, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn continue to embody the ideal American child: intelligent, resourceful, loyal, and

ultimately guided by morality. The delivery of that didacticism in children's literature after the Civil War, however, was far less overt than the delivery found in its antebellum predecessor. And the tempered hammering of good boys and girls was widespread in their literature, whether it was written for middle-class adolescents or the younger children of the day who, after being recognized as an exploitable market in their own right, filled up on the adventures of "Little Prudy" and friends in a collection designed for the very young by Rebecca Sophia Clarke (writing as Sophie May) in 1863 and others like them; Clarke's toddlers "scampered through funny but harmless misadventures, pranks, and visits with friends" (Murray 67). Through each of these depictions of less-than-exemplary child heroes, children's literature authors found characters with which their child readers could better identify and with whom their adult readers could stand to spend some time (and money) in one book after another.

But beneath these more realistic tales in children's literature, a new trend began to take hold of readers' attention. While the presence of English nursery rhymes had been a staple of the American nursery since the publication and almost nationwide distribution of *Mother Goose's Melodies* (1833)⁸ by the Boston print shop of Munroe and Francis, American fascination with fairy tales had been less than enthusiastic at the start of the nineteenth century, undoubtedly the result of their containing the hobgoblins and spirits so thoroughly denounced by Locke and their undeniable fictional status as fiction condemned by the Puritans. As their particular role in Baum's authorship is the subject of

⁸ This was a refinement of the 1825 collection *Mother Goose's Quarto, or, Melodies Complete* from the same publisher.

the next chapter, here it is only necessary to mention them in reference to their rapidly increasing popularity with the middle class as the industrialization of America raged on. The same phenomenon in fairy tale fanaticism had taken place in England nearly twenty years earlier, after their own industrial revolution had spawned an economic depression and swiftly increased the troubles associated with urban living: disease, hunger, orphaned and overworked children, and the overtaxing of resources. As Marjory Lang writes of the English experience, “The resurgence of interest in folk-lore was fueled, in part, by the desire of adults to escape from the social and political reality of an age of doubt and insecurity to an imaginary world, where universal human values and natural justice ordered existence” (17). The same interest began to take hold in America. While American authors had comparatively little activity in fantastical fairy tale authorship, two works by Nathaniel Hawthorne – *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* (1851) and *Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys* (1853) – are cited by a number of scholars as the first recognizable attempts that were, as Brian Attebery states “not absolutely original or genuinely American, but not entirely derivative either” (63).

American interest in the English-translated myths, fairy tales, and folklore of other countries continued to grow; and when the introduction of fantasy literature for children awed Great Britain – most significantly through the 1862 serialization of Charles Kingsley’s *The Water-Babies*, the 1865 publication of *Alice in Wonderland* by Charles Dodgson (“Lewis Carroll”), and George MacDonald’s 1867 *Dealings with the Fairies*, which included his most famous tale “The Golden Key” – its influence on American authorship of children’s literature would forever be evident. However, like previous

British literary trends, the realization of these changes would, in America, take years to really come to fruition.

FATHER KNOWS BEST

L. Frank Baum's childhood reading has often been referenced in his biographies. As discussed in the previous chapter, these references nearly always include his having been a regular reader of the works of British authors Dickens, Thackeray, Swift, and Bunyan. Baum is noted by his sons as having paid particular attention to Dickens and Thackeray, both of whom are regularly acknowledged for their astute perceptions of class and society, be they satirical or otherwise critical. As noted by Schwartz, Baum's shelves held works by Hawthorne, Thoreau, Emerson, Cooper, and Twain. These American authors, too, are clear in their social observations and relatively wide view of the pitfalls of participation in cultures which they may or may not find accepting of subversive members. The devout Methodism of Baum's mother likely meant regular exposure to texts espousing Christian values and expectations, at least in his very early years; his own turn from the church and adoption of the practice of theosophy is the subject of a great many biographical discussions considering influences on his writing⁹. Additionally, his social position as a child in middle-class America in the latter half of the nineteenth

⁹ Mentioned in biographies by Hearn, Carpenter, Gardner, Loncraine, Moore, Schwartz, and Rogers. Also, for additional examinations of this subject see: John Algeo, "Oz and Kansas: A Theosophical Quest," *CHLA Quarterly*, 1986, pp. 135-39; Nancy Tystad Koupal, "On the Road to Oz: L. Frank Baum as Western Editor," *South Dakota History*, 30.1: Spring 2000, pp. 49-106; various reprinted columns by Baum from "The Editor's Musings" of the *Aberdeen Pioneer*, reprinted in part in *South Dakota History*, 30.1, Spring 2000; Brandel France de Bravo, "Transutopia," *Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*, 17.2: Fall 2015, pp.73-84; Susan L. Mizruchi, "American Utopias," *The Rise of Multicultural America: Economy and Print Culture, 1865-1915*, UofNC Press, 2008, pp.256-87.

century certainly made for ample exposure to periodicals, and his regular participation in writing, printing, and distributing magazines as a youth suggests a clear understanding of their cultural space and importance in his life. Baum's personal discussion of the presence of fairy tales in his childhood¹⁰ confirms their place within his reading list, and the recollection of his son that Andrew Lang's *Colored Fairy Book(s)* sat on their household shelves suggests a continued interest in the genre, despite his professed distaste for the monsters within them.

Had it not been for Baum's having entered adulthood at a time in American literary history when the line between literature for adults and literature for children was far less solid than that of later generations, he would have had no encouragement to participate as a reader of children's literature until he became a father, experiencing the literature through reading to his own children in the family circle. And yet, as Beverly Clark writes, "In the nineteenth century, [. . .] the American arbiters of elite culture were receptive to children's literature, considered it important, took it seriously. Even the most elite such arbiters, the editors of the *Atlantic*, devoted considerable space to reviewing and discussing children's literature" (76). This was, in part, because "the audience for all fiction was still conceived of as encompassing both young and old" (Clark 81). And so, as Baum entered adulthood, leaving his parents' home in 1880 and beginning his life with

¹⁰ Baum told the Philadelphia *North American*, on Oct. 3, 1904, "I demanded fairy stories when I was a youngster, and I was a critical reader, too. One thing I never liked then, and that was the introduction of witches and goblins into the story. I didn't like the little dwarfs in the woods bobbing up with their horrors. That's why you'll never find anything in my fairy tales which frighten a child. I remembered my own feelings well enough to determine that I would never be responsible for a child's nightmare" (*Annotated* 6).

Maud in 1881, it is unlikely that he would have missed the growing trend in literature for children and the great measures taken to encourage its sale.

The marketability for books written exclusively for children grew in tandem with the affluence of American families. As the nineteenth century moved towards its close, the children of middle-class households found themselves with an ever-increasing amount of leisure time and an ever-increasing amount of disposable income. Concern for what idle time might lead to in future generations spawned a growing trend of advice literature for parents and a new category for that advice: lists for the “best” books to buy as presented by the “experts” of the day. When Caroline M. Hewins began publishing lists of recommended reading for children in the late 1870s through the newsletter of the Hartford Library, Clark asserts, “Children’s literature started becoming the province of librarians” (69). Increased attention by middle- and middling class families towards children “because of the uncertainty of the adult, public world” (Carpenter 19), encouraged an expansion in products designed for the entertainment and education of children that could be measured by the quality of their merit and their tangible materiality. The influx of sensational literature provided by cheap publishers had, by the late 1880s, assumed a position of popularity among youth and the working class which caught the attention of reformists who adopted a “commitment to protect children from the pernicious influence of such stuff” (MacLeod, *American Childhood* 121). Coupled with advancements in nineteenth century science from researchers continuing Charles Darwin’s exploration of evolution in *On the Origin of Species* (1859), studies like those of G. Stanley Hall (*The Contents of Children’s Minds*, 1883) laid physiological and

psychological importance on the training of children and the uniqueness of the period of childhood in ways as yet unseen in America. The sociological push to nurture, protect, and teach a child was greater than ever before. Caroline Levander explains, “As scientists were identifying childhood as a pivotal period of individual development and the child subject as key to unlocking the mysteries of the self, they were also keenly aware of the importance of novels to this process” (307).

In a move similar to that of the ASSU of the early nineteenth century, in the 1880s the public library system began adopting policies to not only allow children to visit the library (a practice previously unthinkable), but to provide them with their own, carefully selected, reading material to “direct children’s reading to ‘the best’” (121) and most appropriate works literature had to offer them. The professionalization of the children’s librarian in 1890, when the Pratt Institute Library School in Brooklyn, New York “introduced the nation’s first specialized course of study in children’s librarianship,” signaled a renewed dedication “in favor of ministering to the young” through books (Marcus 64). While the recommendations of books for youth and their development had been previously tackled by Samuel Osgood’s 1865 *Books for Our Children*, a work Glenn Davis defines as “both a telling criticism and a tangible journalistic evidence of the new pressure of socialization – the demand that the child rise in the world by controlling his instincts and energy,” (47) Hewins’s lists, published annually beginning in the 1880s after Hartford became a public library and adopted the use of a children’s reading area, represented a serious new voice in children’s literature and a measure of its power. As MacLeod explains, by the end of the nineteenth century,

“a whole industry grew up around children’s books, professionalized by trained children’s librarians, children’s book editors, and children’s book reviewing services” (*American Childhood* 122).

Working against an intense upsurge in the current of children’s literature production, and hoping to gain the approval of the libraries’ “minders of make-believe,” as named by Marcus, publishers of works for children had to constantly find ways to improve the materiality of their products for consumers. As Lerer writes, the history of children’s literature “is a history, too, of artifacts: of books as valued things, crafted and held, lived with and loved. [. . .] How a book looks, how it feels, even how it smells can affect the experience of reading as much as what it says” (322). Beginning with the work of Edmund Evans, a pioneering London publisher of children’s books who first conceptualized the use of colored wood blocks to add depth and complexity to pictures for children’s literature, illustration played an increasingly important role in the success of a book’s marketability. Evans, who was responsible for introducing the world to the three most preeminent illustrators of children’s texts – Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott, and Kate Greenaway – passed his colored block technology to the rest of the Western publishing world; during the 1870s, Americans John and Edmund McLoughlin (McLoughlin Bros. & Co.) were quick to capitalize on the technique and, by committing their company “to the far more fluid – and flamboyant – possibilities presented by the perfection of chromolithography, a process entailing the meticulous application of individual colors onto a series of printer’s stones with a grease-based crayon,” (Marcus

62) dominated the market with children's books, games, posters, and novelties of "unprecedented visual appeal" (Marcus 62).

Their goods were representative of the larger movement of textual aestheticism taking place in American culture; books with "handsome type, attractive illustrations, decorative binding and sometimes even gilt-edged pages" (Grenby, "Origins" 9) found their place in middle-class home libraries. Their presence, tangible evidence of the attainment of middle-class status, signaled an increased attention to the market of merchandise of and related to children's literature that became popular in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the time during which L. Frank Baum also entered the market of children's miscellany as the father of four young boys and, in Aberdeen, the owner of a bazaar meant to offer extravagances to the people of the Dakota territory similar to those found on the eastern coast.

The advent of the "gift book," the reissuance of titles with new and improved illustrations and cover art, and the overwhelming public fandom erupting from the publication success of Frances Hodgson Burnett's 1886 *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, which expanded the market for paratextual commodities like no other book before it¹¹, signaled for many American businessmen and women the grand opportunities available in the exploitation of child-consumers and their paying parents. Furthermore, in what began as a

¹¹ Beverly Clark writes of the 'public delirium of joy' caused by *Fauntleroy*'s release: "This was a delirium that Burnett both encouraged and deprecated. She proudly claimed that illustrator Reginald Birch based his drawing of Fauntleroy on her son Vivian but also strenuously denied that her boys, even if they sometimes sported Fauntleroy curls and lace, were foppish. She happily endorsed playing cards and candy, and there were Fauntleroy toys and writing paper, a chocolate Fauntleroy, Fauntleroy perfume – not to mention the popularity of his trademark velvet suit with sash and lace collar and cuffs. Fauntleroy was an early merchandising phenomenon" (*Kiddie Lit* 19).

distinctly American practice, the *New York* trade magazine *The Bookman* published the first monthly bestseller list in 1895. Leonard Cassuto, describing the idea of the “bestseller” as “a socially constructed one, and also a cultural symptom” of a capitalist market set on identifying the dominant ideology through “anointed books,” recognizes that the use of the bestseller designation “confers meaning within its larger surrounding” (321). Cassuto explains that “the idea of calling attention to big-selling books emerged during a period of highly self-conscious, largely unregulated industrial capitalism in the country” (323). First formulated as a form of marketing books for publishing houses, the bestseller title became a tool for advertising continued consumption of texts year after year. Literature for children, noted by Michael Levy and Farah Mendelsohn as being “the cutting-edge fiction market of the mid to late nineteenth-century publishing industry” (33), often topped the bestseller lists – their sales boosted by parents who wanted to provide their children with the best literature of their time (as deemed by other middle-class consumers and respected cultural critics) and by adults who sought to relive the nostalgic innocence of childhood through stories that captured the spirit of the age.

So when L. Frank Baum, in 1895, was presented with the competition from *Youth's Companion* by Matilda Joslyn Gage – the very presence of which, as a popular family magazine of highly praised literature, signals his family's participation in the consumption of literary goods aimed at youth – the likelihood of his having been extraordinarily aware of the immense cultural popularity and the intense economic profitability of children's literature is extremely high. As a child of a middle-class family, a youth intensely interested in the publication of periodicals, a performer highly in tune

with the necessity of spectacle and presentation, and a businessman continually searching for the next great product to peddle as the dreams of his imaginary patrons, Baum's entrance into the world of children's literature authorship is not only an exciting next-step in his search for fame and fortune, it is a logical one, made less risky by his living in Chicago during a time of cultural production that hoped to rival the literary centers of more established cities and his connection to the professional organizations frequented by members of the publishing industry who were already invested in staking a claim in the grand explosion of the children's literary marketplace.

All that remained was for Baum to choose his genre of composition. Surrounded by readers with a continued love for the domestic realism of Alcott and Twain; an appreciation for the British fantasy and adventures of Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, Charles Kingsley, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Jules Verne; the rags-to-riches tales of Alger; the romanticized children of Burnett; and the ever-growing fascination for folk and fairy tales, he made his choice. Moved by an intense academic push for the exploration of an American folklore, Baum found what he believed to be an "in" to the business of children's literature. Building on desires already sparked through the work of men like Irving, Stockton, and Pyle – whose contributions will be discussed in depth in the next chapter – Baum placed his name on the roster of American folklore scholars with the 1897 publication of *Mother Goose in Prose*. By 1900, he hoped to produce a new voice for the growing audience of American children's literature with the addition of a modern American fairy tale in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. And by 1902, speaking as self-proclaimed expert on children's literature in an article for the *Chicago Evening Post*

titled “What Children Want,” Baum explained to amateur authors and readers alike exactly what to feed those hungry little consumers:

Positively the child cannot be satisfied with inanities in its story books. It craves marvels – fairy tales, adventures, surprising and unreal occurrences; gorgeousness, color and kaleidoscopic succession of inspiring incident. Give it these for mental refreshment and the child’s nervous energy is soothed and rested; its heart beats become normal; the eager eyes take on a dreamy and contented look, while above the throbbing course of rich lifeblood the glowing cheeks wear a happy smile of satisfaction.

In just five short years, L. Frank Baum had become an author with considerable expertise in his field (at least by his own account), adding another point for recognition on his résumé and yet another turn in the very complicated history of writing for American children and their ever-guiding parents.

CHAPTER III:

WITH FOLKLORE AND FAIRY TALES FOR ALL

"Yes; there are many books to be had of the right sort; books that will entertain and delight your little ones without putting a single bad or repulsive idea into their heads. So I entreat parents, and those who present books to children, to be particular in selecting modern, up-to-date fairy tales, for in this way you will feed the imaginative instinct of the little ones and develop the best side of child nature."

-- L. Frank Baum, "Modern Fairy Tales"

Baum's introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* begins: "Folk lore, legends, myths and fairy tales have followed childhood through the ages [. . .]" (4). While from Baum's perspective -- and that of his general readers -- this may appear an accurate statement, scholars at the time of his authorship were already actively debating the twisted, complicated past of these genres and the unique characteristics separating them from one another. Though his description of the tales following "childhood" may be inaccurate to some degree, Baum's separation of four different types of tales -- folk, legend, myth, and fairy -- is indicative of his participation in a significant and exciting public interest in his day: the burgeoning study of folklore. A few scholars have discussed Baum as an active author of literary fairy tales, but I have found no explorations which consider his authoring that work within the context of American folklore studies, most specifically as a resident of Chicago. While no historical documents suggest that Baum received any formal training in folklore, the knowledge of its study in public discourse suggests that his use of the term within the *Wizard* introduction is intentional and informed.

Simon J. Bronner writes in *Folklife Studies from the Gilded Age* about "a distinctive intellectual fervor [. . .] for American studies of material culture and folklife" in late nineteenth-century America, made "distinctive during this period because of the unprecedented output of publications devoted to the subject, the dedication of the studies to evolutionary doctrine, the predominance of scholarly activity outside of academe, and the connection of the studies to public policy" (xi). Considering the content of popular knowledge in the field and positioning it against the backdrop of Chicago during the time of Baum's residency there (1891- 1909), a strong case can be made for Baum's having entered his career as a children's author in 1897 (*Mother Goose in Prose*) with a complicated view of what the production of "folk lore, legends, myths, and fairy tales" might look like and a strong desire to insert himself into the exciting (and commercially successful) field of the folk authority.

THE LURE OF CHICAGO

When Baum's newspaper, the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*, failed to support his family in the spring of 1891, he moved to Chicago and settled down at 34 Campbell Park, "a short street with large trees growing along the curbs" (Loncraine 136). Baum's choice of Chicago for starting anew is a complicated one. While his biographers are wont to agree that "with the World's Columbian Exposition set to open, Baum knew Chicago was the place to be" (Hearn, *Annotated* xxiv), public opinion of the city at the time of Frank's relocation offers a very different perspective on the city's worth, despite the fair's promises of grandeur.

Chicago had, in the twenty years before Baum's appearance, acquired a well-known reputation for materialism and show. As explored by Lisa Krissoff Boehn in her work *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago, 1871 - 1968*, the city "was representative of the changes that accompanied modernity and which were not universally applauded in the United States" (xiii). In the city of Chicago the thirst for money and progress by American businesspeople collided with the influx of new immigrants searching for freedom and opportunity of their own. The increasing diversity, multiplicity of languages, and cultural clashes happening on Chicago's already busy streets was a threatening presence for much of the country. The "foreignness," as described by Boehn, meant "changes arrived daily with the tides" of eastern coastal cities just a short train ride away (xv).

Outside witnesses to the crime, poverty, and chaos of urban growth felt "unsettled by cities generally, and by Chicago's brashness, youth, relentless commercial drive, and connections with crime in particular" (Boehn xv). An anti-urban sentiment wrestled with the onslaught of modernity spreading inland from the coast. The tension in America regarding what the urbanization of its nation might mean for the moral and ethical well-being of its citizens reached an all-time high after the 1871 Great Chicago Fire took the lives of some 300 people and left nearly 100,000 without shelter. Writing in response to his witnessing the aftermath of the fire, popular author Elias Colbert said:

The scene of Sunday night must have been terrible, but it could not, with all its horrors, have been so affecting to the tender emotions as this. Then there were flames roaring and devouring, men cursing and striving, noble

hearts risking themselves to save others, brutes of men plundering and extorting, women and children fleeing and screaming, and every thing to excite the mind and stimulate the nerves. Here every thing tended to subdue and overcome one. Here I saw -- not a few bodies threatened with sudden destruction; I saw the coined product of the mind, the muscle, the flesh and bones, the hopes and ambitions of a hundred thousand fellow-beings, expended through twenty years, all swept into oblivion. There was more life represented in those miles of streets, now prostrated, than in all that surging, shrieking throng of Sunday night; and here it was -- all -- all -- confronting me, like a fleshless, lifeless ghost, and holding up to me, in token of distress -- to me alone -- its spectral hands; for such seemed the gaunt obelisks which the demon had left as monuments of rage, along with the yellow and mephitic flames which flickered from the coal-heaps among the ruins, as if they were traces of the sulphurous domain from which the destroyer had come. (282-83)

Colbert's despairing response, one of many from the period, was accompanied by the publication of thousands of news reports outlining the unspeakable horror that unfolded with the flames, which burned from October 8 to October 10. For some, explains Boehn, "the fire symbolized what was wrong with the rapid development now becoming commonplace in American cities, and provided a seemingly unprecedented opportunity for revision to, and possibly repentance for, the questionable culture of the Midwestern cultural center" (1). Just fifteen years later, in 1886, the city received additional national

press for the labor riots and explosion in Haymarket Square, which killed at least eight people and further legitimized the stigma of violence and crime the city garnered before the Great Fire.

Not all Americans fell under the influence of anti-urban sentiment. Boosters for city life insisted "individuals could find the greatest possible opportunity, and come into contact with a broad array of enriching cultural experiences" inside the city's center (Boehn xix). Following the disastrous blaze, the rebuilding process began immediately. As discussed by Camilla Fojas, "After the fire, the question was not simply how can Chicago be made *good*, but how can it be made *better* than its former incarnation, than the bad values of disorder, inequality, inefficiency" (266). The devastation of the fire gave the city the unique opportunity to plan things like public transportation, zoning districts, recreation and green spaces, sewer and water systems, and architectural designs that might assist in preventing future disasters from ending in total ruin.

Already a place of rapidly growing business and industry, Chicago's boomers set out to create a city that would be a cultural center for the United States, as well. Social and intellectual clubs appeared at a rapid rate of development, while the founding of the Chicago Public Library (1874), Chicago Academy of Fine Arts (1879), and the Chicago Orchestral Association (1890) exhibited in large scale the institutional devotion to making Chicago a center for high culture and intellectualism. Writers like Hamlin

Garland¹, Henry Blake Fuller, George Ade, Eugene Field, Opie Read², and Edith Wyatt contributed to a growing literary scene, amidst disagreements that the Chicagoans might be lost on a national scale.³

In 1889, large efforts in lobbying for what many viewed as the ultimate chance to redeem their city in the eyes of the nation and the world began in earnest. Chicago's mayor, DeWitt C. Cregier, enlisted the assistance of two hundred of the city's most influential citizens in an attempt to win the right to host the 1892 World's Columbian Exposition, commemorating a centennial year of Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of the Americas. The battle for the fair grounds' home between Chicago, New York, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C. ended when President Benjamin Harrison signed a decree placing the fair in Chicago on April 25, 1890, moving the year of the fair to 1893 to allow

¹ M.P. Hearne has written often about Garland's influence on Baum's introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and on the scenic descriptions of Kansas in the first chapter (1973, 1985, 1993). For additional reading on Garland's creation of "gray" America, see: Berliner, Jonathan. "The Landscapes of Hamlin Garland and the American Populists." *American Literary Realism*, Vol. 4, No. 3. (Spring 2015) pp. 219-34.

² Referenced in Chapter One as the figure involved in setting Baum's meeting with his publisher for *Mother Goose in Prose*.

³ In one of the most popular magazines published in Chicago in Baum's time, the *Dial*, an anonymous 1892 editorial titled "Who Reads a Chicago Book?" elicited a response from Stanley Waterloo on Sept. 20, 1892. Waterloo, who believed "the movement" towards national press was "perceptible" (207) in Chicago's publishing industry wrote about the differences Chicago writers could provide for national perspectives unexplored by writers in the East: "There is a great West, with its great life and its great themes and colorings. Those who have shorn away forests, and built railroads and huge cities, have had their hopes, their aims, their consciences, their passions, their temptations, and their loves; and the story of them is worth the telling. It is a new story, and its relation has just begun. There is nothing reflected or imitated about it. It may be sometimes crude, but it is interesting. So crude but interesting were the Norseman's Sagas. So the force of the ragged-versed Whitman is felt in its reckless naturalness. In this new story is the swing of manhood. It will not be told in the soft, trig sentences of some distant essayist or laboring sonnet-writer, but in a style adapted to the prospect and the theme; and the relators will be of those born to the purple of the region. Here, in Chicago, the dominant in land city of the continent, is developing a literary centre. Already the answer to the question, 'Who reads a Chicago book?' is, 'Thousands of people outside of Chicago.'" (207) Waterloo was president of the Chicago Press Club, of which Baum was a member; his attitude of encouragement for Chicago literary voices to be published and advertised is significant for consideration of general attitudes regarding the publication of marketable fiction near the end of the nineteenth century for an author like Baum who wanted wide recognition and legacy.

adequate time for planning. To pull off the massive event, one that would welcome more than twenty-seven million visitors during its run, Chicago would need the assistance of a great number of experts. The construction of a grand “White City,” the crown of the exposition covering more than 600 acres and exhibiting the contributions of nearly fifty nations, would, as described by David F. Burg, “inform all visitors of the momentous achievements in such areas as fine arts, industry, technology, and agriculture of the United States, [. . .] whose political, cultural, and economic endeavors had prepared her to join the ranks of the world's great nations” (xiii). While many historians agree that the reality of the Columbian Exposition did little to change Chicago's image in the eyes of anti-urbanists, its impression on the cultural memory of the United States is undeniable.⁴

Though the White City was certainly a marvel, for many attendees the section of the fair often noted as holding “the most readily available fair memories” (Boehn 45) was the stretch of concessions and exhibits known as the Midway Plaisance, or the “Midway” for short. A project that “grew out of an idea for a museum-like display of anthropological exhibits, known as Department M to fair planners” (Boehn 45), the reality of the Midway differed in some very important ways from its original concept. In the beginning, before financial difficulties and ideological disagreements necessitated a change in directors, fair planners had designated American Folk-Lore Society president and Harvard professor of anthropology Frederic Ward Putnam to head the Midway's organization; George Browne Goode, of the Smithsonian Institution, was to categorize

⁴ For more general reading on the World's Fair of 1893 and its cultural significance, see: R. Reid Badger. *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition & American Culture*. Nelson Hall. 1979.

and catalogue the Fair's exhibits. As the Exposition's opening grew nearer, however, the organization of the Midway was taken over by twenty-two-year-old Sol Bloom, an entrepreneur with a "flair for the eccentric" (Boehn 45). It is this changing of the guards, so to speak, with which this chapter is concerned. I will assert that the disparity between the initially conceived Midway, an exhibit based on the rapidly expanding public interest in anthropology and the folk, and that which appeared in reality for the public after Bloom's work, significantly altered the American public's perception regarding the status of folklore and folklife research. Furthermore, I will suggest that Baum's authorship of *Mother Goose in Prose* and the reception of both *Father Goose, His Book* and of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* are indicative of that altered perception.

FOLK-LORE STUDIES IN AMERICA

While a field-specific term was not coined until 1846, when William J. Thoms used "folk-lore" as "a good Saxon compound" to better describe the popular antiquities being studied by the British, the collection and study of traditional narratives associated with the "folk" stretch back centuries under many other names (6). However, in discussion of Baum's use of the field, this dissertation need only explore the surge of folklore scholarship and its readership among the general public throughout the nineteenth century, when the cultural "ownership" of folklore signaled cause for feelings of nationalism and stimulated the interest of those curious about man's evolutionary progress.

After the 1812-15 publication of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in Germany, much of the developed world began participating in what D.

L. Ashliman calls the nineteenth century's "flurry of collecting and editing" (12), searching out traditional tales that might represent the great peoples of the past and hold the key to understanding man's future. The Grimm brothers operated in a Germany that, much like the rest of the Western world, was fractured and drastically changed by the marching of time. As explained by Jack Zipes in an introduction to his translation *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, "The Napoleonic Wars and French rule had been upsetting to both Jacob and Wilhelm, who were dedicated to the notion of German unification. Neither wanted to see the restoration of oppressive German princes, but they did feel a deep longing to have the German people united in one nation through customs and laws of their own making" (xxvi). Exploring the impetus of the Grimm collection and its influence on the modern study of folklore, Richard Dorson explains that near the end of the eighteenth century, philosopher Johan Gottfried von Herder "expounded a persuasive theory of literary nationalism based on the oral poetry of the common people who transmitted the soul of the Germanic tradition from its medieval springs, before Renaissance influences had imported an artificial veneer to Germanic literature" ("Modern" 12). Influenced by Herder's theory on literary nationalism and by the publication of Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano's collection of folk poetry, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805), the brothers set out to collect those stories of the German *Volk* (folk) – stories they believed to be "innocent expressions and representations of the divine nature of the world" (Zipes, "Hyping" 206). Folklore scholar A.S. Byatt explains: "When Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm first developed the plan to compile German folktales, they had in mind a scholarly project that would preserve storytelling traditions threatened

by industrialization and urbanization. What they wanted was to capture the ‘pure’ voice of the German people and to conserve their oracular *Naturpoesie* before it died away" (xxxviii).

This concept of the dying off of simpler times was supported in the spread of Romanticism, which held that man's closeness to nature was philosophically and spiritually closer to purity, universal Truth, and happiness. The infiltration of machines and the push towards urbanization had removed man too far from his pastoral truths; returning to considerations of individual experience and nature was the only answer to reversing the damage done to the human spirit in the name of modernity. Like many of their day, the Grimms saw portals to those early times in the language of tales from simpler people. While the legitimacy of their informants' "folk" status may have later caused considerable controversy regarding the tales' "traditional" forms⁵, Zipes asserts that the brothers' publication “set off (unintentionally) a chain reaction that had massive repercussions for the dissemination and study of folk tales in Europe and North America” (*Irresistible* 111).

The Grimms' collection was presented as a scholarly one, containing academic notes on the tales themselves and the brothers' intentions in collecting. As discussed by Maria Tatar, “the Grimms understood their collection as a foundation stone for the construction of German national identity, yet they were also aware that folklore

⁵ A great deal of scholarship details the “authenticity” of the Grimm informants and their class status. For general overviews of this, see: Paradiž, Valerie. *Clever Maids: The Secret History of the Grimms Fairy Tales*. Basic Books. 2005; Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Princeton UP. 1987 ; Zipes, Jack. *Grimm Legacies: The Magic Spell of the Grimms' Folk and Fairy Tales*. Princeton UP. 2015.

traditions, for all their local color and cultural specificity, revealed a certain universality, at least among European nations” (*Annotated Grimm* 434). Additionally, in presentation at least, the Grimms revealed themselves to be deeply in touch with and concerned in the authentic representation of the folk from whom the tales had been gathered. In the preface to the first volume of the first edition, Wilhelm writes: “We bequeath this book to well-meaning hands and cannot help but think of the powerful blessing that dwells in them. We hope that the book will remain completely unknown to those who begrudge poor and modest souls these small morsels of poetry” (441).

Despite the brothers' wishes that the collection might serve as an education manual of sorts for German students, the first edition of the tales was not commercially successful. In truth, their international recognition from general readers was largely the result of the well-received translation of the 1819 second edition of the tales into English by British editor Edgar Taylor, illustrated by the wildly popular newspaper artist George Cruikshank and retitled *German Popular Stories* (1823). As discussed by Ruth Bottigheimer in “Oral Transmission in a Literate World,” in Germany, the popular *German Fairy Tales* (*Deutsches Märchenbuch*) from Ludwig Bechstein (1845) actually outsold the Grimms' collection until the 1890s, only falling from its spot as the public's favorite collection because of Bechstein's failure to use language that would remain recognizable to shifting audiences and an attack “by influential editors [. . .] as unsuitable for children” (69). Still, as a source of academic inspiration, the brothers' reputations for strong research methods earned their project considerably more attention from scholars in popular antiquities, philology, ethnology, anthropology and the growing interest in what

would become the field of folklore; and, as shall later be discussed, their editorial choices and variations in presentation earned *Kinder und- Hausmärchen* a spot center stage for commercially successful tale collections in the English-speaking world.

“As folktale scholars,” Ashliman explains, the Grimms' “principal interest was less in the interpretation of the tales and more in the investigation of their origins” (131). Their recognition of the antiquities of the tales led the brothers to conclude that “many folktales, magic tales in particular, were surviving fragments of primeval myths” (Ashliman 132). Applying the work of Jacob Grimm in comparative philology, the brothers theorized that these ancient myths had once been common to “a unified Indo-European people, the same folk that once spoke the original Indo-European language from which most languages spoken between India and northwestern Europe demonstrably evolved” (Ashliman 132). As folktales from other nations were gathered for comparison to those of the Germans, the connections made by the Grimms between folk lore and myth occupied considerable space in scholarly discussions of tale origins and their diffusion to civilizations around the world. Dorson writes, “The example and concepts of the Grimms inspired nascent folklorists in one European country after another to emulate their mode of collecting and interpreting folk traditions as emblems of a people's proud antiquities” (“Modern” 12).

For much of the nineteenth century, theories regarding the origin of the tales remained central to scholarly debate, and many of those theories asserted the connection between folk narratives and ancient mythology. As defined by Ashliman, “myths constitute possibly the most elemental kind of folk narrative. These accounts, often rich

with symbolic imagery, establish a context for humans within the cosmos; define our relationships with supernatural powers; and depict the deeds of deities, prophets, and superhuman heroes from the distant past” (33). Their study contributed to the spread of folkloric scholarly discussion in Great Britain and North America.

Decades later, German scholar Max Müller published his 1856 essay “Comparative Mythology,” asserting that all ancient myth derived from a once-universally accepted reverence of the sun. Müller “constructed his system of solar mythology around the concept of a 'disease of language' in the mythopoeic age of the Aryan race, during which men forgot the original meanings of words and used them metaphorically” (Dorson, “Modern” 13-14). While the solar mythologists later received criticism for the totality with which they viewed this theory in regards to tale formation and meaning⁶, considerations for shifts in language and storytelling as a means of scientific investigation and explanation continued to occupy investigations in folklore throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Taking Müller's theory without much reservation, British scholar Edward B. Tylor “directed his attention to an earlier stage of mankind, the savage state of animistic thought, to formulate his doctrine of survivals: the folklore of today represents the survivals of animistic ways of thinking” (Dorson, “Modern” 14). The perpetuation of Tylor's theory came as no surprise in Great Britain, where Charles Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of Species* had been enthusiastically received and very quickly thereafter used as a

⁶ See: Dorson, Richard M. “The Eclipse of Solar Mythology.” *Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 68, No. 270. Myth: A Symposium. (Oct.- Dec. 1955). pp. 396-416.

building block for interrogations of cultural evolution. Tylor, whose 1871 *Primitive Culture* was the first major work published to discuss the theory that man moved from an animistic or “savage” state to a civilized one and earned Tylor title as the father of modern anthropology, inspired a number of anthropological folklorists who “explored collections of peasant folklore and stimulated the local vicar to collect such folklore for the purpose of identifying survivals” (Dorson, “Modern” 14). These British folklorists, who would come to be known as the “Great Team,”⁷ – Andrew Lang, E. Sydney Hartland, Alfred Nutt, George Lawrence Gomme, Edward Clodd, and W.A. Clouston – continued the work of Tylor and argued, in varying degrees, the lunacy of the solar mythologists while developing additional theories on the origin and diffusion of folk tales.

The establishment of the Folk-lore Society in London in 1878 was intended to collect those bits of survivals, to categorize and compare them to one another, and to use them to show the history of mankind and its journey towards civilization. As Dorson relates, “That was the great quest, the exciting hunt, to pin down the memorial of a prehistoric rite or custom or myth in its fossilized form as a peasant observance or utterance” (“Modern” 14). It was this anthropological interest that grew the study of folklore in America during Baum's lifetime and encouraged the founding of the American Folk-lore Society in 1888 – the exploitation of which, I contend, became the point of public confusion at the presentation of the “folk” in the 1893 Columbian Exposition.

⁷ Dorson, Richard M. “The Great Team of English Folklorists.” *Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 64, No. 251. (Jan.-March, 1951) pp. 1-10.

As often noted by scholars, the collection of American folklore began in tandem with the discovery of North America. From the time of its earliest exploration, detailed travelogues of observations in flora and fauna, eventually extending to include encounters with native peoples, filled the ships of many adventurers. Early settlers documented native custom and tradition from about the fifteenth century onward, as most clearly documented in William Kinneith McNeil's *A History of American Folklore Scholarship before 1908* (1980), which cites Friar Roman Pane's *On the Antiquities of the Indians* (1496) as the earliest recorded example of such a log. McNeil explains, "In the years after 1496 numerous other travelers to the New World recorded, among other items of interest, some of the traditions of this barely explored New World. Like folklore collectors of a later day they placed greatest emphasis on the quaint, curious, and exotic. For this reason they were primarily interested in the Indian" (*History* 6). Infatuation with collecting the folklore of American Indians stretched well into the time of Baum's authorship and was one of the primary sources of information collected by American folklorists throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is, in large part, because American folklorists were highly influenced by (and in competition with) their British counterparts and found theoretical backing in the science of anthropology and ethnology of significant value.

The "father" of American folklore studies is a title often given to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, whose 1839 *Algic Researches* chronicles the folk narratives of the Native Americans with whom he spent considerable time conducting field research. Schoolcraft's contribution to the field of folklore scholarship centers on his field work

and the belief that studying the mythology of the “rude peoples” allowed for better understanding of the philosophical and spiritual concerns that made up the whole of man before civilization. For Schoolcraft, the collection of these bits of surviving data was imbibed with a sense of urgency because of the assimilation of Native American tribes into European culture. The introduction of technology and language to these peoples was seen as a necessary part of colonization for their physical and spiritual betterment, but Schoolcraft felt the collection of their antiquities might offer valuable insight to the science of man and his progress and should be gathered before too great a degree of contamination made them no longer reachable.

American interests in primitive man and his myths gained considerable popularity in the late nineteenth century, in part owing to the explicit connection made between biological evolution and cultural hierarchies by Charles Darwin in his 1871 *The Descent of Man*. As Bronner asserts, “Laws of evolution applied to Victorian culture affirmed the superiority of Victorian society over primitive groups that Victorians sought to modernize and control” (*Gilded* 12). For Americans, these groups included the native American Indians and the immigrant populations with heavy old-world traditions now present on American soil, groups like “Afro-Americans, French-Canadians, Latin American migrants, Appalachians and other isolated mountain or maritime groups, and children” (Bronner, *Gilded* 7).

As the white American middle class accumulated financial stability through the urbanization and industrialization of coastal cities, followed by those more inland urban sites like Chicago, the push for culture and intellectualism on par with Europe grew

stronger, and the ability to display cultural superiority to the “savages” who inhabited their country took on additional significance. According to Bronner, “America gave a particularly hospitable reaction to the social Darwinism of Britisher Herbert Spencer, who made a case for industrial progress and laissez-faire economics on the grounds of Darwin’s natural selection. By 1903 more than 368,000 volumes of Spencer’s works had been sold in the United States” (*Gilded* 14). American scholar John Fiske, whose work *Myths and Mythmakers* (1873) relies heavily on the theories of Spencer and is, as McNeil explains, “an admitted synthesis of the thoughts of many earlier mythologists” (*History* 244), sold enough copies to American readers to demand eleven editions over a fifteen year span. “Composed of original and previously published essays it is an attempt to dress up scholarly materials palatable to the general public and [. . .] this primary goal evidently was realized” (McNeil, *History* 244), as indicated by commercial demand. Studies in anthropology and biology continued to show evidence of physical evolution, while the collection and categorization of “savage” literature and customs encouraged an American worldview that idealized the attainment of middle-class status by white Americans as indicative of having reached the peak of evolutionary possibilities for culture. Furthermore, the continual collection of the folklore and folkways of minorities encouraged an increase in concern for the “domestication” of those less civilized people and lessened the ethical blow for assimilating them to the ways of the white man.

In 1879, the American government formed the Bureau of Ethnology with “Major” John Wesley Powell as its head. As McNeil explains in his article celebrating the centenary of the American Folklore Society, “Pre-Society American Folklorists,” Powell

“saw the agency as the focal point around which all American Indian studies would be centered” (3). An evolutionary theorist in his own right, Powell followed the beliefs of Tylor in man’s movement from savagery to barbarism to civilization, but believed in a fourth level of evolutionary achievement – enlightenment – which would be reached sometime in the future. Despite Powell’s interesting theories in evolution, his most significant advancement to the study of folklore came in the publication of twenty-three bulletins made for the education of the American public regarding the Bureau’s investigations and discoveries. Though not all of these bulletins deal specifically with folklore, many do, and all are indicative of the interest of general readers in what was happening in the study of the “primitive” to better understand the positive advancements made by civilized, modern (white) Americans since the country’s founding (McNeil, *History*).

This general interest is perhaps no better illustrated than in the regular appearance of folklorists as voices of reason in popular publications. As Simon Bronner explains,

Folklife studies dramatized the dilemmas of a rising middle class, raising ambivalence about relations between passing traditions and whirring modernity. Editors of popular magazines sought out folklorists to address the issues that were causing ambivalence for their readers. Leafing through the pages of the influential magazines such as *Harper’s Monthly*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Century*, *Nation*, *Open Court*, *Outlook*, and *Popular Science Monthly*, and *Overland Monthly*, readers found essays on, among other subjects, primitive inventions and “industry,” women’s roles in

primitive society, beliefs and customs having to do with the supernatural, and the evolution of folk religious objects into play items. (*Gilded* 11)

Perhaps American readers, too, felt at ease with these folklorists and the study of folklore in general because of the genuine appeal it offered to everyday “scholars,” as represented from the very beginning of its formalized study in the United States through the creation of the American Folk-lore Society and its *Journal of American Folklore*.

Just a decade after the founding of the Folk-lore Society in London, an official call to begin a club concerned with the collection of American folklore was issued and received by a group who, on January 4, 1888, assembled in University Hall at Harvard to elect the officers of what was to be the American Folk-lore Society. Though their first official meeting to conduct business was not held until one year later in Philadelphia, at this 1888 meeting the group elected president Francis James Child – whose influential *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* was in its seventh edition and already internationally well-received in the field – and secretary William Wells Newell – consistently regarded as the most integral figure in the society’s founding – and began, with a team of council members⁸, to organize the production of the *Journal of American Folklore* and an official call to action for American scholars to participate in its production.

Writing in its first issue, general editor Newell lists the rules for a society that would have “for its object the study of Folk-Lore in general, and in particular the

⁸ Prof. T. F. Crane, Franz Boas, and Rev. Owen Dorsey.

collection and publication of the Folk-Lore of North America,” publishing “a Journal, of a scientific character, calculated to promote such collection” (1). For Newell and the founding members of the Society, the collection of folk-lore was deeply scientific and should be carried out with the same methodology and precision with which all scientific data should be collected. Following the rules of organization, the first issue contains an article “On the Field and Work of a Journal of American Folk-Lore,” wherein a brief outline of the aims of the society lists its primary goal as collecting “the fast-vanishing remains of Folk-Lore in America,” namely “Relics of Old English Folk-Lore,” “Lore of Negroes in the Southern States of the Union,” “Lore of the Indian Tribes of North America,” and “Lore of French Canada, Mexico, etc.” for “the study of the general subject, and the publication of the results of special students in this department” (3). The piece makes special note of collecting “ancient nursery tales,” of which “scarcely a single such tale [had] been recorded in America” (4). The article supposes this occurrence is the result of public assumptions regarding German origins for all such tales, as perpetuated by the widely-read collection of the Grimm brothers, but feels certain similar tales might exist in the stories of grandparents and parents of American citizens. The article insists, “There is reason to hope that some of these may be saved from oblivion” (4).

It is in this hope that the next article in the issue, T. F. Crane’s “The Diffusion of Popular Tales,” explains the relief with which the *Journal of American Folklore* should be received by readers, as the presentation of American popular tales therein “does not depend for its interest upon any theory of origin or diffusion” (15). Crane writes:

As we have seen, the interest in one class of folk-lore, popular tales, has grown as theory after theory has been proposed, examined, and rejected. This, I am sure, will be the case in our own country, where the field of study is so wide and so little explored. All sorts of pleasant surprises are waiting for the scholar who devotes himself to it with some previous preparation from the study of European folk-tales; while even children may make collections of the highest scientific interest and literary charm. To some it may be given to reconstruct the nursery tales of Old England, which have almost entirely disappeared, from their survivals in New England. To others, to discover in Canada or Louisiana a field as fresh and fascinating as that first revealed to us in "Uncle Remus." Finally, all can aid, according to their opportunities, in the collection and preservation of material which delighted our childhood, and which offers such manifold subjects of study to our maturer minds. (15)

Such was the attitude of the American Folk-lore Society: all could participate in this great science with a little learning and a clear methodology – though, the specifics of that methodology were hardly agreed upon.

Not only was this a study in which all could participate, but the participation of the public was vital to collection and to the survival of the Society itself. As noted in the second issue of the *Journal*, the American Folk-Lore Society had, in its first year, "received as much support and encouragement as [. . .] it had the right to expect" (1). However, in order to increase that support and make it "adequate" for the financial

support necessary for the Society's purpose, it was "only necessary to make the public comprehend the necessity" (1). In the introduction to the issue, Newell laments, "The importance of the study of popular traditions, though recognized by men of science, is not yet understood by the general public" (1). But in order to answer the big questions regarding American folklore – commonalities between Old World and New World mythologies, tale origins and diffusion – Newell insisted it was "necessary to have abundant means for comparison," means only accumulated through repetitious collection and reports from many collectors "who should at least have the encouragement of knowing that their records" would be published (2). Surely, the *Journal of American Folklore* was the instrument for that publication, but with so few members and dues necessarily low enough to be payable by those members, continued publications would be near impossible. Newell envisioned multiple publications of special studies and collections beyond the *Journal*, but by 1890 the financial means for those publications were far from attainable. He writes, "It is because of the necessity of providing for such emergencies, and in view of the importance of proceeding without delay, in order to save precious traditions from perishing, that the Society of American Folk-Lore appeals to the support of the American public" (2). Hereafter, the outreach for public support became one of the key notes for each annual update within the *Journal*. Each issue appeals more broadly to the invitation for the public to join the Society, to read the *Journal*, to purchase special reports, to participate in collection; beginning in the 1890s one of the duties of the American Folk-Lore Society was to initiate grander public interest in the collection of folklore.

It is important to remember that for many of these anthropologically-minded folklorists, the urgency with which this material was to be collected was immensely important. The belief that with modernity came the death of folklore encouraged what Dorson refers to in *Folklore and Fakelore* as “the classic cliché of the folkloric enterprise: the old traditions and rites are disappearing; hurry up and collect them as fast as you can” (35). The “Annual Meeting” notes for Volume 3, Number 8 of the *Journal* laments that “the field is so extensive, and the time so short, that there is necessity for greatly increased energy” in encouraging more collectors from the nation (3). In these notes, Newell urges “activity in extending membership,” writing, “It ought not to be difficult to procure, among the American people, a thousand members,” a number that would “enable the Society to exercise an influence in some degree commensurate with the importance of its object” (2-3). Theorizing that reaching a greater number of people might be made easier if the Society were to approve the establishment of local chapters, beginning with the city of Philadelphia, this same issue of the *Journal* (Jan-March, 1890) contains an article – attributed to Stewart Culin, a member of the organization’s council – called “Hints for the Local Study of Folk-Lore in Philadelphia and Vicinity.” Here, Culin’s words to the American public reiterate the weight with which the Society viewed its mission: “The collection of American oral traditions should be regarded as a national duty” (80).

To elicit broader participation by the public, a number of well-known folklorists would thereafter contribute to calls for all Americans to understand the gravity of the Society’s needs in publications read by a more general middle-class audience. T. F.

Crane's "The Study of Popular Tales" ran in *The Chautauquan* in November of 1892 – a weekly newsmagazine for a literary and scientific circle – to summarize the work of the Society thus far and to offer insight into works necessary for understanding general theories currently under debate in the field of folklore. Crane's suggested reading list for the public, which he notes are "so far as possible only works in English, and such as are suited to the general reader," contains works by Lang and Müller on mythology; Müller, Clouston, and Joseph Jacobs on Oriental/Occidental literary relations; Tylor, Farrer, Lang, Frazer, and Gomme on the science of anthropology; and Lang and Hartland on theories of popular tales and their diffusion. Crane's list is one of several offered to potential new members in a variety of middle-class aimed periodicals by members of the Society. His article appeals, like others in the late nineteenth century, to the egos of American readers and "future" scholars. On the opportunities for publication in the field, he writes that folklore is "a promising field here for the student of popular tales" (184). He continues, "The society is in need of many new members in order to extend its usefulness, and deserves the support not only of all students of popular tales, but of all patriotic citizens who desire to see their country rank with Europe in all intellectual pursuits" (184). Lee J. Vance's "Folk-Lore Study in America," which ran in *Popular Science Monthly* in September of 1893, also summarized the state of folkloric studies, but – like Newell had in the *Journal's* first issue – appeals to the universality of opportunities in folklore collection to people who are *not* scholars. Vance exclaims:

Folk lore is a study to which every one can add his or her mite, from the farmer to the stock broker, from the servant girl to the mistress. We may

find quaint and curious items of superstition or traditional lore in the parlor, in the kitchen, and in Wall Street. Indeed, we need only to read the daily newspaper reports of clairvoyants, mediums, fortune-telling, haunted houses, etc., to be reminded of those low forms of thought that characterize rude and uncivilized communities. (588)

Articles by Vance with similar affect appeared in *Open Court* (1887; 1893) and the *Forum* (1896/7). His 1893 article in *Open Court* chronicles the efforts of the society over its first four years of organization and reports that there were then more members of the American Folk-Lore Society than any similar societies in Europe. These efforts by Vance and Crane are only two representatives from a long line of calls to action for the American public in periodicals consumed by more general middle-class readers; the attempts by the Society's members to garner public interest evidently worked. By the mid-1890s, being "in the know" about folk culture was becoming an important part of participating in popular culture. Still further evidence of the "vogue" of folklore, as noted by Bronner, "the two main guides to popular periodicals at the time, *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature*⁹ and the *Reader's Guide*, indexed the *Journal of American Folklore*" (*Gilded* 11) in their listings.

The call to action was significantly enticing for rising members of the middle-class, as the Society could count among its members, listed from the *Journal's* very first

⁹ It should be noted, too, that William Poole (editor of this guide) was a charter member of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society (unaffiliated with the American Folk-Lore Society), whose differences in folk categorization may have contributed to Poole's push for reading "the folk" to become such a great part of "the popular". See: *The Folk-lorist*, Vol.1, No.1 (July 1892) p.8.

issue, such popular figures as George Lyman Kittredge, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Fiske, H.E. Scudder, S.L. Clemens, Franz Boas, Stewart Culin, Joel Chandler Harris, Frank Hamilton Cushing, and Andrew Lang (*Journal* 1.1). Clemens, whose *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and its sequel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) had been national best-sellers for several years, was widely recognized in public opinion as being the epitome of the American author-celebrity, even by working-class citizens. As discussed by Sarah Robbins in “Textual Commodities and Authorial Celebrities,” after the Civil War “the capacity that mass circulation brought for reaching audiences prompted anxiety that this floodtide would make literary distinction impossible” (3). However, rather than that, the flood of literature for the American public necessitated that the work of the author extended to creating new reading audiences larger than ever imagined. One of the methods for creating reader interest in books was to create reader interest in authors as public figures. “Because book reading was closely associated with becoming cultured, knowing about the writers of serious literature promised readers enhanced class status” (Robbins 3). For Clemens, writing under the pseudonym Mark Twain, the cultivation of authorial celebrity knew no boundaries; during his career he “cut across virtually every strategy for self-promotion available” (Robbins 8). His shameless practices aimed at wide-spread public recognition elicited a following for Twain’s writing, but also provided him with an aura of “celebrity” unknown in previous decades – later, the same claim can be made for Baum’s attempts at creating an authorial

legacy¹⁰. Attaching one's name to the list of Society members alongside men like Clemens held great cultural capital for the American public. Being elicited to join in as actively participating contributors for a study in which these scholarly "celebrities" might also participate, I would suggest, offers a level of fandom participation that had yet to be explored in American academia. The exploitation of class desire, however, also left room for crossed wires in communicating what was expected from a "legitimate" folklore record, and the imitation of interest by everyday Americans made even more room for error in popular understanding about the nature of folklore and studies of culture in general.

CROSSED WIRES: THE CHICAGO FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Perhaps less obvious to the American general public, while national popular interest in folklore was steadily increasing, was that those scholars most closely connected to its field of study were in what Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt refers to as the "schism" of nineteenth-century folklore. Zumwalt's 1988 text *American Folklore Scholarship: A Dialogue of Dissent* outlines the struggle between professionalism and specialization most active in the field in the 1890s. In a nation where new disciplines were battling for space in universities, legitimization for folklore scholars as valuable members within a department became increasingly important. Scientism broadly swept

¹⁰ As noted by Robbins, Twain was one of the early users of the photograph for endearing himself as a national figure. His regular white-suit presentation, made best known in his author portraits, were his standard attire for public lectures/talks also used to cultivate celebrity. Likenesses can be drawn between Twain's white-suited figure and the presentation of Baum in a similarly cut white-suit and mustache for his public tour of *The Fairylogue and Radio-Plays*, the first public presentation of his Oz material with Baum as oral storyteller.

the nation and contributed to a growing belief that the attainment of knowledge would be best signaled by the institutionalization of fields of learning and codified standards that could measure mastery and growth. As Zumwalt explains, “This realignment of power and reorganization of knowledge was definitely tied to the growth of professionalism and the eclipse of the amateur” (2). In American folklore studies, the search for professional identity led to an eruption of conflict between two ideologically opposed groups of scholars, the literary and the anthropological folklorists.

Francis James Child, the first president of the American Folklore Society, had been appointed the first professor of English at Harvard University in 1876. His special recognition in the study of English and Irish ballads by folklorists both in America and abroad made him a natural selection as leader in the American Society, but his presence signaled, for some, that the study of folklore should be institutionally connected with departments of literature. “Throughout the course of his research, Child himself was consciously seeking ballad texts that would represent the purest form, the classical ballads. His orientation to the material was that of a scholar steeped in literature. He mistrusted oral versions and preferred manuscript sources” (Zumwalt 48). But Child was outnumbered in the American Folklore Society by other members, most significantly secretary William Wells Newell, whose interest in folklore was as a part of an anthropological exploration taking place within the sciences. While much has been made of Child’s strong, near-obsessive, work patterns for his ballad collection – cited as the reason for his absence from the first official meeting of the Society in 1889 – fundamental, definitional disputes regarding what American “folklore” might look like

must also have contributed to his disinterest in actively leading the Society and his stepping down from the position of president after less than one full year of service.

For Newell and the members of the American Folklore Society, despite their public call to attention and assistance, the gathering of folklore data was a practice firmly placed within the study of anthropology and something that should be published by the learned. The *Journal*, for all its talk of educating the American public, was selective in the work it chose to publish; Newell believed that by retaining “the regard of the scientific community” through keeping a clear methodology without bias, the gathering of folklore would be seen as a noteworthy project in the larger ethnological and anthropological discoveries being made at the end of the nineteenth century (Zumwalt 26). As such, the anthropological folklorists viewed folklore as only a *part* of the larger study of culture. “Folklore was given a special place within anthropology, that of oral literature” (Zumwalt 6). That verbal/oral art could be explored in any number of folk groups, be they European, African, or Native American in their origins; but only the verbal art forms – things like myths, tales, legends, dramas, rhymes, prayers, and songs – were the realm of the folklorist; any product created as a result of these was the realm of the ethnologist.

While these anthropological scholars restricted their study to verbal art forms, there existed another group of growing popularity, those who believed that folklore consisted of a much broader range of material. These scholars, the literary folklorists, believed “folklore was part of the unlettered tradition within literate European and Euro-American societies. This included verbal art *and* traditional lifeways” (Zumwalt 6). It

was to this group that Child belonged. For the literary folklorists, the folk were represented in marginal groups dependent on larger groups for existence – the peasant class of Europe, the American Indian post-European settlement, children, the southern Negro, the immigrant Appalachian groups, sea folk, farmers; these were the “folk,” and all of their lifeways offered opportunity for the collection of folklore. As Zumwalt relates, “To simplify, it could be said that the literary folklorists looked at literary *forms* for folklore; and that the anthropological folklorists looked at the *life* of the people and saw folklore as part of it” (10).

While Child may have been the institutional face for a more “literary” folklorist in American universities, the American Folk-Lore Society and its earliest local branches in Philadelphia (est. 1889), Boston (1890), Louisiana (1891), Montreal (1892), and New York (1893) continued to uphold an anthropologically-minded research platform for data collection. Elsewhere in the nation, however, another circle was gaining ground whose presence on the international stage was more quickly recognized and for whom the public’s appreciation was much more clearly demonstrated. The founding of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society in 1891 was entirely unaffiliated with the American Folklore Society, and it was determined to be recognized as the more ambitious of the two from its very inception.

As previously discussed, by the end of the nineteenth century Chicago’s most prominent residents were diligently working to establish their city as a cultural center for the nation, on par with much older and more well-established cities like New York and Washington, DC. Fletcher S. Bassett, a retired Naval officer whose work in professional

writing led to contributions to Hammersly's *Naval Encyclopedia* (1884) before his own book, *Legends and Superstitions of the Sea* (1885), established his position in the field of folklore, together with a small group of Chicagoans and Professor F.W. Putnam who served as American Folklore Society President after Child, gathered to establish a Chicago Folk-Lore Society out of an interest that differed in some very important ways from the American Society and its local branches.

As discussed by Zumwalt, Bassett's intentions in the founding of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society and his later work on the international folklore scene centered on the desire to establish folklore as its own independent discipline. Following the recent work of Kaarle Krohn, the first professor of folklore in Germany, Bassett believed that universities fostering the exploration of other branches of science and literature might find equal interest for scholarly pursuit in the field of folklore in America. He "saw great potential in the study of folklore," which he believed "had the power of correcting and organizing the differing approaches to the study of man" (Zumwalt 23). As a show for the inclusivity of folklore for members of academic study in all areas of interest, Bassett extended an invitation for all who were interested in discovering the field's potential to join the Chicago Folk-Lore Society. Through extensive correspondence with active folklorists internationally and much gathered print material of similar effect, Bassett published *The Folk-Lore Manual* in 1892 as a guide to assist in collection of folklore by those "members of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society, and its correspondents, with such others as may be interested in the subject," but who were unstudied in the field (*Manual* 4). Bassett's society, unlike the American Folklore Society, intended to fully embrace the

work of the amateur. Writing on “How to Collect Folk-Lore,” Bassett exclaims:

Among the Indians, on the plantation and cattle-range, in the factory and on the farm, in the crowded city and in the little village, among miners and sailors, professional men of attainments and uneducated laborers, in busy avocations of men and in the household life of women, among children and gray-hairs – everywhere, folk-lore is abundant, for it is the lore of the people, not of any class, and it is to be sought everywhere. (7)

The collection of this folklore could be found not just in the field, but “in the library and at home” (11); all could discover the gems of the folklorist in every nook and cranny of their lives.

While the Chicago Folk-Lore Society’s membership paled in comparison to that of the American Folklore Society, Bassett insisted that the Chicago group’s approach to the study of folklore as a unique discipline would not go unrecognized. Seizing the opportunity to make his intentions for the field clear, in 1892 Bassett began to lay the plans for participation in the World’s Fair Auxiliary of the Columbian Exposition with an International Folk-Lore Congress. “As planned by Bassett, the Folklore Congress was to cover four main divisions: (1) myths and traditional beliefs, (2) oral literature and folk music, (3) customs, institutions and ritual, and (4) artistic, emblematic, and economic folklore” (Zumwalt 24). Not to miss the opportunity to show America as a primed land for a formalized discipline of folklore in universities and the city of Chicago as a place at the forefront of that disciplinary formation, Bassett issued a call for participation to folklore-minded groups all over the world.

When the American Folk-Lore Society received its invitation, one detail of the arrangements stood out as a glaring mistake – the International Folk-Lore Congress, as organized by Bassett, was to take place within the Department of Literature. As Zumwalt notes, “One can almost hear the scurrying behind the scenes to formulate an alternate plan for a folklore congress” by Newell and his anthropological brethren at the call’s first reading (25). For the American Society, most specifically for Newell, an association on an international stage made between folklore studies in America and the study of literature would seriously undermine the years of work and research conducted by him and other anthropological American folklorists and would serve as a significant threat to the field’s scientific credibility. Working with Franz Boas and Daniel Garrison Brinton, both anthropologists and important members of the American Society at the time of the Chicago group’s rush for fame, Newell devised a plan for a second showing of the science of folklore on the world stage; however, this group would be housed within the Department of Anthropology and would serve as only one piece of five sections of anthropological inquiry for a week long discussion of research. Surely, by exhibiting the work of *legitimate* American folklorists, the American Society would receive recognition internationally and would retain their respected position as a gathering of scientific minds. Whether the American public knew it or not, the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 marked a defining moment in what would be a strenuous relationship between literary and anthropological folklorists for decades to come. The academic divisions for the discipline, however, would play out for the fair’s patrons in a way that neither group

could have ever predicted thanks to the difficulty in the Fair's execution, participation of the general public, and the entrepreneurial spirit of a young Chicago showman.

FOLKLORE UNDER THE BIG TOP

When Chicago placed its bid to host the World's Columbian Exposition, much of the nation doubted the young city's ability to present an event free from commercial drive. The practice of fairs and expositions at the time was common in the United States and much had been said on an international level of the trend in American Fairs for becoming spotlights to show land for real estate investors. The Philadelphia Centenary celebration in 1876 received broadly published criticism for its inclusion of bawdy bar-rooms, questionable entertainment, and vulgar exhibits. Chicago, however, was determined to produce an exposition worthy of global acclaim. To meet this demand, local organizers consulted George Brown Goode, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institute and director of the National Museum, to organize a classification scheme for the fair.

As discussed by Curtis M. Hinsley and David R. Wilcox in their work *Coming of Age in Chicago: The 1893 World's Fair and the Coalescence of American Anthropology*, in the late nineteenth century Goode was "the dominant figure on the American museum scene" (xviii). His work in the Smithsonian National Museum centered on the achievements of man, an organizational principle he would also utilize for Chicago's Fair; but Goode's style was not unique for the time. Global interest in anthropology and the display of "exotic" people, animals, and objects encouraged an anthropological slant to most every exposition in the latter half of the nineteenth century. To make certain that

the first American-held international exposition would stand out as the crowning example of industrialism and progress, Goode's work would be placed within an impressive architectural space. George R. Davis, acting as director-general, and Daniel H. Burnham, acting as director of works, assembled the nation's top talents to construct a monument to American architectural capabilities. Working in the neoclassical style, architect Frederick Law Olmstead arranged the Exposition in Jackson Park with a massive water feature, the Grand Basin, symbolic of the ocean passage for Columbus, and a city of structures designed to be temporary but with impressive white plaster facades. The effect offered by the facades was of a city made entirely of marble, earning it the name the "White City."

Within this White City, Goode organized departments to correlate with the collections amassed for the exposition according to fields of intellectual and industrial interests. Responsibility for the Department of Ethnology, or Department M as it was called by Fair organizers, was offered to Harvard's professor of anthropology Frederic Ward Putnam, who was then serving as the president for the American Folklore Society and would later be of assistance in the organization of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society by providing a discussion at its first meeting "describing his personal experience in the formation of such societies, and detailing some of the objects and aims of the study of Folk-Lore" (*Folk-lorist* 1.1, 7). For Putnam, the study of folklore, like the study of anthropology, was of vital importance to understanding man's evolutionary progress.

Central to Putnam's anthropological work was his involvement as curator for the Peabody Museum. As discussed by Hinsley, Putnam placed a considerable amount of importance on the role of museums as vital cultural institutions in America. He believed

“museum exhibits offered the public enlightening and uplifting narratives of human variety and progress; and in his constant phrase, valuable ‘object lessons’ were inherent in the artifacts assembled by the curatorial hand and eye” (Hinsley 10). Thus, for his role in the Chicago Exposition, Putnam would need to advance his vision for the future of American anthropology in the form of a living museum that might serve as the ultimate object lesson for fairgoers while simultaneously allowing him to build a collection for the legacy of the Exposition and the cultural enlightenment of the city long after the Fair had closed. But for Putnam to agree to his role, the project would need to advance in what Hinsley identifies as three related arguments: (1) the Chicago Exposition should be both evolutionary and historical in its framework, exhibiting the magnificence of American industrialism and civilization by “simultaneously demonstrating the low cultural baseline of North, Central, and South America at the time of contact” for Columbus; (2) so that the Exposition would in no way come across as an attempt at commercial enterprise, “sufficient attention and funding must be devoted to higher, disinterested human affairs, especially the concerns and advances of science, in order to rise above the predictable East-Coast accusations of cattle-town provincialism” already circulating as a result of the doubts over Chicago’s ability to remain strictly edifying in its presentation; and (3) his involvement in the Exposition as chief of Department M should result in the establishment of a museum of natural history and anthropology for Chicago after the closing of the Fair (16-17). As Hinsley asserts, “Putnam made clear that establishment of a museum was the major condition of his accepting the position [. . .]: he could not devote three years of his career [. . .] to putting together a six-month display [. . .] without

reasonable assurance that the collections would become central to a permanent public institution for Chicago” (18). With his position for employment made clear, and a promised budget of \$100,000, Putnam accepted the appointment of Department M chief; unfortunately, he then spent the next twenty-seven months learning “the painful difference between vision and actualization” (Hinsley 22).

Putnam’s plans for the Fair were incredibly ambitious. They included an unprecedented indoor-outdoor exhibition of the progression of American ethnology and archaeology. For the indoor exhibit, Putnam’s collections would occupy 160,000 square feet of the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building with “privately owned collections, exhibits contributed by U.S. states and foreign governments, and, most important, the new materials gathered by his force of more than one hundred fieldworkers dispersed throughout the hemisphere – the Department of Ethnology’s ‘special exhibits’” (Hinsley 23). While the indoor plans were certainly grand, Putnam’s outdoor exhibit held even greater promise for wowing fairgoers. Modeled after the 1889 Paris Exposition’s cultural displays along the Seine, Putnam proposed an ethnographic village illustrative of all the native people of America within the context of their traditional lifeways; their dwellings, clothing, food ways, rituals, family units, vocational skills, etc., all would be displayed in real-time for the duration of the Fair. Putnam envisioned this exhibit as “the necessary basis for understanding and fully appreciating the industrial and aesthetic accomplishments of modern life on display everywhere else in the park” (Hinsley 25). He hypothesized that by surrounding fairgoers with living representations of the history of the Americas before the introduction of Columbus’s civilizing ways, the rapidity with

which the United States had risen to the marvel of industry and culture capable of putting on an exposition like that of the Chicago Fair would be far more impressive. The Exposition in Chicago would serve as a grand edifying agent in the intellectual and cultural raising of its visitors and would supply later expositions with a model of excellence in entertainment and education through the field of anthropology.

While the Fair's administrative body was largely supportive of Putnam's intentions for these exhibits, an oncoming financial crisis loomed over the nation and the reality of Putnam's monetary needs was too great to make his vision a reality. Overwhelming response to the call for collections occupying Department M's indoor exhibit space necessitated the construction of a separate Anthropology Building, but delays in construction pushed the building's opening back to a full two months after the Fair's opening day. As a result, Putnam lost collections once offered to him for display from private and government exhibitors. Though the spaces were easily refilled by others anxious to be shown at the prestigious Exposition, the final allowable space for curation was a full 60% smaller than what had originally been promised to the department.

Outside, Putnam's plans for his ethnographic village met with similar misfortune. Though originally conceived as a display occupying the coveted "Wooded Isle" – an island in the center of one of the Fair's great water features, far away from the hustle and bustle of the Expo's modernity – the reality of these human exhibitions was quite far removed from Putnam's plan. After hiring a field assistant, Antonio Apache, to travel to the southwestern Navajo and Apache tribes and secure all of the necessary data for reconstructing authentic communities, including the necessary people to "stock" them

with, Putnam discovered that gathering humans to be his *tableaux vivants* for popular and scientific observation would not be as simple as he once imagined. As Hinsley explains, in visiting these tribal communities, “Antonio found [. . .] that they feared homesickness above all; and he discovered expectation of monetary profit from sales of wares [. . .]. Moreover, [. . .] the Navajos no longer wore nor knew how to make the yucca fiber clothing of the Columbian period,” which meant “Putnam’s notion of ‘traditional’ wares and clothing would have to be adjusted at least a century forward in time to embrace woven wool” (38). This came as a shocking surprise to Putnam, who had imagined himself capable of simply asking for volunteers from the Indian tribes and filling his authentically constructed villages with people eager to show the world their traditional ways for living, without pay and without promise of reward for their time or displacement. Clearly, the professor underestimated the monetary needs of “savages.” In the end, Putnam’s outdoor exhibit was relegated to an area of land near the South Pond of the Fair, far off the regular pathways of fairgoers and quite near the hustle and bustle of industry. The Exposition did not have the funds necessary to supply Putnam with the people and goods needed to fully materialize his ethnographic village as imagined. Instead, he relied on state- and nation-sponsored groups, each of whom operated under unique contracts for employment and living arrangements. A hogan constructed for use by a Navajo group sponsored by the state of Colorado sat at South Pond, but it received relatively little foot traffic in comparison to the other ethnological exhibits brought in by outside groups – some of whom made a living through their participation in expositions around the world – which elicited a greater interest in cultural spectacle and created an

aura of authenticity through the charge of separate admissions fees and walls dividing the spaces from the Fair's general public.¹¹

In, perhaps, the greatest measure of failure for Putnam's vision versus reality at the Exposition, the installation of the Midway Plaisance – a long stretch of land occupying the space west of the central exhibits of the Fair – caused a great deal of controversy for Putnam's department and for the overall presentation of the Fair as perceived by outside critics and fairgoers. From its inception, the "Midway," as it would come to be called, was a point of controversy for a number of fair organizers at the state and national level. According to Boehn, these organizers "originally fretted about whether or not to allow paid concessions and exhibits of 'lower' cultural value to participate in the Columbian Exposition at all," deciding in 1891 "that publicity concerning the existence of theatrical shows requiring extra fees on the fairgrounds damaged the overall reputation of the event" (46).

However, as organizers felt the financial stretch of their massive project increasing, and difficulties continued to arise in securing "primitive" people for Putnam's exhibits without some promise of monetary compensation, policies on commercial gains grew less and less stringent; "a strong countercurrent of commercial profit began to blur the distinction between intramural high culture and extramural low-brow entertainment" (Hinsley 69). While the central goal of the Exposition was as an edifying event for

¹¹ See Hinsley's description of the Esquimaux Village and professional human exhibition companies in "Anthropology as Education and Entertainment: Frederic Ward Putnam at the World's Fair," pp.40-46 and pp.56-60, respectively.

visitors, many organizers agreed that traditional methods of education would be useless in the Fair's format. The Midway was generally imagined to be a place of entertainment and set to combat the Exposition's overt intellectualism excluding visitors from attending and gaining much needed worldly introspection. Assuring visitors of the Fair's accessibility was essential in early advertising for the event. As Hinsley explains:

In the construction of expectations the Midway received special attention, and visitors were cued about what to expect well before it existed. Three themes emerged and overlapped: that the earth's remarkable human and cultural diversity would appear on the Midway in microcosm; that fairgoers would consume an entire world of pleasurable and exciting entertainers, along with effortless education; and that it would be a commercial affair, an international marketplace, a "bazaar of nations."
(50)

Putnam, however, was entirely against the premise of the international bazaar. He felt strongly that his authentic presentation of primitive cultures, arranged in geographically coordinated exhibitions for careful observation by all, was the best way to ensure scientifically factual presentations would be offered to the public. As a result of his deep ideological opposition to the project, he ignored the responsibility laid on him for the land and had no concern regarding the Midway's organization.

And yet, despite Putnam's lack of leadership, the Midway project continued to amass applications for exhibitions and concessions through the Exposition's Ways and Means Committee which, without direction from Putnam, issued lots on the Midway for

those applicants as they saw fit. As the time for the fair grew uncomfortably near, organization for the Midway was assigned to twenty-two-year-old Sol Bloom, an Illinois native whose previous work was in the management of boxing matches for the Alcazar Theater in San Francisco. Bloom's previous theatrical experience under the Alcazar's owner, Michael H. De Young, had allowed the showman to travel the world in search of entertainment concepts to bring back to America. In this capacity, Bloom attended the 1889 Paris Exposition where, according to Hinsley, "the young man returned again and again to the Algerian Village and Café, where the dancers, acrobats, glass-eaters and scorpion swallows fascinated him, not as ethnography, but as profitable entertainment" (67). For years Bloom had dreamed of an opportunity to bring a similar exotic spectacle to the United States, but until the Midway project he had been unable to secure a viable space for the venture. To his great luck, De Young, who was "a scion of a prominent San Francisco family and publisher of the *San Francisco Chronicle*" (Hinsley 67), sat on the national advisory council for the Fair and appointed Bloom to take charge of the Midway's organization in place of the absent Putnam.

Under Bloom's guidance the Midway blossomed into a spectacle of epic proportions, offering "a chaos for the senses, a kaleidoscopic passing of scenes too quick for valuation or judgment; the visitor would be invited to a sensual feast of sound, sight and smell, encouraged to suspend rational faculties and simply consume the sensual stream" (Hinsley 50). The space was constructed to the far west of the fairgrounds. A return to maps of the event show the space physically separated from the White City as much as its contents were ideologically separated from the scientific nature of the main

exhibits. At its center, the Midway boasted the world's first Ferris Wheel, set to rival the Eiffel Tower that had stretched above the Paris Exposition in 1889. The rest of the Midway held "an incoherent array of businesses and entertainment exhibits, rides, and restaurants" (Hinsley 64), and, of greatest interest to fairgoers, elaborately constructed villages filled with "authentic" living inhabitants.

A handbook for the Midway's exhibits shows an Austrian Village and Old Vienna, a set of Bulgarian Curiosities, a Dohemey Village, an East Indian Bazaar, an Egyptian Temple, a German Village, Hungarian Café, an Irish Village, reproductions of both Blarney and Donegal Castles, a Japanese Bazaar, Java Village, Lapland Village, Moorish Mosque and Palace, Ottoman Hippodrome, a Persian Palace, Pompilii, Sitting Bull's Log Cabin, a South Sea Island Village, a model of St. Peter's Church, a Turkish Village, and exhibits for Venice and Murano glass, among dozens of other exhibitions set to excite the fair's inquisitive visitors ("Exhibitions" np). One of the most popular exhibits, "A Street in Cairo," sat close to the Ferris Wheel and received considerable attention in newspapers and photographic reports. As Hinsley describes it, "Much of the appeal of the Street in Cairo lay in its construction: the narrow streets, multistoried and balconied building fronts, small shops, street vendors and performers – conjurers, mind-readers, jugglers – created a sense of enclosure, exoticism, and noisy excitement and exchange, even an edge of daring and danger" (60). These extraordinary exhibits "were arranged in no discernible geographical or evolutionary order" (Hinsley 64); their spectacle provided Putnam with unending angst and ire. On the Midway, hawkers of "authentic" exotic experience heavily commercialized "ethnography" to fairgoers who knew no better than what they were

experiencing as being accessible to them in a way it had previously not been. The rush for commercial gains quickly pulled Putnam's human exhibits away from his anthropological displays: his Navajo group provided by the state of Colorado abandoned their hogan on the South Pond by day to sell their wares. Beginning with the movement of just two Navajo from Putnam's village, by August "they had entirely abandoned" the space and "decamped to the Midway, presumably to a lot where a mixed group of Plains Indians had been gathered under a concession to showman Thomas Ruddy and Henry 'Buckskin Joe' De Ford" (Hinsley 39).

Beyond spaces for selling exotic wares, the Midway's exhibits made commodities out of ethnicity and culture. As previously mentioned, the trend of holding expositions was quickly gaining in the U.S. and abroad, and the anthropological slant of so many of the events opened a business opportunity for groups who could make a living with human exhibits. As Hinsley explains, "In tandem with the exposition phenomenon [. . .] grew an experienced international network of private businessmen and government agents who could at once claim to bring forward representative groups from the diverse imperial world and also make sizable profits" (58). But the group managers weren't the only ones capitalizing on the success of human exhibits: "more often than not, the people they brought together for displays were themselves experienced, even well-traveled troupes of contracted individuals or families – anything but 'raw savages' or 'primitives'" the public believed they were seeing (Hinsley 58).

Discussing the public's acceptance of the Plaisance spectacle, Boehn asserts,

"High-minded" cultural observers like the *Dial* did not approve, but many

fairgoers found they wanted to spend a great deal of time on the Midway. Perhaps its lack of rigorous intellectual stimulation drew the crowds. While visitors compared the White City to a university, the Midway recalled the years of childhood instruction. A *Harper's Weekly* commenter believed this watered-down education the best possible means to instruct the great crowds of fairgoers. "It is well, therefore, that these [people] should be provided with the kinds of things that are likely to please them," the journalist wrote, "for there are many men and women in the world who will only take instruction incidentally, as children do in kindergarten." (46)

The Midway, however, was not intended for educational experiences in the same way the rest of the Fair had been. But, heeding to the calls of fair organizers to catalogue the exhibits hosted there, George Brown Goode had decided to label them all under the heading for Putnam's group. In the official brochures and catalogues for the Exposition, the exhibits on the Midway were representative portraits of the work from the Department of Anthropology.

While the general public took in the sights and sounds of technological ingenuity on the boulevard and the various displays of "culture" on the Midway, for Putnam and the rest of the scholars associated with the Fair a very different kind of attraction held academic promise. As outlined by George B. Johnson in an 1893 issue of *Science*, just beyond the fairgrounds at the Memorial Art Palace, the World's Congress Auxiliary of the Columbus Exposition offered a "place of assembly for those who are prominent in any branch of theoretical and practical learning" (116). "At the fair we see the magnificent

work of great masters,” Johnson wrote; “At the Art Palace we see the great masters themselves. As the creator is greater than his work, as thought is greater than action, so are the world’s congresses greater than the fair” (116).

And yet, for Putnam and the American Folk-Lore Society, the Congresses unfortunately offered one final point of failure. Despite Newell’s attempt to thwart Bassett’s international call within the Department of Literature by offering a more “prestigious” panel of folklore research in the World’s Congress of Anthropology, the gathering was not a success. The plans laid out by the Society had called for five sections of discussion toward the topic of anthropology, with one section being devoted to folklore and extending over two full days of presentations. Writing after the Exposition, however, Newell’s “Notes and Queries” for the *Journal* read: “The attendance at the Congress, as at most of the scientific congresses, was limited but the occasion was found pleasant by those who took part” (228). In the end, the Congress had abandoned the separate sections of anthropological discussion, allowing the folklorists only one brief exhibition walk-through of a collection on games by Stewart Culin in the Anthropology Building, and one morning session of a few papers delivered in front of a meager audience at the Memorial Art Palace. Many of the group’s presenters either cancelled and sent no papers to be read or simply did not show up to the scheduled event at all. Much like the “legitimate” exhibitions of folklife in action, the “legitimate” research of the American Folklore Society was ignored in favor of something with a bit more pizzazz.

Fletcher S. Bassett’s call for the Third International Folk-Lore Congress was a resounding success. Within the Department of Literature the request attracted more than

seventy papers from respected scholars in all parts of the world. The widespread participation encouraged Bassett to claim the congress the *first* international congress of the sort, despite two previously held congresses that had not secured speakers from some important areas of folk scholarship. There were “twelve formal sessions extending over eight days – July 10 to July 17” (Zumwalt 28) and containing papers from scholars in all areas of folklore studies as well as a number of presentations that were of particular interest to the general public. Zumwalt reports that the “paper that drew the most enthusiastic response was delivered by Lieutenant H. L. Scott of Fort Riley, Kansas, on ‘The Sign Language of the Indians.’ The headlines in the *Chicago Tribune* reported ‘IN A SIGN LANGUAGE FOUR SIOUX INDIANS CONVERSE WITHOUT THE USE OF WORDS’” (28). Bassett’s folklore Congress, like the Midway of the Exposition, offered participants education *and* spectacle. Zumwalt notes, “as an additional attraction,” the participants in the Congress were the guests of Col. William F. Cody at his *Wild West Show* (28), a cowboy theatrical performance beyond the fairgrounds that played each night to a packed house. On another day, “a folksong concert was so popular that arrangements were made to present the show simultaneously in the Hall of Columbus and the Hall of Washington” (Zumwalt 28). For observers to Bassett’s International Congress, folklore was exactly the kind of science that the American Folklore Society had tried so desperately to sell them through the *Journal*: an exciting, public, accessible branch of learning that was then being displayed as still alive and well in artisan goods, rituals, traditions, artistic performances, language, and literature right before their eyes.

During the entirety of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, fairgoers were

wooded with the sights, sounds, and smells of cultures unlike their own. A national itch for participation in observing and discussing these cultures had been brushed by the efforts of the American Folklore Society and a great deal of publication in traditional folklore from all over the world; but it had been scratched quite thoroughly by a group of folklorists who wanted their interests to be discovered as a field worthy of inquiry all of its own and a twenty-two year old snake-oil salesman who'd hoped to pull the public's purse strings with a taste of the exotic. Despite the fair's intentions for well-mannered education, the lure of the Midway with its snake charmers, belly dancers, strolling camels, bright colors, and unusual wares were the highlight of many visitor's experiences; in contrast, the White City, with its impressive façade focused attentions on the great European empire with its apex in displays of American achievement. In the middle of it all lay the departments and the men responsible for amassing both experiences and placing them all under the same label. For the fairgoers in America, statistically one in four by the end of the Exposition's run, the world of ethnology – and, by extension, folklore – had acquired a new level of excitement, accessibility, and opportunity for imaginative expansion.

SELLING THE FAIRY TALE OF AN AMERICAN FAIRY TALE:

BAUM FINDS AN "IN"

As Bronner reminds us in "The Intellectual Climate of Nineteenth-Century American Folklore Studies," for Victorian Americans, the collection of traditional narratives, customs, and manners was seen as equal to the collection of data for the natural sciences in the study of evolution. These lines of data allowed collectors to show

“the advance of science over superstition, civilized manners over exotic rituals, industries over primitive crafts” (6). For a body of people continually concerned that its industrialization and scientific advancements would lead to increased opportunities for moral and ethical ruin, having what looked like ordered, tangible evidence that its progress in science was dictated by evolution – and therefore necessary for the achievement of superior peoples above the less civilized – provided an additional degree of confidence to any movement away from nature and the world of the “folk” towards American “progress.”

Published in June of 1897, Henry Childs Merwin’s “On Being Civilized Too Much” well illustrates the concerns of many Americans in the late nineteenth century. Merwin’s interests lie in man’s “natural impulses, or instincts,” which he fears “are apt to be dulled and weakened by civilization” (838). The article, printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*, echoes one of the more popular scientific concepts of the late nineteenth century, as relayed most clearly in George M. Beard’s 1881 *American Nervousness, Its Causes and Consequences*. There was an anxiety which plagued the American population and, as explained by Beard, it was a direct result of modern civilization, distinguished from the ancient times by five characteristics: “steampower, the periodical press, the telegraph, the sciences, and the mental activity of women” (vi). Thanks to these advancements, modern man had been too far removed from a natural understanding of his self and his environment and, thus, was open to a variety of neurological diseases only tempered by a susceptibility to the use of drugs and drinking, depression, the shifting status of the family unit, and the blurring of appropriate lines for social, gender, and class

behaviors. Removing oneself from the grips of modernity, returning to less “civilized” concepts of tradition and culture, immersing oneself in the “primitive,” more “natural” state of man – one filled with feeling *and* intellect – was the only way to remedy this condition. While Merwin called for city dwellers to maintain a home in the country, claiming man could “retain his strength only by perpetually renewing his contact with Mother Earth” (838), a wider and much more profitable market for returning to “simpler” times had already blossomed in the near-rabid consumption of goods that paid sentimental homage to antiquities, including bound volumes of folklore and fairy tales and, most importantly for this discussion, volumes designed for children.

For well-mannered, middle-class, white Americans who had no personal connection to the native folklore being so regularly collected in their country’s folk scholarship, identification with a “folk” was a difficult task. Attempts to redefine the term “folk” with alternatives acceptable to Americans were significant. Otis T. Mason, writing on “The Natural History of Folklore” in 1891, had already attempted to define the term in ways that might allow non-natives in America to have folk brethren. He asserts, “The folk are: (1) all savages, (2) the old-fashioned people, (3) the children, and (4) all of us when we are old-fashioned” (54). The desire to experience less restrictive life through the literature of these people, whose perspectives might offer what Bronner calls “refreshing palliatives for the overcivilized man and woman” (*Gilded* 4), grew by leaps and bounds in popularity as the nineteenth century drew to a close. As noted in the previous chapter, increased sales in children’s literature, or literature specifically written for the family reading circle, as well as a market for products designed strictly for the

(educational) entertainment of children – toys, games, music, etc. – boomed with an enthusiasm not yet witnessed in America, where there still lingered some remnants of Puritan distrust for make-believe.

Perhaps because of that lingering distrust, the acceptance of the fairy tale as popular reading in America was slower to grow than it was in other parts of the world. In the eighteenth century, Robert Samber's 1729 English translation of the French tales of Charles Perrault was little received in New England, though wildly popular back on English soil. Entertaining though they were, Perrault's tales had a decidedly adult audience in mind and the morals at the end of each were steeped in the traditions of the aristocracy, something New World settlers were desperately trying to escape. Taylor's translation of the Grimms' work, *German Popular Tales* (1823), found space in many middle-class libraries, though they too concerned settings foreign to American readers, and their propensity for violence was unnerving for many adults, unacceptable as reading for many children.

Closest to the fairy tale for American children in the early nineteenth century were a number of volumes of fables and allegories, as well as what Gillian Avery calls the American "contribution to heroic legend – the Indian captivity story," with "supernatural endurance and courage, incorporating moments of tenderness, tragedy and triumph, [. . .] not only true but uplifting" (26). Works like Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Aesop's *Fables* were permitted only because of their obvious lessons in behavior deemed desirable at the time. However, even those tales were altered for a more acceptable delivery, as when Goodrich published *Peter Parley's Book of Fables* in 1836, claiming

“to render this work more suitable to the purposes of education and moral culture,” he had “rejected such stories as might seem of questionable utility, and remodeled those that are retained” (5).

In that same year, however, Harper & Brothers publishing in New York released a significant volume in *The Fairy-Book* edited by Guilian C. Verplank, and a new consideration for fairy tale utility in America began to take shape. Verplank, as discussed by Avery, “had been reared in a tradition of fairy-tales” and “saw them as stimulating courage and daring in boys, gentleness and compassion in girls” (69). In the “Introduction” to the collection, Verplank asserts that the tales therein, which he remembers being printed by Newbery in his boyhood and handed out to children in London for nearly nothing, must have undoubtedly been read by George Washington himself, who “was not only a happier and better boy for them, but a braver and greater man afterward” (ii). For Verplank, each tale contained an “essential moral truth” (ix) that should be judged separately from the factual truth criticized as missing by many readers of the day. The tales’ absence from popular reading was a tragedy Verplank felt should be rectified as soon as possible for fear of losing forever “the cheap delight of childhood, the unbought grace of boyhood, the dearest, freshest, most unfading recollections of maturer life” in favor of “a swarm of geological catechisms, entomological primers, and tales of political economy,” the “dismal trash” of new tales for children Verplank categorized as “something halfway between stupid story-books and bad school books, being so ingeniously written as to be unfit for any useful purpose in school, and too dull for any entertainment out of it” (vi). Verplank’s work is now largely unknown to American

children, but the stream of fairy tale volumes produced after its 1836 release speaks to the significance of the work in capturing an early American embrace of the genre; though as Avery notes, “publishers were often wary of offending those with strict views, concealing fairy legends or Grimm stories under such titles as *Wonder-World Stories* or *Tales of Adventure*” (124).

Fifteen years later another American author tried his hand at “collecting” tales suited for American children. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s 1852 *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* and its 1853 sequel, *Tanglewood Tales for Boys and Girls*, are retellings of classic Greek mythology often acknowledged as the first contribution to the American fairy tale genre. “Resituating them in New England, taming and emasculating them, and in certain instances creating something entirely new,” Hawthorne used children wherever he could in the tales, in some “introducing them where there were none before, in others transforming the protagonists into children” (Avery 126; 129). As noted by Brian Attebery in *The Fantasy Tradition in American Literature: From Irving to Le Guin*, “To tamper with the classics and to write, not doggerel or moral lessons, but carefully worked stories particularly for children – these were bold actions in America in the 1850s” (60). As such, the books were enthusiastically received by readers. These were tales that originated not from the crude peasantry, but from the elusive ancients; and their classical status earned them more cultural currency among American middle-class readers. “Largely from [Hawthorne’s] innovations, a tradition grew up of fairy tales that were not absolutely original or genuinely American, but not entirely derivative either” (Attebery 63).

Throughout the mid to late nineteenth century, the literary tales of Hans Christian Andersen were hugely popular in America; Andersen developed a relationship with the American editor Horace Scudder and published a number of tales for the first time in *The Riverside Magazine for Young People* after granting Scudder the rights to translate his work for publication in the States. As Jack Zipes explains, “Ideologically speaking Andersen furthered bourgeois notions of the self-made man of the Horatio Alger myth, which was becoming very popular in America and elsewhere, while reinforcing a belief in the existing power structure that meant domination and exploitation of the lower classes” (*Subversion* 91). American authors wanted to create new fairy tales of their own that would resonate with American audiences as Andersen’s did, but American audiences still looked for tales that matched traditions found in European lore. As noted by John Rowe Townsend, these authors often “did not fully realize what they were up against, for the old folk stories had stood the test of a great deal of time and were not so easily outshone as the modern writers expected” (93). Throughout the end of the nineteenth century, literary fairy tales in Great Britain, through the fantastical work of men like John Ruskin, George MacDonald, William Morris, and Oscar Wilde, blended the traditional elements of the folklorists’ *Märchen* with disruptions of fantasy, exploitation of societal norms, and challenges to institutional ideas about class and gender. As discussed by Michael Levy and Farah Mendelsohn, writers of these early fantasies “took the fairy tales of the eighteenth century, and where their predecessors had attempted to reclothe them, polish them and render them suitable for contemporary mores and manners, the writers of

the nineteenth century embarked on a different project, to create new tales and a new kind of fairy” (32).

Instead of participating in this burst of literary fairy tales, early American attempts at originality created a new genre in the tall tale, sometimes called the “lying tale”. Here, the supernatural and magical elements in the fairy tale are exchanged for an acknowledged falsity, as in the stories of Paul Bunyan or Davey Crockett on the American frontier. These stories operate differently for both author and reader than traditional *Märchen* or the literary tales of Andersen and others. As Attebery explains, “There is a strict etiquette of response to the tall tale – to smile or laugh or fall for the story is to ruin its effect. Tall tales treat the supernatural as a species of willful falsehood; they cut through all the stages of partial and temporary belief that mark the literature of magic. ‘You’re a fool if you believe this,’ is one underlying message” (22). Tall tales are intentionally anecdotal and offer fantastic elements sparingly, as in the presentation of Bunyan’s size, the only really fantastic thing about him. American audiences were still uneasy with the elements of traditional tales. Echoing Attebery and speaking on the difficulties for American authors to participate in the genres of the fantastic (in which literary fairy tales were certainly included), Levy and Mendelsohn assert:

A writer who wished to produce something both American and fantastic, and to root his creation, as did the British fantasists, in his native lore, had to move against the current, restoring what had been lost over the years or finding eddies of tradition that had resisted the general erosion of the marvelous. One consequence was that traditional American versions of

European folk tales were not only conveyed with less fantastic content than were their British or German or Scandinavian predecessors, but, when they contained fantasy elements, they were sometimes explicitly told in such a way as to keep them from being taken seriously. (51)

This trend is easily recognized in the American contributions to the literary genre through works like Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1883) and Palmer Cox's *The Brownies* (1887)¹²; even Harris's "Uncle Remus" tales (1879) rely on comic stereotypes of African Americans and their dialects to be taken seriously. As Avery notes, "America took more readily to Mother Goose's nursery rhymes than to fairy-tales. For fairies to be popular, it seems that they had to be comical" (4).

There are, however, two notable exceptions in nineteenth-century American authors, whose work in fairy tales received a great deal of popular acclaim during their time: Frank R. Stockton of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Howard Pyle of Wilmington, Delaware. The work of both Stockton and Pyle has received significant attention for their early contributions to the genre and in focus towards a child-audience¹³. Stockton, who "never tried to set his tales in an American fairyland," wrote fairy tales that were "delicate, and not suitable for expansion" (Attebery 72). As Attebery writes, "The best of

¹² Cox's stories containing Brownie characters appeared in print for the first time with "The Brownies' Ride," 1883 in *St. Nicholas* magazine. The characters were the first to be used as a brand in an advertising campaign when the National Biscuit Company began selling "Brownie Biscuits" in the late 1880s. For a fascinating biography of Cox and his impressive merchandizing history, see Roger W. Cummins's *Humorous but Wholesome: A History of Palmer Cox and the Brownies* – Century House, 1973.

¹³ Though Washington Irving can certainly be considered an early American fairy tale author, his tales' being written for adult audiences prompted me to exclude him from this conversation.

Stockton's fairy tales have that quality of rightness that marks a good traditional tale: things have to happen just so, no matter how unusual or unexpected, [. . .] It links Stockton more closely to the old Märchen tradition [. . .], not necessarily in degree of actual contact but in sympathy and understanding" (69). His tales are heavy in Christian morality, though they are populated with a great number of the sprites, giants, and trolls made famous by the Grimm tales which had been rejected for their terrible creatures and violent ways by many Christian readers. Stockton's protagonists, however, are generally peaceful souls, sternly against war and imposing their ways upon others. Jack Zipes describes Stockton as an author who had the ability to "describe all conditions and scenes, no matter how fabulous, as realistically as possible and to turn the world upside down by introducing extraordinary events and characters in a matter-of-fact way" (*Dreams* 157).

Howard Pyle, on the other hand, wrote tales heavily influenced by British history and realistic landscapes. His early work is "all traditional, retold from folklorists' collections like Thorp's *Northern Mythology*" (Attebery 72). In later work, emboldened by his success as an illustrator, Pyle released an increasing number of original tales; all were firmly placed in characteristically British settings and elaborately decorated with highly artistic pictures and lettering. His most well-known work, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (1883), is incredibly indicative of his knowledge of tale structure, British history, and the enthusiasm his audience had for these kinds of plots, themes, and characters. As Attebery explains, Pyle wrote "as he illustrated, clearly, in detail, and with just enough archaism to set the stories off from ordinary experience. He did careful

research for both pictures and text, and brought medieval Europe to life for an American audience” (72).

While both Stockton and Pyle represent significant attempts by American authors to write literary fairy tales in the nineteenth century, neither succeed in writing *American* fairy tales. Their affections for the folktales of Europe and the Near East that likely populated the reading of their own childhoods bled too strongly into their writings to encourage nationalistic ownership of their tales by American audiences. As Avery explains, those tales had “kings and queens, princes and princesses, and very often a court setting, and though the sharp-witted peasant boy is often the hero, his reward is the hand of the princess and perhaps the chance of absolute rule himself – not, as it should be in a republic, the office of president with the inevitability of standing down later” (132). And so American readers continued to consume tale collections of a more “exotic” nature to fulfill their desire for fairy tales.

The 1889 release of Andrew Lang’s *Blue Fairy Book*, for many, signals a shift in the commercial placement of folklore in the market of children’s literature and in the American market for tale collection in general. Writing on Lang’s contributions to children’s tales, Anna Smol notes that the first colored fairy book “critics often identify [. . .] as a turning point in Victorian literature, because the book seems to have returned readers’ preferences from children’s realistic stories to traditional folk tales” (1). As expressed by Jane Yolen, “From Lang’s time on, the bowdlerization, the tarting up, the cleaning up, the cultural appropriations (some would say misappropriations) of the folktale became big business for children’s books” (“Once” 40). The children’s literature

of America in the 1890s reflected the continual push towards progress, both in literature that uplifted the possibilities for the future and in literature that feared the worst for those standing in its path. As was the case in the decade before, escapism offered comfort through the turmoil. Andrew Lang's continued popularity both in Great Britain and America suggested no end to the fairy tale craze. In the 1890s, after the *Blue Fairy Book* in 1889, came books of *Red* (1890), *Green* (1892), *Yellow* (1894), and *Pink* (1897). Beyond those collections distinctly called "fairy books," Lang produced works in the years between their releases of poetry, parables, Arabian tales, and "true stories" – all harnessing the same human fascination with traditional stories from around the world and firmly placing Lang's name in popular discourse. The books offered opportunities for lavish illustrations for the day's most prominent artists; they attracted audiences of all ages and offered readings that could be done as a family; they excited dreamers of foreign lands and those interested in the lives of foreign peoples, in some ways capturing the spirit of the travelogs and adventure tales in years past with the added bonus of being "true" artifacts from the "journeys" made by the translators of the tales. Lang's consistent presentation of himself as a *collector* of tales, rather than their author, offered him a position similar to that of the Grimms in their early collection. However, Lang's desire to remain a "dweller in the pleasantries of literature," as he was called by an early critic, separated his work from that of the Grimms, whose scholarly presentation of "authentic" folktales meant they were unafraid in their earliest collections to show tales with unhappy endings. Lang's dedication to pleasantries would have certainly earned him praise from

American readers, and likely earned his book's place on L. Frank Baum's family shelf more quickly than the collections of earlier scholars, Andersen, and the Grimms.

Lang's *Blue Fairy Book* was followed shortly thereafter by *English Fairy Tales* (1890) collected by Joseph Jacobs, which also showed some promise to American readers. Jacobs's preface asks "Who says that English folk have no fairy tales of their own?" and contains nearly 140 "fairy tales" attributed to the English nursery (6). While these tales were not American, their "English" origins made them much closer to the Euro-American middle class and representative of those tales identified as still possibly existing in the storytellers of America by the American Folklore Society in its opening issue; in fact, Jacobs relates that "a couple of these stories have been found among descendents of English immigrants in America" (6). As such, they were well received commercially and demanded a second collection of *More English Fairy Tales* in 1894. Furthermore, a plethora of cheap reproductions of single tales were made available across the country; the presence of the tales found strong footing in American schoolbooks; merchandising for children's games and toys took on the "brownie" craze in fairy tale love; and authors of all political leanings began utilizing the tales for their didactic flexibility.

With a desire to enter the literary marketplace in 1897, then, L. Frank Baum's choice in constructing a folk collection for a child-centered audience was dictated not only by the insatiable appetite of "family circle" readers, but also by the longing of American audiences for an American voice to contribute to the popular work of folklore happening in Europe and elsewhere. To optimize his chances for success, Baum drew on

recognizable trends in American interest and chose for his first collection to pursue the course of Mother Goose rhymes rather than the more recently covered fairy tales from Lang and Jacobs. Mother Goose offered a safer alternative to fairy tales for an American audience because they could draw a wider demographic of readers with fewer possibilities for offending conservative Victorian sensibilities.

As discussed in chapter one, Baum situated his first work, *Mother Goose in Prose*, between the readers of fairy tales for entertainment and those middle-class readers who were keeping abreast of scholarly work in folklore through the use of an introduction that referenced collections from previously respected authors, like Taylor, while acknowledging the most recent contributions from the likes of Lang. His prefatory presentation authenticates Baum as a “legitimate” collector, while the original contributions he makes in his back-stories to the rhymes offer an American freshness that entertains and instructs. Baum’s position as a resident of Chicago, a city whose recent history included a massive upswing of popular interest in American folklore thanks to the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, offered him considerable opportunities for publication and a thoroughly well-primed market for readership.

The generally well-received *Mother Goose in Prose* prompted Baum to pursue a career in fairy tale authorship, and his knowledge of fairy tale tradition encouraged his next work to make a timely contribution to American folklore in the socially critical *Father Goose, His Book* (1899). Again drawing on the American love for nursery rhymes and the traditional formulas of European texts, Baum created an original work that encompassed the humor of American fiction and the politics of the turn of the century

middle-class population while embracing traditional structures for presentation. The collection of nursery rhymes begins: “Old Mother Goose became quite new, / And joined a Women’s Club; / She left poor Father Goose at home / To care for Sis and Bub.” (4). The tales therein are the “queer and merry songs” of Father Goose, forced into fruition because of the New Woman’s absence from her role as mother while pursuing the political interests of women’s suffrage (4). Cheerful and humorous, Baum’s “jingles” are accompanied by the colored illustrations of W.W. Denslow and were bound in an attractive volume by Williams for publication in 1899. Despite their joyful tune, the premise for the collection offers a critical perspective on the disruption of maternal duties by progressive political ideals. In his critique of the Women’s Club, Baum offers himself as commentator on an American middle-class issue for the time and further gathers interest from his audience because of the timeliness of circumstances addressed. In his *Father Goose* prefatory material Baum mentions his intention “solely to supplement the nursery rhymes of our ancestors,” both refusing to dismiss the earlier traditional rhymes and acknowledging his goal of these new rhymes joining their position in childhood memory. The work was the best-selling picture book of the year.

So when Baum sat down to write his next “modernized fairy tale,” he was writing to an audience that was deeply concerned about the loss of folklore, closeness to nature, and happiness. Middle-class Americans were undergoing an identity crisis; they had no folk of their own to turn to, no tradition of *Märchen* hidden in the annals of their urban communities. They were surrounded by steadily encroaching modernity that threatened the end of folk-like purity and the beginning of lost feeling. Already captivated by

children's literature and the folklore of foreign lands, Baum's readers were searching for their authentic American fairy tale. Introducing a new tale could imply the continuation of the folk, while including distinctly "American" traits would suggest the ability to maintain folk purity alongside progress. And so he would try. L. Frank Baum gave the American public Dorothy. What it did with her is the subject of the chapters that follow.¹⁴

¹⁴ As discussed most clearly in Michael O. Riley's *Oz and Beyond*, the text for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* holds the spot for Baum's third fairy tale only in chronology of publication. Written before the *Wizard*, Baum's collection of stories *Adventures in Phunniland* (published as *A New Wonderland* in 1900 and reissued as *The Surprising Adventures of the Magical Monarch of Mo and His People* in 1903), offers further insight to the author's clear knowledge of the fairy tale tradition in America. Reminiscent of the worlds in the fairy tales of Stockton and Pyle, the stories in the magical land of Mo have elements adapted from European tales, like the presence of kings, queens, royal children, and castles, altered to fit the new American environment. The monarchy of Mo is not so much an accurate reflection of European monarchs as it is an American child's conception of what that monarchy might be like. Furthermore, the tales offer what Riley calls "fantastic characters, outrageous situations, absurd logic, and broad humor" (33) in line with another American literary tradition – the tall tale. While the stories did get published and were generally well-received (appearing shortly after *Oz*'s great success – hence the title change), their reliance on traditional tale motifs found in previously recorded or authored European tales made them less novel for their time and places them in line with previously written American literary fairy tales which also lost their favor with native readers and have failed to stand the test of time in popularity. For more on this work, see: Riley, Michael O. *Oz and Beyond: The Fantasy World of L. Frank Baum*. Kansas UP. 1998. pp.33-37.

CHAPTER IV:

EXAMINING *THE WIZARD*: INTERROGATIONS OF GENRE

“Since the lines of demarcation are frequently blurred and fuzzy, the folklorist must continually sharpen his concepts, refine his techniques, appraise his results. For him the game is very much worth the candle, as he seeks the greater understanding of the masses of mankind.”

-- Richard M. Dorson, *Folklore and Fakelore*

“The primary phase in America was never, in Herderian terms, purely folk but already a hybrid concatenation of folk and popular.”

-- Gene Bluestein, *The Voice of the Folk*

“Rather than reject fakelore on the a priori grounds that it is impure or bastardized folklore, let us study it as folklorists, using the tools of folklorists.”

-- Alan Dundes, *Folklore Matters*

Baum’s intention to write a “modernized fairy tale” has both a temporally bound context and a contextual position in present-day academic discussions about enduring American cultural signifiers; both must necessarily be considered in an analysis of the author’s attempt to contribute a fairy tale to American tradition. As discussed in the previous chapter, Americans at the end of the nineteenth century were deeply interested in the accumulation and recognition of folklore, both for its ability to showcase the progress and ingenuity of their young nation and for its implied sentimentality for the pre-industrialized days of years gone by – times associated with a pastoral connection to nature, spirituality, and, ultimately, Truth about man and his place in the world. Folk tales had the ability to transport their readers from the crises of modernity and urbanization to

the simple, reflexive worlds of “once upon a time.” Their immense popularity at the *fin de siècle* is a measurable indication of the need for common cultural capital¹, for a connection – however tenuous it may seem – between members of a nation without generationally established systems for cultural encoding.

Foreign though the worlds of Cinderella or Hansel and Gretel may have been in a land devoid of its own fairy lore, royalty, castles, or witches, the formularized, predictable narratives of folktales offered the kinds of clear rewards for heroes with virtue and hard work, or punishments for deviants of norms and expectations, that supplied entertainment and wonder to American readers. Yet, despite the enthusiasm with which these “traditional” tales were received and reproduced in the United States, they fell short in the kind of personal significance offered to Americans that they held for citizens in many other nations. In the rest of the Western world – where the gathering of folklore also occupied a significant space in popular interest – collections of tales were additionally touted as national artifacts, a communal property of sorts. D. L. Ashliman explains: “In spite of the similarities of folktales found in different places, a very large number of collections claimed national or regional identity, using such titles as *Norwegian Folktales* or *Sicilian Folktales*, and this is appropriate, for even naturalized tales soon assume some characteristics of their new homelands” (17). In nations laying

¹ The term “cultural capital” is used in this chapter as a blanket term to describe those embodied, objectified, and institutionalized states of non-economic capital that offer purchasing power for admitting their holder to a group, as first discussed by Pierre Bourdieu in “The Forms of Capital.” (Trans. by Richard Nice. *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*. J. E. Richardson, ed. Greenwood P. 1986. pp. 241-58.)

claim to these traditional tales, beyond employing them as a means of entertainment and education, the populace was free to assign characteristics to those texts which made them specifically relevant in the construction of a group identity. This was not, however, the case in America, where a long-held distrust for the fantastic and a modern affinity for authenticity denied popular acceptance of tales as “belonging” to the American people.

The idea that folklore is a communal creation, passed from one generation to the next in the traditions of story, ritual and materiality, is central to definitions of the field. As discussed by Jan Harold Brunvand, “Folklore represents what men have thought worth preserving in their culture by word of mouth when few other means existed to preserve it” (5). But nineteenth-century America had no record of preservation, no “folk” of their own, no context for antiquities that elsewhere provided annals of narratives to articulate a cohesive spirit of nationalism. The temporal and spatial construction of the nation inhibited such a thing under the construct of “folklore” as it was defined for the rest of the “civilized” world; and yet, as Dorson asserts, “the promoters of a national self-consciousness, whether in a republic, a monarchy, an empire, or a socialist state, clearly appear to have recognized the value and utility of folklore” (*Historian* 94). Americans yearned for folklore of their own. They collected the native lore of American Indians, the mountain tales of the Ozark and Appalachian groups, the narratives of the Creoles, and the stories of the American Negroes. These “removed,” or “disenfranchised,” groups were the focus of American folklore collection for many years.

The stories had value in their *likelihood* of antiquity and tradition, but their collection did not spur the amalgamation of a national “folk” identity. These groups were

seen as anachronous to “American” culture by white, middle-class European-Americans. Unlike the peasants of England, these “less civilized” groups in America were devoid of recognizable cultural connections to the ethnic majority in the country. A poor, white, rural farmer had the ethnic and racial strings of connection to the John D. Rockefellers of his nation – there he could sense the notion of American progress – but he could not reconcile in himself some cultural commonality with black slaves in the South or with diverse immigrant populations in the country’s more remote regions. No; to gain folklore *worthy* of outlining the “American” spirit, the definitional principles of the genre would have to be altered. It is only through this alteration that the white American middle-class found its folk heroes, and it is only through national acceptance of that alteration that Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* found its space as a legitimate modern American fairy tale. Reading the tale through lenses of folkloristic study, its place as a touchstone of American children’s literature gains a deep cultural significance that permeates the construction of American identity and the representation of the American spirit on an international and timeless scale.

FOLK, FAKE, OR FLOP?

The word “folklore” most broadly names the “lore” of the “folk,” but it is in the definitions of those two parts – lore and folk – that the body of work indicated by the compound becomes fuzzy. Alan Dundes, working to “define both folk and lore in a way that even the beginner can understand what folklore is,” defines the term “folk” as being “*any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor*” (“What” 2). Standing against what Richard Dorson notes was the field’s early suggestion that folk

was connected to “a hidden, forgotten, and backward culture” (“Modern” 33), this more flexible definition allows for the inclusion of groups at any point in time or space, “as small as two friends or as large as a nation” (Bronner, *Nation* 11). “It does not matter what the linking factor is,” Dundes writes, “– it could be a common occupation, language, or religion – but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own” (“What” 2). As Dorson explains it, the term folk “signifies anonymous masses of tradition-oriented people” (“Modern” 46). What is important in these collections of people is a shared identity constructed, in part, through their lore.

The term “lore,” denoting knowledge gained from personal or shared experience, signifies the various traditions collected in the group’s repertoire. “In its flexible uses folklore may refer to types of barns, bread molds, or quilts; to orally inherited tales, songs, sayings, and beliefs; or to village festivals, household customs, and peasant rituals. The common element in all these matters is tradition” (Dorson, *American Folklore* 2). But these are specific kinds of traditions. These are traditions to be *enacted*, or *performed*. It is through the modes of performance that folklore finds the unique qualities that differentiate it from the knowledge held by *unconnected* people, that popular or “common” knowledge that is perpetuated as being the sole output of mass production – the lessons of schools, organized religions, governmental institutions, or formal groups linked through the power of entities not within their ranks and unrecognized as a cohesive unit by those designated within. “There is an important connection between the concept of identity and folklore” (Dundes, *Matters* 7). As Roger D. Abrahams writes,

The difference between folklore and other expressive phenomena is in the range of relations possible in performance. Essentially, we distinguish between folklore and ‘popular culture’ on the basis of dissemination (performance) methods; folklore, we say, can only exist in face-to-face encounter that leads to purely oral tradition. [. . .] Viewed in this way, *folklore* is meaningful as a term only insofar as it designates artistic expression in which there is a certain degree of personal interrelationship between performer and artist. When a performer loses this interpersonal approach but still attempts to entertain the populace at large (i.e., argues publicly utilizing public values), then we call this performance ‘popular.’ And when he restricts his audience and adapts his values to a group of educated initiates, then we enter the realm of high art. (212)

And so folklore, in succinct definition, is “*those materials in culture that circulate traditionally among members of any group in different versions, whether in oral form or by means of customary example*” (Brunvand 5, italics in original).

It is in the definitional requirement of *tradition* that American folklore finds its first instance of apparent transgression. As Brunvand discusses, even today – long after the peasantry was dismissed as necessary entities for folkloric invention – the original sense of the word “to signify that portion of any culture that is passed on orally” maintains an implied connection to non-literary origins with regards to narrative (2). The essence of this implication is that the practice of *particular* kinds of folklore is aged and must remain bound to antiquity. The practice of constructing folktales is traditionally

relegated to pre-literate invention. “Folklorists tend to exclude as spurious or contaminated any supposed folklore that is transmitted largely by print, broadcasting, or other commercial and organized means” (Brunvand 2). Yet, the construction of American culture was, in my many ways, necessarily the product of mass production. As Dorson articulates, “American history begins in the seventeenth century. It looks back to no ancient racial stock, no medieval heritage, no lineage of traditions shrouded in a dim and remote past” (*Historian* 28). There is no pre-literate age in American culture. Does this lack of a feudal past, then, necessitate the exclusion of all possibility for folktales of American origin?

In some cases, American folklore scholarship suggests it does not. A great deal of twentieth- and twenty-first-century theory maintains that traditional folklore “theories and philosophies bear little relevance to the American situation because American civilization is the product of special historical conditions which in turn breed special folklore problems” (Dorson, *Historian* 28). The inability to define tradition in American folklore because of the inability to examine generational passing of tradition on its soil was one of those problems. To combat that difficulty, Americans shifted the notion of tradition from a temporal one to a spatial one. America was a vast land; conceptualizing tradition as “repetition across *space* as well as *time*” meant folklore could become contemporaneous; in short, “tradition lost its antiquity” (Bronner, *Nation* 11). American folklore could be shared across the nation as common cultural capital, traceable through physical contact in trade, exploration, migration, or within groups of settlers who held commonalities in their having descended from similar stocks of people.

Demonstrable though this may be, what could not be gleaned from this isolated sharing of folklore was a nationally shared cultural identity. As discussed by Dundes, “Folklore is clearly one of the most, perhaps *the* most important, sources for the articulation and perpetuation of a group’s symbols” (*Matters* 8). It is a considerable force in the creation of group identity and, most importantly for Americans in this context, a spirit of nationalism; “it is folklore which is responsible in large measure for creating ethnic identity” (Dundes, *Matters* 9). Discussing the function of folklore, William Bascom asserts that

folklore is an important mechanism for the stability of culture. It is used to inculcate the customs and ethical standards in the young, and as an adult to reward him with praise when he conforms, to punish him with ridicule or criticism when he deviates, to provide him with rationalizations when the institutions and conventions are challenged or questioned, to suggest that he be content with things as they are, and to provide him with a compensatory escape from ‘the hardships, the inequalities, the injustices’ of everyday life. (298)

Without the shared traditions of folklore, the formation of a nationally recognized identity is not possible, and without a nationally recognized identity, an international recognition of cultural specifics is unthinkable. As Dan Ben-Amos asserts, the objects of folklore do not “exist in culture merely as constant verbal forms but also play an active role in social affairs” (xxiii). To establish American culture, American tradition had to be – essentially – fabricated.

Regina Bendix declares, “Americans were caught in the social and intellectual dilemma faced by any postcolonial society” (122). They wanted to build an independent culture that would carry the spirit of their new nation, yet they had no model but that of their former British rulers to follow. This was the impetus for the Chicago Folk-Lore Society’s call to action that requested American citizens look at home and in the library for the seeds of folk expression. A lack of clarity in definition and context, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, led to muddled notions about what an American “folklore” might contain for Baum and his contemporaries. This muddling opened opportunities for the creation of American folk heroes and their connected folklore in moments of literary and journalistic invention, opportunities only capable of happening in America because of its reliance on modern conveniences and mass production.

What arose from these attempts to characterize the American spirit through the classification of tradition was serious discussion regarding a body of artistic work that had begun to analyze American *types* in the early nineteenth century, reaching its height in popularity around mid-century and the start of the American Civil War. A great deal of modern day folklore scholarship focuses on the appearance of American regional types emerging at this time: the down-Easter, the Kentuckian, the Yankee bumpkin, the southern clay-eater, the western roarer. Identifying and exploring these types in popular culture suggested to the American majority that even in their new nation there existed groups of less “civilized” peoples who carried with them their own traditions and folkways. It is the nature of stereotypes, however, that they rely on the recognition of the “Other,” often centering their depictions of members in the stereotyped class on

perceived violations of normative behavior expectations from the “rest” of society. The result, as demonstrated in texts which employ these stereotyped characters, was often that these American “types” were treated as either comical entities or entities to be feared: an “us-versus-them” presentation was common².

As Dorson discusses in *American Folklore*,

in the first thirty years of the Republic, the rising swell of an indigenous folk humor comes into view. Three main tributaries fed this humor, often mingling their currents: the boastful speech and eccentricities of the frontiersman, the drolleries of Yankees, and the stock fictions of roguery and mendacity. In stage coaches and taverns, during husking and raising bees, at militia musters, around hunters’ campfires, in New England village squares and on Southern verandas, tongues wagged and stories flew. (48)

What the folklore-searching public found when looking for bits of American folklore in their homes and libraries were, undeniably, bits of printed “lore” from what Dorson categorizes as the “subliterary levels of print” (*American Folklore* 49): local newspapers, dramas, tall tales, cheap broadsides, and the like, including works created for juveniles. These same bits of public lore found their way into communities across the nation with the professionalization of journalism and the spread of newspaper printing in local print shops.

² For a detailed discussion of these, see Dorson *American Folklore* pp. 39-74

The proliferation of local tales in popular media is most apparent in the intense expansion of newspaper formatting in the Jacksonian era, when the “four-page production on good rag stock, printed in eastern seaboard cities, addressed to the educated upper class, and given over largely to foreign news” changed to become the “personal, chatty newspaper [. . .] run by an individualistic editor in close touch with the local community he served, and conscious of his function as dispenser of entertainment as well as news” (Dorson, *American Folklore* 50). L. Frank Baum was himself one of these editors. As outlined in Chapter One and discussed most intensely by Koupal, when Baum purchased the *Pioneer* and took his place as editor in 1890, he intended “to publish a paper in the best interests of his community” (“On the Road” 57) and to offer what he expressed as “counsel and guidance in the obtuse and intricate political issues which are constantly cropping up in this remarkable country” (qtd. in Koupal, “On the Road” 57). Baum’s insistence on characterizing the editor as guide here falls in line with what Walter Benjamin notes as the most significant role of the storyteller, wherein every real story “contains, openly or covertly, something useful. The usefulness may, in one case, consist in a moral; in another, in some practical advice; in a third, a proverb or maxim” (“The Storyteller” 86). Benjamin asserts, “In every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers” (86). Baum, and many local newspaper editors, considered this role as counselor one of the most significant in an organized community. As dispensers of information, these local sages – who, in many cases, were responsible for writing much of their local publications as well as editing information received from national circuits – quite literally controlled the narrative of the political, social, and cultural state of America

in the lives of their readers. By the end of the nineteenth century, to find even a small town without a local source of printed news was unthinkable. Taking the place of communal storytellers, it was the newspapermen who surfaced as the sources of tale migration across the land. Particularly interesting bits of narrative could easily be adapted to local specifics for a bit of entertainment and, also, a bit of what Benjamin describes as usefulness.

Somewhere within this national thirst for information and entertainment lay the need for shared folktales and the second “transgression” in American definitions of folklore. Folktales can be defined as “traditional prose narratives that are strictly fictional and told primarily for entertainment, although they may also illustrate a truth or point to a moral. [. . .] The term ‘folktale’ usually connotes the complex, so-called ‘fairy-tale,’ which is familiar in children’s literature” (Brunvard 103). Folktales differ from myths and legends, narrative forms which also have connections to communal groups but “were considered to be true by the originators and traditional tellers,” in that they are “for the most part, self-consciously fictitious” (Ashliman 33). Throughout the course of their being investigated by folklorists, these tales have been classified according to their structural and thematic contents and can be used to provide incredible insight into the study of people and their cultures. While they are not the only source of creative invention in folklore – consider folk art, folk songs, folk dramas, etc. – they are often the most intensely studied genre of folklore in what appears to be a universality of form and function. This apparent universality offers the tales a general acceptance as anonymous

creations and restricts their origins to oral tradition for most scholars³. Included in folktales, and the tales most often brought to mind with the use of folktale terminology, are the “Tales of Magic.” Classified in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification of folktales as those tales numbering 300-749, the tales of magic are most commonly called “fairy tales.” What is important to remember here is that, while not all folktales are classified as fairy tales, all *legitimate* fairy tales *are* classified as folktales.

In America, the construction of folktales took on an entirely new spirit and format. Rather than the passing of strictly oral folktales, local color printed in newspapers, growing in popularity thanks to the sharing of print-work across the nation, offered written folkloric “bits” as short as an anecdote and as lengthy as a tall tale. One of the most recognizable instances of this folktale creation comes in the American fascination with Paul Bunyan. Discussing Bunyan’s unique folk status for the first time in his 1941 article “America’s Comic Demigods,” Dorson highlighted the ways in which the folk hero came to be through a sort of “continuous cross-fertilizing cycle” of oral and literary narratives (399). The likely invention of newspapermen, Dorson would later claim “journalism, not folklore, has nourished Old Paul in the hearts of his countrymen” (*Fakelore* 336). And yet, he admits, “It is clear that cavils and sneers of the impious can not disturb the secure if seemingly manufactured place of Paul Bunyan in American tradition” (“Comic” 397).

³ For a discussion of folktale origin in print literature, see Ruth B. Bottigheimer’s *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition* (UPenn Press, 2002) and *Fairy Tales: A New History* (SUNY Press, 2009).

Bunyan is but one character in American literary history who, like Baum's Dorothy, gained widespread acceptance as a folk hero despite his literary origins. The proliferation of Bunyan tales moved beyond the newspaper stories to a new incarnation of oral dissemination, inspiring an increasing number of tales dealing with the character and weaving themselves into "prose, verse, drama, in forms as extreme as doctors' theses and advertising brochures" (Dorson, "Comic" 394), and, as discussed by Dorson, into a third phase of expression in a "pageantry and variety of art media: sculpture, ballet, musical suite, lyric opera, folk drama, radio play, painting, lithographing, wood carving, and even a glass mosaic mural" ("Comic" 394). This kind of memetic spread, the focus of my next chapter on Dorothy's experience as folk-phenomenon, propelled Bunyan into what Dorson deems a "fourth and final incarnation," in which "the mock divinity breaks loose from artistic as well as literary devotion and passes into the popular speech as a symbolic figure of allusion, to point a large comical happening, commend a superior physical achievement, or punctuate an exaggerated effect of almost any sort" ("Comic" 395). Summarizing the effect of these incarnations, Dorson writes, "Circulation, diffusion and popularization, in their mysterious ways, have established Paul as a cherished folk hero independent of the fixed body of literary legend that bred him" ("Comic" 397). Dorson ends this article, not in condemnation of Bunyan's folk status, but with a clearer picture of the necessity of considering hybridity in the case of this particular American folk tale. He writes:

Folklorists are agreed that neither the purely literary and invented hero-figure, or the champion known only to the folk, ever secures general

recognition; apparently both must burst the confining bonds of merely oral or merely literary circulation, either by breaking down the splendid literary epic into rude folk stories, or by building up scattered ballads into a single epic narrative, so that the tales pass from oral tradition to printed legend and back again in a continuous cross-fertilizing cycle. (“Comic” 399)

Yet, more than a decade later, Dorson adopted a more critically focused view on Bunyan’s folk status. In many ways the shift in folklore terminology created by his next taking on of the strongman is what makes establishing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz’s* status as a legitimate fairy tale difficult today.

In 1950, taking aim at the work of James Stevens in his full-length literary treatment of Bunyan, Dorson coined the term “fakelore” with regards to Bunyan and characters like him in American “folk” tradition. In *American Folklore*, Dorson writes, “A slender trickle of oral tradition can be detected beneath the torrent of printed matter about Paul Bunyan” (216); but beyond that trickle, Dorson asserts that the American affection for this character has been fueled by what Jane Yolen summarizes as “stories that look and smell and feel like folklore but come from an artist’s fertile imagination” (“Once” 44). Dorson writes, “Fakelore falsifies the raw data of folklore by invention, selection, fabrication, and similar refining processes, but for capitalistic gain rather than for totalitarian conquest” (*American Folklore* 4). Alongside Bunyan, Dorson hurled the “fakelore” label at other iconic American characters as well, including the well-known Annie Christmas, Pecos Bill, Joe Magarac, Febold Feboldson, Tony Beaver, and Bowleg

Bill in his list of faux folk heroes. These spurious legends, Dorson insisted, were the invention of artistic minds and not the product of the folk. Their construction represented a degradation of the necessity of orality in folklore and should be dismissed for their “conception of the folk as quaint, eccentric, whimsical, droll, primeval” (*American Folklore* 4). These instances of fakelore, he asserted, were the invention of the twentieth century’s “impulse to present so-called American folklore” that “suddenly developed in the 1920s and 30s in response to the nationalistic mood following World War I and America’s new place in the sun” (*Historian* 9). Dorson’s discussion of American folklore studies by the time he wrote *American Folklore & the Historian* in 1971 evolved to the assertion that there existed “no close parallel in other nations to the fakelore issue in the United States, where popularization, commercialization, and the mass media engulf the culture” (14). Here, Dorson claims that “a mass market existed, and publishers and writers rushed to supply the need. Hence the great success of Paul Bunyan. Some writers knew better, some did not, but in either case the product they tendered was ersatz” (9).

Dorson’s argument by 1971 was not that *no* American folklore existed, only that these particular instances of American fakelore should be recognized in their status as products of the motivation for capitalistic gains by literary authors. He suggests that “because of the special and even unique conditions of the United States history, folklorists acknowledge the function of print in spreading, perpetuating, and preserving American popular tales, and the value of printed resources as repositories of folktale” (*Historian* 173). Furthermore, Dorson asserts that “the ubiquitous printed page becomes an instrument to diffuse and a table to record folktales” (174). This is because “stories in

the United States travel interchangeably through the spoken and the printed word; if communities are scattered and fluid and culturally advanced beyond the cement of purely oral tradition, a cohesive force is supplied by commonly read printed material” (174).

Dorson’s claim, then, was not that printed material could not *hold* folklore, or be used to pass on folklore, but that the origin for folklore had to be considered based on the “folk” creation of the text. The work that could be surmised as the product of a single authorial voice and was additionally presented as being *from tradition* was fakelore and should be acknowledged as such.

Dorson’s “fakelore” designation spawned a great deal of discussion regarding authenticity and origin among twentieth-century folklorists. Alan Dundes insisted that fakelore was not, as asserted by Dorson, a product of a twentieth-century lust for America to have a folklore of its own. Rather, Dundes suggested that “fakelore may be said to be rooted in feelings of national or cultural inferiority. As feelings of nationalism may be tied to feelings of cultural inferiority, so folklore may be linked with fakelore” (*Matters* 50). The need in each nation that had laid claim to folktales that did not *absolutely* belong to them in origin – through the naming of tale collections as their own – was analogous to the need to create nationalist enthusiasm through the exploration of authentic folkloric traditions. Connecting folklore to the central means for identifying cultural history and, therefore, cultural validity, Dundes insisted that “fakelore apparently fills a national, psychic need: namely, to assert one’s national identity, especially in a time of crisis, and to instill pride in that identity” (*Matters* 50). As such, he suggested it was “pointless” to argue the “ersatz” status of folk heroes like Bunyan, instead claiming it would be “far

better to accept the fact that fakelore may be an integral element of culture just as folklore is” (*Matters* 53).

This fakelore vs. folklore discussion operates, in some ways, on the heels of larger philosophical questions regarding authenticity and value that began twenty years before Dorson first coined his term. Writing in 1936, in what would become his most significant text for many – “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” – German cultural critic Walter Benjamin first articulated the fear of art’s categorical deconstruction in the wake of modernity. Benjamin’s essay tackles what he fears as the inherent risk in losing the authenticity of original production in a work of art when that work of art can be (re)produced through mechanical means, citing the use of photography and film as the most significant examples of reproductive means that, when consumed by an audience, lose their connection to mechanical re-production in favor of a newly created notion of artistic form. Benjamin’s assertion was that “even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (“Work” 220). He likened this unique existence to the work’s “aura” and contended that “to pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose ‘sense of the universal equality of things’ has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction” (223). For Benjamin, the acceptance of a mechanically reproduced object by the masses as being uniquely beautiful and holding its own value was symptomatic of the “adjustment of reality” taking place in modern society, “as much for thinking as for perception” (“Work” 223). By the mid-1930s, he believed that the process of mechanical

reproduction had, “for the first time in world history,” reached an acceptance by the masses as artwork in its own right in a way that “emancipate[d] the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual” (224). He laments:

To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility. From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the “authentic” print makes no sense. But the instant the criteria of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics. (224)

Benjamin’s deductions here laid the foundation for the concern of Dorson in his argument against the “fakelore” of particular American folk heroes. If the practice of creating fakelore in mass media publications had reached a state in which it was seen as analogous to the “spontaneous” creation of folklore in oral traditions of antiquity, then the fundamental function of folklore would have to be seen as endemic of the political (re: commercial) production of group identity. Ironically, viewed in this light, Dorson’s assertion that “fakelore” authors had co-opted the vision of “the folk” as “quaint, eccentric, whimsical, droll, primeval,” rather than acknowledging “that much folklore is coarse and obscene, and its true form is often meaningless and dull to the casual reader, though absorbing to the serious student of culture” (*American Folklore* 4), is in itself a sort of political statement regarding the status of the folk. In many ways, the collection and study of folklore mechanizes the practice of folkloric creation and makes the

folklorist responsible for the reproduction of the work of art, thus robbing that work of its aura and politicizing the folk past in a way only possible in the present.

And yet, to deny the need to recognize the political past of folkloric creation is to deny the ultimate function of folklore. If folklore is the epitome of tradition necessary for the creation and stabilization of group identity, then its political nature is fundamental to its origin. The *tradition* in folklore *is* reproduction. To argue the semantics of reproductive mediums feels far more ersatz than the “origins” of folk ideology that trouble Dorson.

Brunvand writes, “Folklore is traditional in two senses: it is passed on repeatedly in a relatively fixed or standard form, and it circulates among members of a particular group” (4). I believe that, particularly in America, the most integral point of defining folklore comes just beyond this consideration; folklore is traditional in a third sense: *it serves a function essential in the establishment of group identity, both for members within those particular groups and for observers of the groups and their lore*. As expressed by Bascom, folklore functions in four ways: (1) in revealing “man’s frustrations and attempts to escape in fantasy from repression imposed upon him by society” (290); (2) “in validating culture, in justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them” (292); (3) “in education, particularly, but not exclusively, in nonliterate societies” (293); and (4) in “maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior. [. . .] More than simply serving to validate or justify institutions, beliefs and attitudes, some forms of folklore are important as means of applying social pressure and exercising social control” (294). Furthermore, “Folklore is used to express social approval to those

who conform. [. . .] In many societies folklore is used to control, influence, or direct the activities of others from the time the first lullaby is sung, or ogre tale is told. Folklore may also become an internalized check on behavior” (Bascom 295). In short, “folklore operates within society to insure conformity to the accepted cultural norms, and continuity from generation to generation through its role in education and the extent to which it mirrors culture” (Bascom 297).

Maria Tatar writes that “folklore operates as a system oriented toward conventions sanctioned by a cultural community”; that “a folktale, unlike a literary text, must win the consensus of a collective body before it becomes part of a standard repertory of tales” (“Reading” xli). But I suggest that a literary text is capable of achieving the same consensus if that literary text *operates* as folklore. In the same manner Bascom discusses the “folklorization” of literary texts, where the oral life of a literary creation becomes so great that its literary origins are lost, it can be suggested that literary texts come to folklorization *without* the loss of literary identity *if the function of the literary text maintains its essential purpose in helping to construct a group’s identity.*

Considering the premise of the processes of simulacrum, as explored by Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation*, the “reality” of a text’s status as “folklore” via the limits imposed by traditional definitions for the field has little relevance for those readers “experiencing” the text as folklore. If in the case of L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, as is the case for the stories of Paul Bunyan, readers *believe* the story is a fairy tale, then the story is a fairy tale. So long as it functions as a fairy tale in the ways that the cultural community conceives as being authentic, then its status as a

literary text – even one written with the demonstrated purpose of making money for its author – is irrelevant. As Dundes asserts, “Folklorists cannot prevent people from believing fakelore is folklore. [. . .] It is only scholarly folklorists who are concerned with oral pedigrees” (*Matters* 47). For Baum’s “modernized fairy tale” to *be* a modernized fairy tale, his readers just had to believe that it was and carry it forward in the construction of a tradition that treated it as such. With this in mind, analyzing Baum’s work as a legitimate fairy tale, as folklore, means analyzing it with regards to what folklorists see as the most important questions for situating a text in tradition. As outlined by Brunvand,

the basic goal of any research in folklore may be thought of as an attempt to answer one or more of the fundamental questions of *definition* (what folklore is), *classification* (what the genres of folklore are), *source* (who “the folk” are), *origin* (who composed folklore), *transmission* (how folklore is carried, how fast, and how far), *variation* (how folklore changes and for what reason), *structure* (what the underlying form of folklore is and the relation of form to content), *meaning* and *function* (what folklore means to its carriers and how it serves them), and finally of *use* and *application* (what should be done with folklore and in what other areas of study is it useful). (10-11)

Though questions regarding transmission, variation, use and application find better avenues for exploration in the next chapter – my discussion of the memetic life of *Oz* – an examination of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* for the remaining categories of

investigation here proves helpful in situating the tale within the tradition of American folklore and the functional genre of the fairy tale.

FINDING THE FAIRY TALE IN *OZ*

As my discussion thus far has worked to better define the terms of folklore in America, the discussion of folkloric *definition* with relation to *The Wizard* will be brief. I believe that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is a unique example of an American literary work that, thanks to its position in history and its traditionally-based presentation of narrative, has allowed for the continual re-cycling of its tale in oral, literary, artistic, material, and abstract forms in a way that continually reaffirms it as a fairy tale for its audiences. Though first reaching the consensus of one cultural community as representative of its expectations for normative behavior and shared desires, the *Wizard's* transmutable qualities have allowed for its appropriation and retelling by multiple groups of folk while retaining its core resonances and clear didacticism. The nature of these mutations and appropriations are the subject of later discussion.

Examining the *classification* of *Oz* within the genres of folklore, however, necessitates a momentary exploration of the nature of the fairy tale and the ways in which Baum's tale meets those generic conventions associated with tales already classified as such. As described by Brunvand, "their characteristic features [. . .] are formularized language and structure, supernatural motifs, and sympathy for the underdog or commoner" (108). Much of the language associated with fairy tales is the product of literary styling based on the presentation of tales by Wilhelm Grimm, the acknowledged editor of the Grimm brothers' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* collections. Despite the claims

of their tales having been taken from oral tellers, there is extensive and well-documented scholarship regarding the brothers' increasing concern with the style and tone of their "authentic" folktales. Wilhelm's editorial brush was responsible for the reshaping of the sharp, often fragmentary tales into enjoyable and cohesive works representative of the German *Volk* spirit. As Ashliman notes, Wilhelm's style "quickly established itself as a pattern for later folktale collectors and editors of many nations" (41). The language of his prose is "simple, but not primitive; literate, but not pretentious; child friendly, but not childish"; his "plots are tightly constructed, avoiding parenthetical comments and unintended redundancies. Above all else [. . .] the Grimms' fairy tales are action oriented. These narratives contain few descriptive passages, very sparse dialogue, and virtually no deliberation of reflection. The adventure itself is the message [. . .] almost a stereotypical feature of fairy tales" (Ashliman 41). As expressed by Max Lüthi, "It is a style of precision and clarity" (22).

Baum's work, too, follows Wilhelm's stylistic lead. As noted by MacFall and Frank Joslyn Baum in *To Please a Child*, the stories of L. Frank are "told in simple words and short sentences, without distinction of style, but without the conscious repetitions and limited vocabulary which irritate an adult, and even a child" (129). The work is filled with "incident, melodrama rather than emotion, a tingling sense of conflict and the satisfaction of conquest" necessary for holding a child's interest (MacFall 129). Baum clearly understood the necessity of action. In his 1909 article "Modern Fairy Tales," he recognized the greatness in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* that came, for children, through the movements of Alice who was "doing something every moment, and doing

something strange and marvelous, too” (138). He shunned the lavishly superfluous work of Andersen who, with all of his “kindly sympathy for the little ones,” had forgotten that “the child skips descriptive passages because it cannot understand or appreciate them” (139). In “What Children Want,” Baum elaborates on his intentionally sparse style: “Children do not relish descriptive passages, however beautiful they may be. They want their dialogue decisive and crisp. The action of the story must not lag – it should be swift current whirling ever onward to the end. And the language employed should be simple and unadorned.” Recognizing the criticism of Baum’s fairy tale style in comparison to writers of modern fantasy, C. Warren Hollister in “Oz and the Fifth Criterion” touts the author’s simplicity as one of the chief elements that give the work the status of three-dimensionality, a term he defines as indicative of the reader’s being transported into the world of Oz and receiving “a recollection of the taste of joy, the three-dimensional experience of going into another universe where everything is brighter and more fragrant, more dangerous, and more alive” (195). Hollister explains that Baum’s style cannot be more glittering “because glitter gets in the way. To pass through the page into the other world, the words must be as nearly *invisible* as possible. They should merely carry the story, as Baum’s words do effectively, unpretentiously” (196).

As for the tale’s inclusion of “supernatural motifs,” their presence is integral to the narrative. Being classified as “tales of magic,” fairy tales must necessarily contain some brush with the stuff, but unlike the magic presented in works of fantasy or science fiction, fairy tale magic is less novel than it is anticipated. Ashliman explains, “Fairy-tale characters accept magic as a natural and expected part of their everyday world” (38).

Maria Tatar describes this as “a form of magic that settles down comfortably in the world we inhabit,” noting that in fairy tales “we never stray into a world that requires us to navigate a new reality or to learn entirely new rules of behavior” (“Reading” xxxiv). Though this may seem flawed with respect to Dorothy’s experience, being tossed into the Land of Oz by a terrible cyclone, the child’s acceptance of this magical land as just another place is unquestionable. From the very first supernatural event, the lifting of the house by the storm, Dorothy finds comfort in her space, discovering “she was riding quite easily. After the first few whirls around, she felt as if she were being rocked gently, like a baby in a cradle” (24). Despite the enormity of the story’s catalyst for what will become Dorothy’s journey, the way in which the girl experiences this event follows Ashliman’s explanation that “fairy tales give their characters, and vicariously their readers, access to [an] alternate parallel world, a place where magic abounds. These powers are supernatural only by this-worldly standards. By fairy tale standards they are natural and subject to their own laws” (38). In each event of supernatural proportions in Baum’s tale, Dorothy handles the magic in the fashion Ashliman suggests: once she discovers she is in a land that has a different populace than that of her own, she accepts each new bit of information that comes as common for this place and moves forward. Upon learning that she is speaking to a “good witch,” something she did not know existed before that day, Dorothy is told that her lack of experience with witches is only the result of her living in a “civilized country” where “there are no witches left; nor wizards; nor sorceresses, nor magicians” (45). In the Land of Oz, however, which “has never been civilized” because it is “cut off from all the rest of the world,” witches and wizards still walk amongst the

citizens of the various communities (45). Dorothy accepts this explanation and begins her journey toward the City of Emeralds with the same sort of obedience and diligence that would be expected of her as a young girl back in Kansas.

Furthermore, Dorothy does not question the exact location of the Land of Oz with the idea that it might be somehow alien to her world. Rather, she recognizes it as a space simply unknown to her until her arrival. The Land of Oz is surrounded by great deserts that “none could live to cross” (49) at each of its four borders. And yet, the Wizard is discovered to be “a man who goes up in a balloon on circus day” from Omaha (265). His having reached the Land of Oz by balloon, and his assertion that he has the ability to return Dorothy to Kansas in the same manner, leaves readers with what Riley describes as “the nebulous idea that Oz could lie somewhere in the great deserts of the southwestern part of America” (53). The Land of Oz’s status as an unreachable place within the United States renders it less a magical land and more a land where magical things happen – a significant distinction when considering Baum’s participation in the fairy tale genre (Riley 53-54). Like the lands familiar to readers in other tales of magic, Dorothy’s environment, no matter how far it may be physically removed from her home, still remains a place grounded in its own form of reality.

Within Baum’s tale, the author’s “sympathy for the underdog or commoner” is perhaps one of the least contested traits of the story’s adherence to generic convention. In his comical and sympathetic treatment of Dorothy’s companions the author illustrates, as Russell B. Nye discusses in “An Appreciation,” that those members of society lacking in some element deemed necessary for self-respect may be more capable than even they

realize, despite not being able to *show* those abilities in tangible ways: “you have within you [. . .] the things you seek; the symbol is of no value while the virtue is” (166). And while the lessons I later critique as being in line with early twentieth-century ideas regarding the domestic responsibilities of young women may override his kindly treatment of Dorothy in my assessment of her character, at no point does Baum chastise her as being weak, incapable, or in some other way deviating from what is expected of her as a good, moral being, despite her less than well-to-do upbringing and her status as an orphaned child.

Further characteristics associated with the fairy tale include the centrality of one hero or heroine around which, according to Max Lüthi, “all other characters, no matter how drawn, are only helpers, or motivators of him, or they contrast him,” (23) a pattern certainly evident in the roles of Dorothy’s companions, whose positions as guides and protectors through the Land of Oz are unquestionable. Dorothy meets Lüthi’s requirement, too, as a hero who is “isolated but not at the mercy of the world; [. . .] who receives gifts and aid at every step and is able to accept them” (23). As an orphan and a female child, she additionally fulfills Lüthi’s demand as “the outermost, most dispensable member of the social order as well as of the family” (23). Finally, considering Stith Thompson’s definition for the *märchen*, as “a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes” that “moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and is filled with the marvelous,” Baum’s tale fulfills the expectations of the fairy tale through the use of motifs Thompson defines as “the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition” (416). Baum’s employment of the journey episode,

the walk through the woods, the “magical object” of the silver shoes of the Wicked Witch of the East, the marvelous creatures who populate the Land of Oz, and the conventional character of the outcast child allow the author to claim the fairy tale as his novel’s controlling genre.

Consideration for the tale’s *source*, with respect for who makes up the body of folk responsible for its being brought into tradition, and *origin*, with regards to its literal creation, form a sort of interdependent discussion when examining this text. Because Baum’s audience lacked a native category for “folk” with which they could intimately relate, Baum’s membership in a folk group could only be recognized through the creation of a piece of folklore for communal review that included smaller bits of knowledge and tradition summarizing group values without labeling them as such, a sort of “insider’s perspective” to the ideal American fairy tale. Examining the source and origin for the tale, then, should be done with the understanding that Baum’s work creates a folk just the same as it speaks to one.

As the literal *origin* of the tale, L. Frank Baum’s status as storyteller is ultimately under review. While his adoption of the role of “counselor” as a local newspaperman certainly shows his willingness to participate in the traditional capacity for a tale teller, Baum’s presentation as authorial figure in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is quite a different story. As illustrated in his narrative voice in the text’s “Introduction,” Baum first worked to establish himself as an educated authority on folklore, in line with those prominent figures of Taylor, Lang, Perrault, the Grimms, and Andersen who had come before him. But the acceptance of a story as folklore still requires the establishment of

tradition, something that must necessarily be measured over time and space. When taken into consideration for the establishment of Baum in popular opinion as a legitimate storyteller, there arises a much different perspective of the author's role in tale creation.

Beginning with his second Oz book, *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (1904), Baum's relationship with his audience began to change. As discussed in this dissertation's introduction, Baum's "Author's Note" in *Land of Oz* takes on a fundamentally different tone. Here, rather than presenting himself as folk authority, Baum begins a presentation of the author as storyteller; not as a storyteller with a fixed literary project in mind, but one with the kind of flexibility in character and plot required of traditional tale-tellers for folklore. As Lüthi asserts, in traditional *märchen*, "not only the narrator but also the audience participate in the constructing and wording of tales. The narrators pay attention to the needs and desires and also to the immediate mood of the listeners. Creative personalities wanting to innovate are restrained by their generally more conservative public. Less skillful narrators are corrected and encouraged to improve the story" (18). Baum's presentation in prefatory material paints him in the light of both of these positions. As a creative teller, he laments that the children "won't let [him] stop telling tales of the Land of Oz" in the "Note" for *Dorothy of Oz*; but as the less skilled narrator, he writes often that the children "suggest plots" to him, as in the note for *Ozma of Oz*, or that they are largely responsible for the book's composition, as in his notes for several others, even calling *Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz* "Our book – mine and the children's."

Returning from his Oz hiatus in 1913, Baum recounts for his readers the way in which "through the kindness of Dorothy Gale of Kansas, afterward Princess Dorothy of

Oz, a humble writer in the United States of America was once appointed Royal Historian of Oz, with the privilege of writing the chronicle of that wonderful fairyland” until he was cut off from all communication with the land by Ozma only to later rig up “a high tower in his back yard” and take “lessons in wireless telegraphy until he understood it” and could contact Princess Dorothy of Oz for more tales from the mysterious place (15-16). In this manner, Baum fulfills Benjamin’s suggestion that “storytellers tend to begin their story with a presentation of the circumstances in which they themselves have learned what is to follow, unless they simply pass it off as their own experience” (“Storyteller” 92). Whether or not Baum’s interaction with audience was immediate, as was the case for oral tale-tellers, the presentation he offers his readers as a storyteller with whom they can communicate, and who is allowing his tales to be shaped by their wants and needs, is in line with traditional notions about fairy tale weavers. As Marina Warner explains, “Fairy tales are stories which, in the earliest mentions of their existence, include that circle of listeners as audience; as they point to possible destinies, possible happy outcomes, they successfully involve their hearers or readers in identifying with the protagonist, their misfortunes, the triumphs. Schematic characterization leaves a gap into which the listener may step” (23).

While Baum’s metaphorical banter with his readers registers as an abstract version of the interpersonal relationship existing between traditional tale-tellers and their audiences, another more logistical origin for Baum’s literary tale in oral tradition exists. Baum was writing, by choice, for an audience of children. As a text encouraging its presentation within the family reading circle, his work already assumes an oral

component to its construction. As explored by Maria Tatar in *Off with Their Heads!*, the role of the adult reader in the construction of a text for audiences of children is one of an authorial nature. “The places where we wince, cower, laugh, comment, whisper, shriek, or engage in any of the other numerous activities that mark the sites of our rewriting of a text determine the way the child perceives the story. A child’s reception and response is always heavily marked by the context of relationship to performance” (xxi). Even the selection of Baum’s tale for reading is an act of performance with regards to the narrative in context; whether the child listens to *The Wizard* quietly at family reading time or picks up the text from the shelf on their own and reads it silently to themselves, the book’s presence in the child’s environment is a direct choice of the parent on a purely practical (consumer) level, as parents “also select the stories, often on the basis of anticipated therapeutic or didactic effects” (Tatar, *Off* xxi) for family purchase.

Furthermore, Baum’s text encourages a sort of controlled performance for the child in its inclusion of Denslow’s illustrations. By physically setting the boundaries of options given to audiences for visualizing characters and their spaces, Baum’s text acts as a dynamic storyteller, creating options for variation for readers as they choose to display those illustrations for child-listeners, make considerations for what illustrations to show (and when), the degree to which the illustrations receive the attention of the audience, and the equality of opportunity for visualization given to each illustration. Even a silent reader, when given illustrations, must make choices regarding how much (if any) attention is given to each picture; the physical time devoted to each page can vary according to the amount of time spent studying pictorial details in any given reading so

that the “performance” of Baum’s physical text also varies in any given reading according to reader, space, lighting, accessibility, and visibility in a similar fashion of what can be expected in variation for performances of well-rehearsed tales by traditional tellers.

Any discussion of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and origin must also consider the origin of the tale in its specific narrative choices for plot, characters, and settings as the *source* of its relevance for the people participating in the cultural community at the time of the novel’s release. Speaking on the work of the Grimms, Tatar claims, “Fairy tales can operate like powerful magnets, picking up bits and pieces of local culture and lore, drawing a turn of phrase from a song or another story, and fleshing out characters with features taken from the audience witnessing their performance” (“Reading” xliii). This imagery of the fairy tale as magnet makes sense in a tale that is passed without a totally fixed form, but the same is true of Baum’s text as well. Physically, the text’s presentation was altered again and again (and continues to be) through its various editions, where alternative illustrations, the inclusion or dismissal of prefatory material, the literal editing of the author’s words, or the abridgement of the tale for different audiences changes the story for readers. The artwork in particular picks up “bits and pieces” from the tale’s history, as shall be discussed later with relation to the text’s various adaptations and appropriations. But Baum’s words, his tale in its first edition, are also the result of bits and pieces picked up from the world around him. The presence of these bits and pieces act like witnesses to the audience’s reality, drawing the tale a greater degree of familiarity in the way that other traditional tales build on familiarity of narrative movements. Roger

Abraham notes, “Traditional stories are usually so well known to the audience and so stereotyped in their construction that the resolution is inherent in their performance from the first word or gesture” (208). Baum’s reliance on traditional generic structure and motif certainly lends the tale a level of familiarity and predictability for later generations of readers, but his use of real-life bits of local lore and intertextual references created an immediate sense of familiarity for even his very first audience.

Brian Attebery notes that Baum’s work contains “local conditions, local habits of thought. There are genuine bits of oral tradition in his stories, mostly on the level of language: prose rhythms, metaphors, and jokes” (95). Baum plays on the national character of Midwestern farmers in his depictions of Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. Aunt Em, who “was thin and gaunt, and never smiled, now” but works all day to maintain their farm, receives a slightly comical treatment in Baum’s description of the way she was, upon first meeting Dorothy, “so startled by the child’s laughter that she would scream and press her hand upon her heart whenever Dorothy’s merry voice reached her ears” (19-20). Uncle Henry, who “never laughed,” “worked hard from morning till night and did not know what joy was,” is described in very solemn terms as being as “gray” as the Kansas landscape, “from his long beard to his rough boots”; “he looked stern and solemn and rarely spoke” (20). Michael Patrick Hearn writes that both “Aunt Em and Uncle Henry [. . .] exemplify the naturalist writers’ belief that environment profoundly alters character. It is not a pretty picture, but a sympathetic one” (*Annotated* 16), later claiming the pair “have come to symbolize the stern American farmer and his wife as much as the couple in Grant Wood’s famous painting *American Gothic* have” (16). And yet, the

representation of the two for Baum's 1900 Chicago audience was already one made to fulfill expectations of the Kansas "type" in national views. Baum built their actions on news reports, like those of his sister-in-law Helen Leslie Gage who, writing in the *Syracuse Weekly Express* in 1887, spoke of her experiences with "The Dakota Cyclone," saying, "Out on this wide prairie, where not a tree or a building obscures the horizon in any direction, we are ever watching its clouds" (qtd. in Hearn, *Annotated* 21). That same article "described what happened when a funnel-shaped cloud struck a house in North Dakota. [. . .] She also mentioned how the wind seized another house and caught up a shanty and shook its occupants about" (Hearn, *Annotated* 23). Meanwhile, an editorial called "What's the Matter with Kansas?," written by "the Kansas editor William Allen White had recently lambasted the state's poverty and hopelessness" (Rogers 75). Katharine Rogers notes the editorial "was highly praised and widely reprinted, so it gave Kansas a particular topical interest" (75).

Much has been written with regards to Baum's creation of the Emerald City and its likeness to the White City of 1893 Columbian Exposition fame. Certainly for the citizens of Chicago the similarities were unmistakable. "Like the Emerald City, the White City seemed to spring up suddenly out of nowhere in the center of the country from the swamps along the lake. [. . .] The glittering emeralds may have been suggested by the little lights all over the White City that were lit up at night" (Hearn *Annotated* 176). In his 2000 annotated version of the work, Hearn asserts that "with an economy of language, Baum describes the mystery and majesty of a fairy city," noting, "it must be a remarkable sight indeed to dazzle the painted eyes of a scarecrow" (168). Hearn's annotations also

suggest likenesses in the Celestial City of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and the city of Camelot as presented by Tennyson, none of which would be lost on an American audience in 1900 (168). And several scholars have discussed Baum's use of green glasses on the city's citizens in reference to a piece that first appeared in the "Our Landlady" column for the *Saturday Pioneer*. In Baum's column, as relayed by Stuart Culver, a salesman of "the latest innovation in animal husbandry" comes to town with "green spectacles that, when placed on a horse or mule, turned everything the animal ate into food" (102). Schwartz notes in his biography of the author that "colored eyeshades had also been sold at the Chicago World's Fair for the very purpose of blocking the blinding brightness of the White City" (277). And Hearn notes, "Baum may be playing with the proverbial phrase 'to wear rose-colored glasses,' meaning to view the world as better than it really is" (*Annotated* 267). In any of these cases, Baum draws bits of the real and the familiar to better color his tale with "folk" knowledge for his readers.

Also from the World's Fair, as Molly McQuade writes in "Fair-y Tale: The Wizard's Souvenir," Baum likely used the very real public distrust of the hot air balloon and its operator. McQuade's article tells of the September 22, 1893 flight of Pennsylvania stunt man Samuel Archer King who "planned to ascend above Chicago in the basket of a large balloon" and was approached by "a nice girl from Ames, Iowa," who "pleaded with him to let her ride along" on the morning of the flight (115). As McQuade explains it, "at five thousand feet, the rude Chicago wind blew the pair out over Lake Michigan, stranding them, until the *Andy Johnson*, a rescue cutter, arrived to reel them in" (115). The young girl, Joie Morris, "was not heard from again, apparently," and her "accidental

pilot [. . .] returned to Philadelphia, and to more balloons” (115). Archer’s story would have wildly circulated among Chicagoans and fair visitors from all over the world, both for its novelty and the scandal involved in a young girl being “taken” by a strange and dangerous man in his balloon. Baum’s allusion to a similar journey in his tale, one which Dorothy ultimately avoids because of the naughty behavior of her dog Toto who “had run into the crowd to bark at a kitten” (291), offers a tantalizing moment of fear for audiences aware of the King/Morris flight and a moment of relief in the escape of Dorothy from the basket. Unlike Morris, Dorothy escapes the possibly disastrous fate of the Wizard’s ride⁴.

These kinds of associations with the “real” are rampant in Baum’s work. Hearn notes the regularity with which yellow bricks were used in nineteenth-century construction (*Annotated* 51), the “ordinariness” of Dorothy’s dress in its overwhelmingly common “gingham, with checks of white and blue” (57), and the “uncanny ability to relate his fairyland to the immediacy of a child’s world through the little details of his story” (64), even noting the correct construction in material and process for the erection

⁴ It could be suggested that the Wizard, too, is another victim of Baum’s re-casting in his later series. Though he makes a return in 1908’s *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*, in Baum’s first text Hearn notes that when the Wizard tells Dorothy he can’t come back for her, “There is good reason for this: The Wizard has failed in the balloon’s construction to include some apparatus to control his flight. Neither the text nor the pictures suggest that he included a valve or guide rope. By pulling on the cord for a few seconds, the pilot allows air to escape, and the balloon descends. The only way for it to come down without such a device is to wait for the air to cool. Denslow had sketched a guide rope in pencil on the drawing for the chapter title page, but perhaps Baum suggested that it be removed” (*Annotated* 292). The mourning of the Emerald City’s citizens and the way in which Dorothy “felt sorry at losing Oz, and so did her companions” (295) can suggest for some readers that the man was unlikely to make his way home. In some respects this would be a just punishment for the man who deceived the citizenry of Oz and the tale’s characters for his own personal gain, and the author’s lack of detail for the event would be in line with his attempt to avoid the nightmares of those traditional tales and their depictions of punishment. Being surrounded by the great deserts on all sides, there would have been no rescue boat for the Wizard’s balloon as there had been in Chicago. The Wizard would be at the mercy of nature, which regularly punishes those acting unfavorably.

of the Wizard's new balloon in the tale (286). And a great deal of discussion surrounds Baum's interest in and employment of science and machinery as the "magic" of his fairy tale world. Marius Bewley notes that Oz is "unmistakably an *American* fairyland" specifically because of "the way Baum transforms magic into a glamorized version of technology and applied science" (261). Nye emphasizes the importance of this relationship to child readers at a time "when every child saw about him – in the automobile, the dynamo, the radio, the airplane, and the rest – the triumph of technology over distance, time, and gravity" (16). Again, for the residents of Chicago – Baum's first reading audience – the impression of this technological innovation had been recently refreshed in the exhibits at the Exposition. "No American child of Baum's time or after could remain unaware of the age of invention, or fail to feel the wonderment of what machines could do" (Nye 16).

In addition to associations for American readers in realistic bits of life in the States, Baum's fairy tale grabbed bits of life in better-known literary works, both of traditional tales and more recent American invention. Hearn notes Baum's use of the winged monkeys as reminiscent of the "genies of the *Arabian Nights* who obey whoever summons them by a wonderful lamp, whether a poor fisherman or a lad like Aladdin," noting that "genies too are often limited to just three wishes per bearer" (*Annotated* 210). The monkeys are slaves to their own golden talisman, a cap containing all the power necessary to control them and ask for wishes. Baum also makes reference to the "brownies" of Palmer Cox fame, greatly loved by American readers (166); and he implements in the Wizard the archetype of the American "trickster," or "con man,"

playing to stereotypes about circus types and those who deal in magic and illusion. Even in what has become one of the tale's most memorable lines (thanks to the 1939 MGM film adaptation of the work), "There is no place like home" (76), Hearn notes "Baum appears to be playing with the famous sentiment of John Howard Payne's 1823 song 'Home, Sweet, Home,': 'Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home'" (*Annotated* 77).

What made Baum's references relevant was their accessibility by members of his intended audience. With regards to the novel's *source* of folk acceptance, the body of people considered for the cultural community for whom the novel speaks is, in my reading, quite large: the acceptance of Baum's text comes from the burgeoning "folk" group of the American middle class. While this group is not traditionally considered one with folk status, analyzing the relationship of the readers to the story with respect to its place in history and the *meaning* and *function* of the tale for that group makes the likelihood of their readership of *The Wizard* as a fairy tale and the perpetuation of its exemplum quite high.

Baum and Denslow's 1900 George M. Hill Co. edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was a lavishly printed text, with a color cover, dust jacket, and twenty-four full color plates inside. At \$1.50, it was priced a full 37% higher than its competitors. This purely economic difference placed the book in the hands of a slightly more financially stable reading audience and earned it a place higher on the "must have" list for those with means. But its birthplace in Chicago meant a greater number of the populace were willing to spend the money for ownership. The importance of public appearance in the

consumption-driven city was considerable in relation to the rest of the Midwest and even rivaled that of larger and more established metropolitan areas. Writing on the emergence of the American middle class, Melanie Archer and Judith R. Blau explain that “the loose fit between affluence and the wherewithal to ape middle-class decorum in public places” was heightened in urban areas, where mass production of goods and a wide-spread appreciation for a “modest civic life, void of aristocratic conditions [. . .] contributed in no small measure to the success of middle-class culture” (30).

What is most interesting about the emergence of the middle class in America is the paradox in attempting to define it as a class at all. In much the same way that the term “folklore” requires shifts in its definition to fit the unique historical situation of America, the term “middle class” also exists on shaky ground between definitions based in economics and ideology. What twenty-first century readers may consider “middle class” varies greatly in degree of specificity and the grounds for which we define “middle” and “class” as categories of distinction. As explained by Stewart M. Blumin in *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900*:

Americans use the term with remarkable imprecision; yet, we seem to represent something very important about our culture and society by doing so. It is here that ambiguity is joined to irrelevance, within the powerful historiographical tradition invoked by the term “consensus.” America, according to this tradition (or these traditions – one can speak of both the “consensual” and the “ethnocultural” points of view), has had no middle class, but rather a pervasive middle-class culture, and a society in which

the most serious conflicts have revolved around differences of race, ethnicity, religion, and region rather than the diverging interests and ideologies of economic classes. In this sense, the term “middle class” is a misnomer and is best understood as a somewhat inappropriate linguistic import from England, where a genuinely intermediate social group, located between a formally aristocratic upper class and a decidedly plebian lower class, struggled on behalf of those bourgeois values that here so easily won acceptance that they became nearly synonymous with the national culture. (2)

Americans felt that opportunity for upward mobility, land ownership, education, and participation in government were integral for the establishment of the Republic; yet, despite associations made between the earning of money and the display of a man’s worth, there existed “a deep-rooted commitment to simplicity in American life” that, as Archer and Blau assert, “was linked in turn to the highly practical and anti-elitist approach to lifestyle and consumption” (31). Having separated from the intensely stratified class system of monarchical countries in Europe, Americans held a strong resentment for the elitist culture of the upper class and the aristocracy. To exhibit behaviors of extravagant consumerism and superiority were akin to placing oneself in the class of the old elite, something highly antithetical to American principles of hard work and frugality. And yet, much in the same way Americans struggled to find models upon which they could build their own institutions in ways separately identifiable from those

of their former British rulers, citizens also struggled to form codes in which they could differentiate themselves from one another in recognizable displays of personal success.

Speaking on the prominence of travel literature in the mid nineteenth century, Carl Bode explores what visitors to America in this time period identified as a kind of “restlessness” in the population: their observations speak of the habits we had of “walking fast, of being unable to sit still, of erupting into all sorts of brisk motions from drumming our fingers to tapping our feet. And deeper than all of this lay the psychological restlessness of a people without the security and fixity of class status, the restlessness created by a break from the European tradition” (222) without a new tradition set to take its place. Americans wanted to be valued as individual operants working towards the slowly solidifying ideals of the “American dream,” but a deeply human need for identification in a stratified system of existence pulled them equally towards creating the very kind of classes from which their nation purported to escape. As Blumin succinctly states, this dichotomy of needs “is at least a central paradox in the concept of middle-class formation – the building of a class that binds itself together as a social group in part through the common embrace of an ideology of social atomism” (“Hypothesis” 305).

After the Civil War, urban American middle-class households experienced what Blumin describes as a “domestic revolution” (*Emerging* 139), in which the cities witnessed the separation of home and office and the expansion of the family home in both size and decorum. This shift contributed to “the sanctification of the home and of domestic affairs, the redefinition of gender roles within the home, and the reformation of

strategic child nurturance and education, the whole thing constituting [. . .] not merely a middle-class phenomenon but a phenomenon critical to the formation and perpetuation of the middle class” (Blumin, *Emerging* 139). Stemming from widespread acceptance of the need for separate “spheres” of existence for men and women which began in the early part of the nineteenth century and, thanks to the continual perpetuation of womanly ideals demonstrated in everything from personal advice manuals to the pious female characters in juvenile readers, continued to highlight the moral “superiority” of women in America, increased attention to the ways in which a woman was capable of “keeping” her home and family allowed for a more visible presentation of middle class culture to rise to public attention. As Blumin explains, “Increasingly, as women assumed responsibility for the management of the home, the purchase of those goods that helped define the middle-class household (and refine male behavior) became a female function and prerogative. The point applies not only to durable goods but to food as well” (*Emergence* 185). To be best recognized as a member of the middle class, a family’s homestead would be well furnished and well attended to; its head of household would earn a living outside of its walls in the new urban space of the “office”; its members would be well dressed, well read, well fed, and “in the know” about popular culture and local interest. The emergence of a distinct American middle class, then, “was closely connected with, and largely dependent upon, the development of the domestic ideal” (Blumin, *Emergence* 187).

In great service to this ideal was the national interest, fear, fascination, and enthusiasm for the *city*. American conceptions of “city life” existed in terms of polarities,

where the threat of disaster and immorality exposed by the Great Chicago Fire pushed more rural citizens to avoid the den of iniquity found within the city's streets at the same time that the Chicago Exposition sparked fantasies only accessible to "real" city-dwellers and enticed newcomers to turn their visits into permanent moves. Furthermore, the industrialization and mechanization of labor increased opportunities for earning vast fortunes without experiencing the physical toll of manual labor or laying success in the hands of mother nature in the fields, drawing greater numbers of dreamers to the magnetism of urbanity. Upon arrival, however, many found that the enormous returns they hoped to receive in exchange for their office labors were not as limitless as once imagined.

Searching for belonging but incapable of securing it through purely economic means, members of the middle class began increasingly identifying themselves as part of a group through *social* rather than economic markers. "Businessmen, professionals, officials, and clerical workers, living well but lacking great wealth and the access to that great wealth sooner or later provided to the city's most exclusive social circles – this was the urban and suburban middle class" (Blumin, *Emergence* 290). As explained by Archer and Blau, "from the congeries of occupations that comprised the growing urban middle class emerged a life style, set of cultural codes, behaviors, and conventions that helped to define an increasingly homogenous civic order" (30). This homogenous civic order was demonstrable through material exhibition in homes, clothing, and artifacts of "belonging"; through individual presence in social clubs; through adherence to expectations regarding education and child-rearing from both popular opinion and

“specialized” advice by professionals; and through exhibited appreciation for, more than any other thing, what was “best” for America and its future. Consider, only in the sphere of children’s literature consumption, the “need” for American urban “folk” to have read *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and to demonstrate their “ownership” of that knowledge through the display of toys, clothing, and hairstyles modeled in its image. Viewed in this light, belonging to the contemporaneous American folk in Baum’s particular moment in history meant, in a way unlike any other connection of folk status, simply “belonging” to popular culture and its practices in ways that could be *performed* or *enacted* between members that were unrecognizable for those on the outside.

In contrast to this order was the “less developed,” less “cultured” image of the land beyond the city. While Blumin notes the “stream of country lads migrating to city clerkships” and the “specific prejudices” of the nation for rural workers that encouraged even young girls from the country to seek the “genteel” work of the city (*Emergence* 310), images of the pastoral purity of country life illustrated in articles like Merwin’s “On Being Civilized Too Much” suggest that for white, urban, well-to-do Americans, those occupants of the rural countryside might offer exemplum of a less modernized “folk” upon which they could nostalgically reflect.⁵ It is here, in the romanticized vision of the

⁵ In a 1936 review article titled “American Primitives,” A. J. M. Smith asserts a similar consideration should be made for the American characterization of “frontier men.” Here, he explores “the modern self-conscious sentimental interest in the American Past, viewed romantically as a time-space stage for the exhibition of the Heroic, the Simple, and the Strong working out a manifest destiny before a back-drop of pine-tree and mountain. The impermanence, pettiness, and squalor of men are set off against the stability, power, and beauty of the granite mountains in whose shadow he lives; the haste, calculation, and divided aims of the new generations are contrasted with the dignity, courage, and faith of the pioneers; science is opposed to nature and romance” (171).

farm girl, that I believe Baum's Dorothy finds her impetus for creation and cultural significance. In order for Baum's fairy tale to reach truly receptive readers, it would be necessary he make his heroine a member of a folk for whom those readers felt an intimate and authentic connection, an "accurate" image of one who inhabited the bygone days wherein the "real" spirit of American character could be gleaned. By constructing a tale for city-dwelling Chicagoans that offered that "folk" spirit, and simultaneously extolling the virtue of that spirit against the ethical failings of the city, L. Frank Baum created a tale that harkened back to the purity of rural America without exploiting the "dangers" of urban modernity too greatly to have the tale serve as a denouncement of its possibilities. His use of characteristically American symbols and locally understood references encouraged immediate acceptance of the novel *as a fairy tale* and allowed for its cultural encoding to be touted as nationally understood expectations for behavior, reward, and punishment for American readers and their foreign observers.

Despite his intentions to modernize the genre, Baum's tale *structure* follows that of other fairy tales that have been formally classified as such. Noting that "the Oz books conform to the accepted pattern far more often than they deviate," Nye insists "the changes [Baum] rang on the traditional fairy story, not his rejection of that tradition, account to a great extent for his effectiveness," claiming that a great part of the attraction of the Oz books "lies in the child's recognition of old friends in new roles and costumes" (2). As can be seen using the methods of morphological analysis of Vladimir Propp, Baum's tale follows the structural features laid out for a number of other tales.

Beginning with an “initial situation,” in which “the future hero [. . .] is simply introduced by mention of his name or indication of his status,” (Propp 25), Baum’s text opens: “Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer’s wife” (11). Following the catalyst of the cyclone event, wherein both Uncle Henry and Aunt Em “absent” themselves from the situation, and an “interdiction is addressed” to Dorothy to get to the storm cellar (Propp 26), the story’s adventure begins in earnest with Propp’s function XI, “departure,” wherein Dorothy, the “victim-hero,” is taken to a position in Oz which marks “the beginning of a journey without searches, on which various adventures await the hero” (39). She is joined by an accidental encounter with a “donor” (Propp 39) in the Witch of the North, from whom she “obtains some agent [. . .] which permits the eventual liquidation of misfortune” (Propp 39) in the form of the silver shoes of the Wicked Witch of the East. Propp notes that “before receipt of the magical agent takes place, the hero is subjected to a number of quite diverse actions which, however, all lead to the result that a magical agent comes into his hands” (39). This is true in the case of Dorothy who, although in possession of the silver shoes for the entirety of the journey through Oz, does not recognize their magical power until the knowledge of language necessary for utilizing the shoes comes into her possession, as granted by Glinda, who tells her “If you had known their power you could have gone back to your Aunt Em the very first day you came to this country” (351). Additionally, Dorothy receives from the Good Witch of the North a magical kiss to protect her from harm on her journey. This direct transference of

a magical agent comes upon Dorothy's agreement to travel the yellow brick road to the Emerald City to see the Wizard of Oz.

Along the way to the Emerald City, Dorothy is joined by three accompanying "helpers," each of whom helps to transfer, deliver, or lead her to the whereabouts of an object of search as delineated in Propp's "spatial transference between two kingdoms" (50). The group utilizes "a stationary means of communication" for the journey through the following of the yellow brick road (Propp 51). At the end of the road, Dorothy meets the Wizard, who sends her on a second "move," one Propp defines as the hero's journey towards combat, to battle the villain in the Wicked Witch of the West. Following her killing of the witch, Dorothy is "branded" a hero (Propp 52) and returns to the Wizard to receive her reward. "The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated" in a reunion with her companions (Propp 53), and Dorothy frees captives (Propp 54) in the form of the Winkies. "The hero returns" (Propp 55) to the Wizard for reward, but is defeated in her inability to leave. She completes a final task when she makes a journey to Glinda, where she is rewarded use of the magical agent – in this case, the slippers she has been wearing for her entire journey – and she returns home to Aunt Em, who receives the child in a manner uncharacteristic of the woman before Dorothy's departure, as she is seen "folding the little girl in her arms and covering her face with kisses" (357) at the tale's end.

It has been noted on several occasions that Baum's tale follows the conventions of the myth as characterized by Joseph Campbell, as a narrative that contains "a separation from the world, a penetration to some sources of power, and a life-enhancing return" (28). Mark West calls Dorothy "one of the very first girl characters in American or

British children's literature to experience [that] type of heroic quest" ("Dorothys" 125). Still, because *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* operates as self-consciously fictitious, following the journey of a dispensable heroine through the Land of Oz on the direction of a donor for completing a task and returning home to a changed space via a magical agent, Baum's tale is not a myth but a fairy tale, just as he claimed it to be. As such, what is most significant in its genre is the *meaning* and *function* it serves for its community in summarizing significant points in the ideology of its folk, points that serve to provide "relative stability for the community and its culture" (Zipes, *Stick* 11). In this case, the points necessary for examination are those for behavioral expectations it gives via its heroine, Dorothy. Though Hearn asserts that "feminists have naturally claimed Dorothy as one of their own," insisting *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is "now almost universally acknowledged to be the earliest truly feminist American children's book, because of spunky and tenacious Dorothy," an examination of the text reveals a character which can be read as quite antagonistic to that message (*Annotated* 13).

Indeed, Dorothy is anything but the plucky character many scholars claim her to be. Rather, she is obedient, loving, and motivated by one central drive: to get home, where she belongs. I suggest a reading of the tale in which Dorothy is not an independent traveler, embodying what Brian Attebery asserts is "the essential American character," as "the explorer, the wanderer, who penetrates ever wilder regions of the world or the mind and comes back relatively unscathed" (97), but is instead employed as a model child in a fairy tale that cautions young American girls who might be lured away from their rightful

domestic responsibilities by the bright lights and technology of the city, where reality and illusion play too close together for the promise of lasting personal fulfillment.

Though Baum is regularly touted as a supporter of women's rights – chiefly due to his relationship with his mother-in-law, the very vocal suffragette Matilda Joslyn Gage, and his editorial commentary on women and their roles in America – when examined more thoroughly, the messages sent by Baum are no less complex on this matter than any other “opinion” adopted during his lifetime. While Sairy Ann Bilkins, Baum's narrator for his *Pioneer* “Our Landlady” column, may have put words to the importance for women's rights in association with the author's name, and his service on the council for suffrage in South Dakota may have given the appearance of support to the efforts of those involved, neither negate Baum's refusal for financial assistance from his mother as a woman, his dedication to keeping Maud's work inside the home, his comical treatment of the “new woman” in *Father Goose, His Book*, or the number of later anti-feminist references in the Oz series through characterizations of women like General JinJur, the antagonist of *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, who seeks to dethrone the Scarecrow with her powerful army full of women armed with only feminine wiles and sharp-pointed knitting needles. Although Dorothy gains more “progressive” character traits for a girl as the series continues, in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* – the book that was supposed to be the *only* tale at all – the heroine's characterization is far from challenging to the status quo for Anglo-American girls at the time of its composition. The work's function as a fairy tale, designed to present examples from which members of a group gain identity and boundaries for behavioral expectations, is complicated by the ways in which the author

presents those boundaries and the ways in which the public performs and enacts them beyond their reading of the printed text.

I AM DOROTHY, THE DIDACTIC AND DARLING

Regardless of their fantastical elements, fairy tales remind us of the real world we inhabit. Michael Riley writes, “as paradoxical as it may sound, good fantasy is most often about reality; it enables us to perceive the real world in a clearer way and sometimes helps us go past surface illusions to the truth underneath” (51). This truth, in tales directed toward child audiences, stems from established communal concepts about what is or is not appropriate behavior in terms of socialization and cultural performance. Fairy tales offer a particularly fertile ground for the passing of this kind of cultural encoding, because, as Jack Zipes reminds us, “fairy tales were cultivated to ensure that young people would be properly groomed for their social function” (*Subversion* 30). Part of this cultivation is accomplished through the use of temporal-corporeal elements that are flat enough to allow for local inflections alongside generally universal motifs and narrative elements found useful for the memorization, internalization, reflection, and conditional sharing of the dominant ideology for a given communal group. Shifts in the arrangements and details of those elements can signal what is, or was, most important at the time of the tale’s telling for the tellers and their communities.

While Zipes insists “most fairy tales were not didactic,” he acknowledges the genre “was clearly recognized as *the discourse* for the entire family in which questions of proper gender behavior, of success, norms, and values could be presented and debated” (*Happily* 67). As Sheldon Cashdan explains in his psychoanalytic examination of the

genre, “Whereas the initial attraction of a fairy tale may lie in its ability to enchant and entertain, its lasting value lies in its power to help children deal with the internal conflicts they face in the course of growing up” (10). Through the telling of these tales, adults (and children) can offer workable examples for a child’s navigation towards recognized adulthood. One of the most powerful ways this discourse is initiated is in the use of characters upon which child readers can imprint their own experiences. Speaking on this phenomenon with respect to Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Maria Tatar writes, “Children reading fairy tales and fantasy enter Elsewhere and encounter a world awash in visionary beauty. Identifying with Dorothy, they march through Oz, sharing her ecstasies and triumphs but also feeling the shock of her terrors. [. . .] Fairy tales help children move to a state that may not be full emancipation but that marks the beginning of some form of control over what surrounds us” (*Enchanted* 146).

As the most central point for reader identification in Baum’s tale, the young protagonist, Dorothy, shoulders the burden of community expectations as an intended role model for those readers. Brian Attebery claims, “Dorothy is aggressively, triumphantly American” and, as such, “must be accepted by the reader as a valid representation of all things American. Therefore, Dorothy is not merely a fairy tale heroine, or a believable child, she is also heir to an American conception of character, especially of its own character” (97). Examining the ways she exhibits that concept, then, offers insight to what an audience accepting the fairy tale as its own finds most important for children to mimic in their everyday lives. Dorothy’s acceptance as a folk hero makes her susceptible to a variety of cultural interpretations across time and space, making an

exploration of Baum's original text all the more interesting as a point of origin from which to later interrogate the ways expectations for a child's – particularly a female child's – behavior have or have not shifted over more than a century of folkloric (re)enactment, as well as a marker for consideration of the degree to which fairy tale heroes and heroines take on a life independent of "sources" when enculturated by various groups for points of ethnic identity formation in a post-modern environment for ideological dissemination.

Before Baum's very first word in *Oz*, Denslow's illustrations position the reader in line with their young heroine and cement Dorothy's place as an observer in her world. In the first image of the child, she leans over to rest her folded arms on a bold "D," the start of both the book and her introduction, as the name "Dorothy" begins the tale. Her back to the audience, she is ignorant of their gaze. The child stares out at a wide, monochromatic landscape, the flat earth dulled in orange ink with a full sun blazing above it. Unspecified in her age by Baum, Denslow's image hints she is a child of around six or seven. Aligned with her environment through their matching monochromatic coloration, Dorothy's childish nature lays as flat as Great Plains before her. Toto, a wiry-haired dog, in contrast, sits at the bottom of the page; stark black and detailed, his curious eyes and wondering face examine the reader through the fourth wall as the story begins. Lesson one: A good girl is observant.

Baum's text opens on the gray Kansas plains, but as Attebery so clearly states, "It does not take place in Kansas, any more than *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* takes place in Camelot. It only starts there" (83). Kansas is as much a wonderland

as Oz. It is the wonderland in negative – a hyperbolic, dystopian space for Baum’s modernized wonder-tale.⁶ “Not a tree nor a house broke the broad sweep of flat country that reached the edge of the sky in all directions. The sun had baked the plowed land into a gray mass, with little cracks running through it. Even the grass was not green, for the sun had burned the tops of the long blades until they were the same gray color to be seen everywhere” (18). Even the house was blistered by the sun, its paint losing color and turning “as dull and gray as everything else” (18).

Dorothy’s recognition of the life-draining power of the land she inhabits encourages the child to look elsewhere for happiness, specifically to her dog Toto, who “saved her from going as gray as her surroundings” (20). With respect to Dorothy’s journey, Toto is a concrete representation of childhood and naiveté. Black and definite, unlike the gray desolation of Kansas or the whimsical color of Oz, his presence grounds Dorothy as both a point of responsibility – he is the sole being she must provide food and shelter for on her journey to see the Wizard – and as a giver of happiness. The “child-rearing” practice of Dorothy as a proud mother-hen, unlike the uncertain mothering work of Aunt Em before Dorothy’s departure, offers happiness to the one who embraces it.

This is true of Dorothy with Toto and of the later-changed Em, who folds little Dorothy

⁶ Attebery notes, “Oz is not defined only by its unlikeness to Kansas. There are also certain striking similarities between the two. Both are landlocked, bordered, not by perilous seas, but by impassable desert. Oz expresses simultaneously the two symbolic landscapes that Henry Nash Smith says form Americans’ image of the Western frontier: it is the Garden of the World set in the midst of the Great American Desert” (*Fantasy* 85).

in her arms upon her return. Lesson two: A good girl cares for others and finds personal fulfillment in doing so.

Laura Barrett, writing on the spaces in American fairy tales, notes, “In Kansas, nature is the enemy, one, moreover, that wreaks havoc on people as well as land” (153), highlighted through the depiction of Dorothy’s athen guardians who “worked hard from morning until night” while she busied herself with childish play (Baum 20). Before Dorothy’s brush with the cyclone, Uncle Henry “sat upon the door-step and looked anxiously at the sky,” Aunt Em busied herself “washing the dishes,” and “Dorothy stood in the door with Toto in her arms, and looked at the sky too” (20). Denslow’s illustration positions the girl directly in the frame of the doorway. Aunt Em in the background is seen washing dishes in detail, but is otherwise surrounded by blackness, the isolation of the domestic interior. Uncle Henry sits outside on the stairs, and the foreground of the home – four large sunflowers, a sprig of tall grass, the exterior walls, and a horseshoe over the doorway – is well detailed in the scene. The child stands at the literal threshold of domesticity and its gendered sphere, signaling for readers that this will be a story about her choice to step inside or go out. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is, in its giving of Dorothy’s narrative, a tale about embracing our place in the world.

That Baum should address the tension of home life as the central point of conflict for his fairy tale signals the significance of establishing home and family cohesion as the most important issue facing his intended American audience. As discussed by Maxine Van De Wetering, because of the absence of the organized church as a central social institution for safety, the nineteenth-century home “came to be strikingly antagonistic to

the frenetic, commercial world ‘outside’” and “served as a paradigm of serenity, not merely as a negation of the outer frenzy in the world but positively, as a generator of personal nurture” (39). Moreover, “in this separation, what was clear was that the outside world offered not only disreputable behavior, but also loneliness. The individual was ‘lost’ in the thoughtless crowd. As the opposite to such desolation, the home provided not only established morality but also personal nurture and reassurance” (Van De Wetering 39). Writing on the notion of family as a retreat from the city, Kirk Jeffrey notes that the idea that “the individual found meaning and satisfaction in his life at home and nowhere else” (22) persisted in popular culture throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the early portion of the twentieth. In general, Jeffrey suggests, “popular writers tended to define the ideal home as an Edenic retreat, a rural haven utterly distinct from the terrors of urban life and the loneliness which could assail men there” (28). But as an occupant of that wondrous city of Chicago, having experienced life in both urban and rural spaces, Baum recognized the lack of Edenic aura the home could hold for young children, regardless of location, and the insignificant role that visible “Edenic” evidence played in establishing a home as whole. In exemplum of this reality, his depiction of Dorothy’s home is one of sparse material comfort, beginning a mounting concept of home as what Hearn notes is “not the landscape but a condition” (*Annotated* 77). Moreover, his characterization of Dorothy as the child of the plains is, John Funchion writes, as one who “desires nothing” (434). Indeed, “she would appear to live a life of contentment and even joy,” which prompts Aunt Em’s confusion at her happiness (434). This apparent contradiction, however, corresponds well with collections of nineteenth-

century women's writing on the joyful freedom from gendered expectations felt in their youth versus their lives in adolescence and beyond; as Anne MacLeod notes, "many American women could and did look back to their childhood years as a period of physical and psychic freedom unmatched by anything in their later life" (*Childhood* 6).⁷

The centrality of home as the point of Dorothy's opportunity for contention is made further known to her readers in the coming of a terrible storm. "The north and south winds met where the house stood, and made it the exact center of the cyclone" (22). It is here, during the traumatic movement of the home, away from Kansas and into Oz, that Dorothy's first active instance of exemplary female behavior occurs. While Toto "ran about the room, now here, now there, barking loudly [. . .] Dorothy sat quite still on the floor and waited to see what would happen" (24). Eventually, despite the horrors outside, she finds solace in her space. "Hour after hour passed away, and slowly Dorothy got over her fright; but she felt quite lonely [. . .]. At first she had wondered if she would be dashed to pieces when the house fell again; but as the hours passed and nothing terrible happened, she stopped worrying and resolved to wait calmly and see what the future would bring" (23-24).

Content to submit to the literal storm of domestic isolation, the child closes her eyes and falls asleep. It becomes necessary, then, to consider the storm as a feared but

⁷ Baum's discussion of non-sexing books for young children likely refers to this lack of gender-based division before puberty in America: "In childish requirements sex is not clearly defined. There is little excuse for giving namby-pamby books to girls and adventurous ones to boys. The girls eagerly demand and absorb the marvelous, as their brothers; aye, and need it as much" ("What Children Want," *Chicago Evening Post*, Nov. 27, 1902).

accepted co-inhabitant of the Kansas plains. The presence of the storm cellar, the immediate action of Dorothy's guardians to save what they can from certain destruction, and the fear that causes Aunt Em to dash into the dark hole in the ground without stopping to secure the child before herself, all speak to the recognition of nature's indiscriminate wrath in the eyes of these people. It is possible to consider, as well, the storm Aunt Em would have faced in moving to this dreaded place as "a young, pretty wife," before "the sun and wind had changed her, too" (18), as the cyclone's coming is Baum's only other mention of wind on the plains. Perhaps Em, like Dorothy, was once whisked away in a powerful storm, shown the vapid opportunity for fulfillment in a life away from the family home, and returned to her rightful place with house, hearth, and husband. Regardless of the circumstances of her own journey, Em's resolution to "wait calmly and see what the future would bring" would have been expected from a Western woman, a character Attebery notes as being "particularly appealing to local color writers with a naturalistic vision" and also "peculiarly American" (98).⁸ Dorothy's likewise submission to the storms and the solace she finds against nature's fury within her home reiterate cultural approval for female domestic territories and the curious American relationship with the natural world. Of all the moments for life lessons Baum offers his readers during Dorothy's trip to Oz and back, the offering made in her trust and

⁸ Baum also recognizes the frontier woman of the West as a unique American creation. In an editorial for the *Saturday Pioneer* dated March 15, 1890, he discusses "the superiority of western women in usefulness over their eastern sisters," claiming their inability to "brook idleness when they see before them work to be done which is eminently fitted for their hands" as indicative of their "bright example" which "stimulates their husbands, brothers and sweethearts to renewed efforts." He also comments on their "active brains and good judgement" as being "responsible for the success of many a man's business which without their counsel to direct it would be irretrievably involved in ruin."

submission in the midst of the storm is Dorothy's greatest display of American character. She has opportunity for "failure" in the cyclone; she can allow herself to drift into the nightmare of "what if's" and "then what's," but she remains steadfast in reality and rationalism. As Funchion writes,

Indulging her fantasies is the ultimate temptation that she must overcome. That Baum portrays Dorothy favorably for suppressing her imagination seems peculiar in a book 'written solely to please children of today.' Nevertheless, the narrative abandons the goal stated in its preface by challenging its readers to embrace the quotidian world of labor over the extraordinary Oz. (436)

That suppression will continue throughout her time in the marvelous land. Again and again, she will reiterate her desire to leave. Lesson three: A good girl accepts her place and moves forward.

Dorothy's arrival in Oz signals a radical shift in both landscapes and possibilities for her existence. It is here the young girl's fortitude will continually be tested. Forced away from her family through no fault of her own, she must demonstrate for little listeners the absolute necessity of getting back to where she belongs, by any means necessary. For, as she later tells the Scarecrow, "No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country, be it ever so beautiful. There is no place like home" (75-76). Her experiences in Oz make certain to test that assertion. Dorothy's cyclone-beaten house lands in a natural space unlike anything found in Kansas, with "banks of gorgeous flowers," "birds with

rare and brilliant plumage,” and a “small brook, rushing and sparkling along between green banks” (34). She is greeted by “a group of the queerest people she had ever seen”: Munchkins, who were “not as big as the grown folk she had been used to,” but seemed “about as tall as Dorothy, who was a well-grown child for her age, although they were, so far as looks go, many years older” (34).⁹ In the Munchkins’ greeting of the child, Dorothy receives her first title as an assumed autonomous actor. She is labeled “noble Sorceress” by the Good Witch of the North, whose revelation to the child that she has killed the Wicked Witch of the East is made more significant for Dorothy’s establishment of identity through the connection of the girl to the family home. Upon being greeted with the news, “Dorothy said, with hesitation, ‘You are very kind; but there must be some mistake. I have not killed anything’” (38). To which the strange woman replied, “Your house did, anyway, [. . .] and that is the same thing” (38). The Good Witch’s insinuation that a woman is embodied by her home offers Dorothy an opportunity to see herself as the literal “woman of the house.” Yet, as a good little girl, she is incapable of accepting such a title before her due time. Instead, her thoughts turn to what will become her central

⁹ It has been suggested in a number of psychoanalytic readings of the tale that the size of the Munchkins and the Good Witch who accompanies them offers Dorothy and her child readers a less traumatic first-contact with unknown beings. As Hearn writes, “Baum puts the child at ease by making the people of this strange land the same size as herself. She is immediately on an equal footing with them” (*Annotated* 35), as are many in her audience. The relation of size to power and the formation of identity allow Dorothy perhaps her first opportunity to see herself as an agent in terms of physical ability. Though she is only “an innocent, harmless little girl, who had been carried by a cyclone many miles from home” (36), the autonomy of action necessitated by her being alone gives the child a maturity in Oz she does not possess in Kansas. This maturity is important for the advancements made through reader identification with the child. For, as Jack Zipes reminds us, “Fairy tales and children’s literature were written with the purpose of socializing children to meet definite normative expectations at home and in the public sphere” (*Subversion* 9). Without identifying themselves as possible replacements for the tale’s protagonist, the long-lasting imprint of the fairy tale is lost on the child reader.

motivation: getting back to Kansas, Uncle Henry, and dear Aunt Em. Lesson four: A good girl belongs at home with her family.

Dorothy's time in Oz is spent oscillating between the position of a free child, experiencing the wonder of "the other world" without restrictions imposed upon her exploration by her community, and that of an outcast child, experiencing the trauma of separation from the single place in the world that can offer her comfort and stability. Upon the accidental killing of the Wicked Witch of the East, she receives a material token indicative of this polarity. In the silver shoes of the evil woman, Dorothy holds a symbol of her innocence lost – as she can no longer lay claim to having "never killed anything" in her life – and the promise of a return to domestic serenity, as the shoes offer her feet the safe coverage she needs to make the long journey to the Emerald City and, eventually, home. Uncertain of her departure at first, Dorothy takes the slippers as a gift from the Good Witch of the North and places them inside the house before returning to her new Munchkin friends for advice regarding her passage back home, finding what awaits her is "a long journey, through a country that is sometimes pleasant and sometimes dark and terrible" (50), to a City of Emeralds ruled by a Wizard, her best chance for a ticket home.

The Kansas house provides Dorothy, for the time being, with all of the signs of domestic security. After the Witch and the Munchkins depart, it is within the walls of the home that Dorothy prepares herself for her journey, putting on her "pretty frock," washing herself carefully, placing a pink sunbonnet on her head, and filling a basket "with bread from the cupboard" to keep her and Toto fed on their way to the Wizard (56).

As a final act of preparation, after noting that her own shoes will not serve her well on the long trip, “she took off her old leather shoes and tried on the silver ones, which fitted her as well as if they had been made for her” (56). This is Dorothy’s literal opportunity to walk in the shoes of an evil woman, to allow herself to embody a character unlike that expected of her back in Kansas.

The Witch held power in the land of the Munchkins. She lorded over its people as slaves for a great many years and, as their lord, demanded a great deal of respect and awe from them all; but Dorothy, incapable of commanding the power imbibed in the shoes, rejects the opportunity for female overreach, instead opting to travel under the direction of the Good Witch. Though she accepts the Land of Oz as wonderful and mysterious, and the people of the Munchkin land as kind and generous, before beginning her journey to the Emerald City, she will be certain she has “closed the door, locked it, and put the key carefully into the pocket of her dress” (58). As Hearn notes, “No matter how strange her situation, Dorothy always acts like a tidy, meticulous, well-behaved little girl. Although she may never see her house again, she probably does exactly what Aunt Em and Uncle Henry have always taught her to do when she leaves the house” (*Annotated* 59). In Oz, away from the watchful eyes of her guardians, even in the shoes of a now-dead wicked witch, she continues to behave in the manner expected of a good American girl. And, as a child aware of the sacred space the family home offers her, she locks the door to protect it from the invasion of foreign intruders.

Her presence in town, as wearer of the shoes, causes awe in itself, as evidenced in Denslow’s illustrations for her jaunt through Munchkin country, where a man sketched in

black dips his hatless head low to signal her passage and a green house looks on the scene with what appears to be personified shock – wide white windows act as up-stretched eyes, a gaping door as the open jaw of one shaken by the child’s costumed feet, and a well-thatched roof looking much like the hat on the worried house’s head. Dorothy walks in the witch’s shoes but, for all her readers see, she presents herself as a model of American genuineness. As Nye describes her, she is “a coolly level-headed child in whom a refreshing sense of wonder is nicely balanced by healthy common sense, there is nothing fey or magic about her, nothing of the storybook princess. A solid, human child, Dorothy takes her adventure where she finds it, her reactions always generous, reasonable, and direct” (172). Hearn notes one of Baum’s “strengths as a writer of fairy tales is that his child heroine is so easily identifiable by any young reader” (“Modernized” 277), her example of goodness made all the more believable by an undercurrent of skepticism and curiosity, both often noted as characteristically American traits.

Unaware of the power on her own two feet, but guarded by an enchanted kiss from the Good Witch of the North, Dorothy moves through Oz collecting company along the way in the form of the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Lion, each of whom provide her with guidance and assistance on her journey. The path to the Emerald City is dangerous and filled with surprises. Employing motifs traditional in folklore and American literature, Baum’s child protagonist competes against the unpredictable strengths of the natural world. As she moves farther and farther away from the security of

Munchkin Country, she finds herself surrounded by “fewer houses, and fewer trees,” the land becoming “more dismal and lonesome” all the time (75).

Dorothy and her friends tackle the danger of a deep and dark forest, a narrative tool Douglas J. McReynolds and Barbara J. Lips claim is “as familiar a stock-piece of American writing as it was an actual phenomenon to be met and dealt with in the American experience” (89). They meet beasts with “bodies like bears and heads like tigers,” whose claws could rip even the Lion in two (Baum 123). Emerging from the woods, the group experiences what is, ironically, their most dangerous foe in a field full of poppies, where the “odor is so powerful that anyone who breathes it falls asleep, and if the sleeper is not carried away from the scent of the flowers they sleep on and on forever” (140) – an episode that warns young readers of the danger in even the most innocent appearances outside of the family home. And, upon reaching the Emerald City, Dorothy and her companions are immersed in the danger of illusion, the presence of which is most obvious to the readers, who see in Denslow’s illustrations and through the power of narrative omniscience that the city is not as fantastic as it appears through the green spectacles worn by the people within its walls. Here, Baum makes his most obvious commentary on the vapid opportunity for “real” fulfillment in the City, where “everyone seemed happy and contented and prosperous” (177) only thanks to the forced illusion of government-issued (and locked on) spectacles. The group of travelers is frightened and conned by a Wizard who turns out to be a “humbug” (261) in the end. They meet with Hammerheads, who have no arms, and China People, who break when disturbed; and

through it all, the missions of the four remain the same. The Scarecrow wants brains; the Woodman wants a heart; the Lion wants his courage; and Dorothy just wants to go home.

During little Dorothy's time in Oz, she is, above all else, subject to the will of those adult (male) forces surrounding her, just as she was back in Kansas. While critics have often lauded her independence and the helpful nature of her relationships with the company she meets, much of her interaction is as that of the submissive. Though her journey may be filled with dangerous obstacles, she never truly fears for her safety – nor must her audience – because she has the protection of the Good Witch of the North's magical kiss and trusts in her male companions to guide her along the way. At every turn, they are there to act in her stead in matters requiring agency. Even in discussion on matters of intellect and love, as when the Scarecrow and Tin Woodman argue the nuances of what Hearn calls “the ancient philosophical question of having to choose between the dictates of the rational mind and those of the emotional heart” (*Annotated* 103), Dorothy plays the part of the obedient girl, a creature who cannot be bothered with solving this problem: “Dorothy did not say anything, for she was puzzled to know which of her two friends was right, and she decided if she could only get back to Kansas and Aunt Em it did not matter so much whether the Woodman had no brains and the Scarecrow no heart, or each got what he wanted. What worried her most was that the bread was nearly gone [. . .]” (102). Considering Dorothy's part in the exchange, Hearn notes, “Dorothy's response is just like a child's. Her solution is purely practical: So long as she has something to eat, she will let others argue over the finer points of philosophy. Metaphysics does not feed bellies. Baum implies that Dorothy need not worry, for she

already has a brain and a heart – in the persons of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman – to guide her” (103). The notation is interesting in its suggestion that Dorothy does not require the use of heart or brains of her own, and that Baum’s implication was to assert just that: the need for philosophy, and for a brain and a heart, is an adult (and male) concern. Dorothy, and all little girls, should remain content to worry themselves with foodways and child-care, points of concern for their feminine domestic sphere.

Only once, after destroying the Wicked Witch of the West in a momentary temper tantrum, does Dorothy take the lead in what happens next, all of which begins over the child’s desire to claim the shoes she has come to regard as her own, and all occurring in a space regarded as domestic. After unintentionally melting the Wicked Witch of the West with a bucket of mop water, Dorothy “drew another bucket of water and threw it over the mess. She then swept it all out the door” (225). In a scene that suggests Dorothy’s establishment as a woman over a household, the child claims her once-stolen silver shoe from the mess of melted witch, cleans and dries it off, and replaces it on her foot. Dorothy then makes her only entirely autonomous move, and creates “a first act to call all the Winkies together and tell them that they were no longer slaves” (231) before gathering those “who looked as if they knew the most” (232) and employing them as assistants in reuniting her with her lost friends.

After leaving the castle in which she has destroyed the witch, however, Dorothy returns to her position as an obedient child, acting out as a fictional participant the very real existence of American women who, as Phillinda Bunkle writes, were provided “with supreme domestic powers through religious influence and the education of children,” but

experienced “powerlessness beyond these spheres” (13). The line Dorothy says the most after her one-time attainment of uninterrupted agency – “What shall we do now?” (311, 317, 340) – is repeated each time she and her companions come to a point of challenge for the remainder of the novel. Despite the “missing” brains, heart, and courage of her male guides, Dorothy defers to them as leaders. Her doing so is not a point of weakness on the child’s part for her readers. Rather, as discussed by Tatar, “in exemplary stories, dutiful obedience to the point of subservience and servitude is enshrined in the highest value” (*Off!* 42). Dorothy exists as an example of the model American female child. She offers her audience the opportunity to imprint their own experiences with life outside of the family home onto a protagonist who behaves in the manner most becoming of her character, despite her sometimes fallible motives and the occasional outburst of temper. Even when offered the charms of a witch, Dorothy uses the powers given to her to return to life as a grateful humble child.

Speaking on Dorothy’s journey in comparison to those in other (male-centered) tales of American experience, McReynolds and Lips outline what can be marked as a defining moment of recognition in Dorothy’s function for creating cultural expectations for gendered behavior: “She is alone and disoriented in a topsy-turvy world, yet her movements are consciously and unhesitatingly toward those very responsibilities – chores, family obligations, love – that the boys work so hard to escape” (88). Very simply, “Dorothy is not playing” (89). Throughout her time in Oz, the young girl offers children extensive examples of her dedication to good behavior. She is observant in her careful attention to people, customs, decorum, and rules for engagement. From the

colorings of the Land of Oz's regions to the manner in which she treats a race of people made of china, Dorothy is often the character who points out details to her companions along their way. As Katharine Rogers writes, "Dorothy takes things as they come, without speculating about them; she reacts, interprets, and judges with a small child's simplicity" (75). She accepts her place and moves forward as she can.

She is consistent in her care for others, though as a young child she may not always embody the selflessness implied in the expectation. As Funchion notes, truly "Dorothy cares only to return to Kansas, but the realization of this nostalgic desire immediately requires her to care about the desires of those around her; she must not ask what Oz can do for her but what she can do for Oz" (443). Still, those "doings" are not yet accomplished without self-payment of some sort. In the first half of the book, Dorothy does offer to take the Scarecrow to the Emerald City with her, but only because she lacks company. In return, he carries her basket, stays awake at night keeping watch over her, gives the use of his body to shield her from bee stings in the East and dangerous falls on the road, and offers solutions to her problems as they arise. She does the same "good deed" in allowing the Tin Woodman to join their party, and she genuinely saves him from the rusted state in which he is found; but he also repays her for her friendship many times over. He chops down trees for clearance, for a bridge, for a raft, and for her safety. Dorothy's kindness to the Lion comes only after her mothering of Toto. Upon seeing the giant beast open his mouth to bite her tiny black dog, she "rushed forward and slapped the Lion upon his nose as hard as she could" (107). It is only after learning of his ability to scare away all the beasts of the forest with his looks alone, and without bringing

danger to her or her group, that she allows him to join the walking party. In return, the Lion offers to kill her dinner from the woods, saves her from destruction from the terrible Kalidahs, and jumps her over wide crevices too large for the child to cross on her own. But regardless of the catalyst for her actions of caring, Dorothy's time in Oz is spent with others in need of assistance. In the end, after gaining an audience in Glinda whom she judges capable of fulfilling her needs, Dorothy acknowledges the fulfillment of the needs of her friends as being important beyond her own, telling the kind witch, "I am glad I was of use to these good friends. But now that each of them has had what he most desired, and each is happy in having a kingdom to rule beside, I think I should like to go back to Kansas" (351).

As Rahn notes, "at the beginning of *The Wizard* [. . .] the carefree Dorothy shows little evidence of loving her aunt and uncle, but leaving home [. . .] seems to awaken a new and thoughtful affection for them" (66). She knows in the beginning only that they are where she is supposed to be. She worries instead for the food in her belly and the roof over her head. She is concerned with the way "they will worry" (Baum 47) once she is in Oz, but there are no ramifications that follow. By the end of the tale, however, Dorothy's recognition of herself as a member of a family with some degree of influence becomes more clear. Perhaps her relationships with a makeshift "family" of companions encourage her to consider the greater picture, or perhaps she has simply had time to reflect. Regardless of the reason, upon arriving at the Good Witch's castle in the South, she frets to Glinda that "Aunt Em will surely think something dreadful has happened [. . .], and that will make her put on mourning; and unless the crops are better this year than they

were last [. . .] Uncle Henry cannot afford it” (348). Her concerns for her family are practical, financial, and thoughtful – a trait Glinda does not allow to go unrecognized as she “leaned forward and kissed the sweet, upturned face of the loving little girl” (348). In the Good Witch of the South’s presence, as she was for the Good Witch of the North, Dorothy remains an “innocent, harmless little girl, who had been carried by a cyclone many miles from home” (36) though, by now, she’d killed two witches – sweeping up the mess, of course, as any good girl should.

The Land of Oz offers Dorothy a number of opportunities for transgression of behavioral expectations. She is tempted by agency, by power, by vanity, by greed, by vengeance, and by any number of opportunities for selfishness – the indulgence of any of which would be understandable in her traumatic position away from home. However, Dorothy is generally unflinching in her behavior as “sensible, friendly, helpful, brave without being foolhardy, deeply attached to her friends and family, and resolute in pursuing her goals” (Rahn 57). While a number of scholars point to Dorothy’s lack of social progression in any form akin to the European fairy tale tradition – she does not marry, she is not made royal, she receives no material reward, she offers no boons to her people upon her return, in short, “she has no inner problems, doesn’t develop, doesn’t grow” (Hollister 193) – Rahn insists “this is not the story of someone who badly needs to change” (57). Indeed, Dorothy is the clock by which other children should set their watches. She returns to an “improved” status in her family at the end of the tale because she is a good girl who behaves well in spite of the opportunities presented to her in which

she could behave otherwise. Furthermore, she is made a better daughter for her surrogate mother through the continual strengthening of her devotion to family in their absence.

Through Dorothy, Baum offers a distinct model for behavior for young American girls. She is obedient, well mannered, and unendingly devoted to her place within her family and home. By the social standards of 1900, she is occasionally bold in her questioning and adventurous in her friendships, but she is far from representative of any model of social subversion. She has no characteristics of the “truly feminist” children’s literature that Hearn indicates she is a part of. And yet, somewhere in the last century or so, the Dorothy of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* has been lost. She has undergone a mutation in public perception to become the kind of character described as “healthy, bright, outspoken, unaffected, supremely self-confident and courageous” by Martin Gardner (“Garden” 19); as an imagined mature woman, “something like the grown-up *Ántonia*, full-figured, sun-burned to earth colors, radiating order, contentment, and fertility” by Brian Attebery (98); as “Baum’s picture of the daughter he never had” by Nye (“Appreciation” 172); a character enacting her “great desire and need to break out of the gray bleakness of Kansas” (Zipes, “Second Thoughts” 21); one who “refreshingly goes out and solves her problem herself rather than waiting patiently like a beautiful heroine in a European fairy tale for someone else, whether prince or commoner, to put things right” (Hearn *Annotated* 13); a heroine “remarkably self-possessed and skilled [. . .] kind, responsible, self-reliant, brave, sensible, honest, self-confident, yet unpretentious – just what a child would like to be and what she ought to be” (Rogers 76); “quietly conscious of her worth” (Rogers 94); a little girl who, “incarnating the redemptive force

of youth, returns from precincts of storied beauty and newfound wisdom” from a place with “the power to ennoble even that parched, barren patch of land that goes by the name of Kansas” (Tatar, *Enchanted* 147).

What happened to Dorothy as Baum presented her in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*? And what happened to the examples she set forth for her readers? The lessons in cultural expectations? If we call a young girl independent, daring, brave, or feminist, does that make her so? Even if her actions model a reinscription of an ideology that maintains that a woman’s place in the world will always be at home caring for her family? What happens when the fairy tale that “sticks,” as examined in the work of Jack Zipes, isn’t the story that *exists* in its stable written form? At least with respect to Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, memetic clues may offer a path to untangling the ways the American “folk” have absorbed Dorothy as she was written and inscribed her with the marks of American idealism, creating in Baum’s attempt at a “modernized fairy tale” a *legitimate* folktale for American tradition. Speculative though it may seem, that path is certainly worth investigating.

CHAPTER V:

THE WIZARD LEAVES ITS MARK: A MEMETIC PUZZLE

“When the cities die, in their present form at least, and we head out into Eden again, which we must and will, Baum will be waiting for us. And if the road we take is not Yellow Brick why, damn it, we can imagine that it is, even as we imagine our wives beautiful and our husbands wise and our children kind until such day as they echo that dream.”

-- Ray Bradbury, “Because, Because, Because”

L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* offered Anglo-Americans at the turn of the twentieth century a “modernized fairy tale” to call their own. Complete with magical beings, technological wizardry, and inclusions undeniably American, the tale fulfilled Baum’s promise of a story in which “the wonderment and joy are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out” (4) – unless, of course, readers find fear in a child being dashed about by a cyclone, *two* wicked witches, a swarm of flying monkeys (and bees!), terrible creatures with ferocious claws, and an army of men with hammers for heads. In typical fairy tale fashion, however, these obstacles are quickly overcome and, thanks to Baum’s very intentional alteration of tradition, in ways less gruesome than many incidents of the same fearful quality in tales of magic from other sources. Nevertheless, what he created in the Land of Oz was “a fairyland, like none before it, that we recognized as our own,” one “stamped with national culture” that offered affirmation of our modern American spirit (Attebery 84).

In *Oz* Baum gave readers images of the American child as it should be. Dorothy, tossed into an unknown land, remains obedient, rational, kind, and well-mannered through all kinds of danger and strange circumstance. She supports, assists, and congratulates her male companions in finding spaces of power in this strange land while simultaneously recognizing the important role she plays as a member of her family and an assistant in her domestic sphere back home in Kansas. Not tempted by offers of power or freedom from responsibility in the splendid place to which she has been taken – as when “Dorothy and her friends spent a few happy days at the Yellow Castle, where they found everything to make them comfortable,” until she remembered Aunt Em (Baum, *Wizard* 234) – the young girl-child continually focuses her attention on returning home where “we people of flesh and blood would rather live [. . .] than in any other country” (Baum, *Wizard* 75-76). As Katharine Rogers states, “Through Dorothy, Baum shows his child readers their capacities and reassures them that they can meet challenges, without ceasing to be polite and considerate” (76). But Baum’s work also exposes the pressure of modernity and progress on the role of the woman, as demonstrated through the wickedness of the “slave-driving” Witches of the East and West, both women who desired limitless power and control in the Land of Oz, and ends with a simple lesson in the sanctity and security of the homestead. Oz, the City of Emeralds, the lands beyond the farm: all offer opportunities that are, like Dorothy’s journey, “sometimes pleasant and sometimes dark and terrible” (Baum, *Wizard* 50), but none are as pure or fulfilling as a child’s life at home in the arms of a loving mother.

Received by an audience of Chicago readers searching for an American voice in the popular fairy tale vein, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was practically an overnight success. As Attebery writes, “Oz struck such a chord with American readers that they went on to demand a dozen sequels by the author, a number of musical comedy adaptations, three filmed versions (one of which is now a national icon), and countless continuations by lesser writers” (84). And yet, in more scholarly considerations of the tale that started it all, very little is said about the ways Dorothy reinforces a worldview in which a woman should find her dreams fulfilled by rejecting power, progress, technology, and wonder in favor of a land that all but promises to take “the sparkle from her eyes,” “the red from her cheeks and lips,” and the smile from her face completely (Baum, *Wizard* 18) – until, of course, she finds joy in the task of motherhood. Still, if Baum’s tale performs as a *legitimate* fairy tale, one which serves as a piece of folklore for a community of people, those lessons should be evident. The tale should offer an example of those traits and skills deemed necessary for navigating the world in ways appropriate for a member of the community for which it was constructed. The importance of *The Wizard*, as is the case for any piece of folklore that continues to hold cultural capital, is the way it functions for its audience. The ways in which a fairy tale is received, the ways a folk group¹ utilizes it as a tool for confirming normative behavior expectations and social values, the ways it moves, regresses, shifts, or stays consistent, are all indicative of a foundational purpose of the genre and its place in our lives. Understanding why such

¹ As defined by Alan Dundes, a folk group is “any group whatsoever who share at least one common factor” (“What is Folklore?”, 1965: 2).

careful criticism should be devoted to interrogating Baum's tale within the generic boundaries he intentionally placed on his work is of utmost importance when analyzing the place Dorothy and her merry men hold in our cultural memory. Being a fairy tale means operating in a space defined through the consensus of a community. Examining the ways in which *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* meets that consensus, surpasses its literary origins, and cements its place in the fairy tale tradition, offers an incredible example of the ways members of a folk community ignore what is established in the work in favor of what has been created in the text² through a process of continual adaptation, appropriation, and memetic absorption.

THE FUNCTION OF GENRE IN *OZ*

Writing in an article called "The Genre Function," Anis Bawarshi argues that genres should serve as significant sites for inquiry "because genres, ultimately, are the rhetorical environments with which we recognize, enact, and consequently reproduce various situations, practices, relations, and identities" (336). Bawarshi's thesis draws on a number of theoretical ideas about the construction of a text and the limitations placed on that construction as they were discussed by a group of critics working in and around the mid-twentieth century. The title of his article, however, most specifically plays on the concept of the "author function," from Michel Foucault's 1969 "What Is an Author?," in

² "Work" and "text" are used here as they are defined by Roland Barthes in "From Work to Text" (1971), where "work" is a fixed product, defined by filiation (its relationship to an author) and "text" is the product of continual discourse and language, functioning only through action and continual construction.

which Foucault suggests that the figure of the author-in-name is a functional construct that varies in value for our consideration of any given text.

For Bawarshi, genres function in ways incredibly similar to those of Foucault's author; that is, genres function on both a "conceptual as well as a discursive level" (339). In the same way readers gather information for reading strategies based on the voice of composition for a text, the reading strategies for any given discourse are based on what we come to know regarding expectations and limitations for any discourse within a particular genre. Each utterance exists within boundaries of that generic form. Audience response, both active and inactive in nature, initiates from the sort of internal checklist provided by our construction and understanding of those boundaries based on previous experience and knowledge ascertained regarding each genre. As Bawarshi asserts, "Because genres function on an ideological level, constituting discursive reality, they operate as conceptual schemes that also constitute how we negotiate our way through discursive reality as producers and consumers of texts" (349).

Within social reality, the genres of folklore take on an ideologically elevated level of subsistence. Cultural reverence for folklore in general offers any text labeled as such a connotation of the sacred. Despite the profanity of what Baum termed in his *Wizard* introduction "all the horrible and blood-curdling incident" (4) within traditional tales, folkloric narratives are forgiven their transgressions in light of the important ways they regulate the civilizing process for their listeners. Within folklore, generic categorizations become still more refined based on function and tone. As Roger D. Abrahams explains, when considering the folkloric genres of myth, legend, and folktale, any differences an

audience recognizes between the three are most evident in “the area of belief” (199). Generic boundaries and expectations form a base of knowledge for determining tale function, which in turn “determines how members of the group will interpret the actions [of the author] and distinguish between those motives to be emulated or avoided and those which simply explain, or explain away, or allow for fantasizing” (Abrahams 199).

As discussed in William Bascom’s four functions of folklore, folkloric texts do more than allow a reader to understand or escape reality: they also serve in the education, validation, and conformity of culture, its rituals, and its recognized institutions (290-94). Because folklore operates within boundaries defined both discursively and temporally, folkloric texts offer a more intimate means of reflexive identification for readers who are members of the privileged folk community to whom they speak, *or* they offer a more intensive point of difference or rejection in the construction of self-identification based on the Othering of the group with whom the text is concerned. Abrahams suggests, “The strategies of all genres are directed toward influencing future action through the appeal of past usage” (209). But for the genres of folklore, that usage is more intensely organized for constructing narrative and tradition based on outlining areas of transcendence and transgression specific to an identifiable, exclusive group of folk readers, one that shifts accordingly across space and time.

As discussed by Tzvetan Todorov, “Genres communicate with the society in which they flourish by means of institutionalization” (163). Perhaps no genre of fiction has been more overtly institutionalized over time than that of the fairy tale, entering narrative tradition as what Jack Zipes calls “part of the public sphere, with its own

specific code and forms through which we communicate about social and psychic phenomena. We initiate children and expect them to learn the fairy-tale code as part of our responsibility in the civilizing process” (“Changing Function” 29). With its origins (arguably) in oral transmission thousands of years ago³, the fairy tale entered into popular culture as a universally recognized genre only after being codified for use in disseminating what Zipes refers to as “an accepted discursive mode of social conventions” advantageous to those in power (*Subversion* 3). Later, appropriated as a literary genre by the ruling class, and rushed forward through the nineteenth-century public’s obsession with preserving “authentic” folktales, the fairy tale gained additional life as a commodity in mass-produced collections, consistently made more affordable and accessible in their new formats as the technological gains in printing and production were improved and public literacy became a standard expectation in every social class.

Writing on the “media-hyping” of traditional fairy tales, particularly by the Brothers Grimm, Zipes explores the utilization of ethos surrounding Dorothea Viehmann – one of the Grimms’ attributed sources for their tales – to grant the Grimms’ increasingly edited collection an authentic folk voice. Within the second volume of the Grimm text, “the hyping of the purity of the tales and the ideal ‘pleasant’ storyteller, Dorothea Viehmann, conceals the strong editing of the tales by Wilhelm Grimm and the

³ Ruth Bottigheimer’s insistence that the fairy tale is a literary invention rather than an oral one, as presented in both *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition* (U Penn Press, 2002) and *Fairy Tales: A New History* (SUNY Press 2009), is often contested by scholars. Structuring the argument around genre theory, however, would suppose that a genre comes into being only when in active and perpetual discourse, making the suggestion a more plausible one in terms of narrative creation, consumption, and dissemination, as well as the tradition surrounding that process.

real identity of Viehmann” (“Hyping” 208), who was later discovered to be a woman of middle-class status likely weaving far more fanciful tales than those passed by what many would consider “traditional” folk peoples. Zipes’s interrogation of Viehmann’s constructed narratorial ethos further explores the ramifications of such a hyping by the Grimms for tale reception in English-speaking audiences, as Viehmann’s significance in the second edition of the work – her portrait was printed on the 1819 edition – strongly influenced the Edgar Taylor translation of the tales into English in 1823, the text that “brought” many fairy tales to America. Taylor’s work goes even further in its hyping than the work of the Grimms in terms of his construction of narrative source, which is “extraordinary and significant because his ideological and poetic premises were based on the ideals and myths about the origins and dissemination of the folk tales that the Grimms perpetuated” (Zipes, “Hyping” 209). By 1839, the employment of “Gammer Gethel,” a storytelling-character from Taylor based on Viehmann, and his addition of the term “fairy tales” in the introduction to the work⁴ (the same introduction I have suggested as the inspiration for a portion of Baum’s prefatory material in *Mother Goose in Prose*) furthers “the impression that the stories were ancient and magical and taken straight from the mouths of peasants” (Zipes, “Hyping” 210).

In many ways, then, modern general audiences for fairy tales – perhaps most particularly American audiences for fairy tales – began building their understanding of generic conventions for folk and fairy tales from commercialized pieces participating in

⁴ The Grimms’ *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* neither employs the term nor includes fairies.

what Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer label the “culture industry”: that manufactured, capitalist-controlled environment wherein the semblance of authentic culture is given through the consumption of mass-produced goods of relative sameness, issued from top-down industrial complexes of mechanized production and reproduction (98-102). According to Adorno and Horkheimer, “The culture industry endlessly cheats its consumers of what it endlessly promises” (111). And yet, as discussed with regards to the concept of Richard Dorson’s “fakelore” in Chapter Four, that which is perceived by the public as legitimate folklore subsumes the institutionally bound genre of folklore when it gains the approval of a consensus and is allowed to function in place of what were once “more authentic” members of the generic categorization. Once subsumed completely, the origins of the genre’s traditional narratives (operating to the exclusion of all others) are of significance only to the literary scholar and historian. The genre in function, always created through active discourse, is redefined and repopulated with texts exemplifying a new generic identity.

As demonstrated through popular understanding of folklore and the fairy tale tradition at the time of its composition, this “new” concept of the genre was certainly the standard for identifying fairy tales from which Baum’s original printed work was received in 1900. The same can be said for the inclusion of many other generic examples that continued to shift in form of delivery and dissemination after that time, as seen in the highly commodified film adaptations of “traditional” tales *à la* Walt Disney which have

become “authentic” for readers on a near-global scale⁵ more than seventy-five years after Disney’s first feature-length fairy tale film in 1937 (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*). The *function* of the genre, however, has remained consistent in its role regardless of origin or medium. Fairy tales tell audiences how to identify good from evil, how to navigate the world as an agent of good, and what happens when that navigation is successful; and they do so in terms agreed upon by members of a community. When fairy tales are told in connection, either explicitly or implicitly, to a specific group of readers, their lessons have the opportunity to attach themselves to an audience’s construction of cultural identity for a greater degree of significance, even power, than narratives in other genres do. As Zipes asserts, “It is uncanny how much we turn to this genre in all its forms to pursue our identities and the happy fulfillment of our goals” (*Happily* 9). Through our acceptance, eager absorption, and constant retelling, the fairy tale becomes “a broad arena for presenting and representing our wishes and desires. It frequently takes the form of a mammoth discourse in which we carry on struggles over family, sexuality, gender roles, rituals, values, and sociopolitical power” (Zipes, *Happily* 9). And beneath that discourse is the ever-shifting Text (and, paradoxically, the mostly-stagnant work), our *architext* – the story not always as it is, but as we see it.

⁵ See: Mollet, Tracey. “With a smile and a song...’: Walt Disney and the Birth of the American Fairy Tale.” *Marvels & Tales*. Vol. 27, No. 1 (2013). pp. 109-24, for an excellent discussion on Disney’s post-Depression role in constructing American concepts of the fairy tale genre.

CONSTRUCTING THE FAIRY TALE TEXT

Before interrogating the evolution of Baum's work and public considerations for Dorothy, it is important to consider what constitutes the "Text" for the Wizard of Oz tale. As Graham Allen explains: "Texts, whether they be literary or non-literary, are viewed by modern theorists as lacking in any kind of independent reading" (1). That's because we, as readers, understand texts only as they operate within a very large and complicated web of what is sometimes called *transtextuality*, the experience of which extends readers an opportunity to create an identity for the work. Just as a text gains meaning from genre, situation, and context, the ways the text lives and operates with and devoid of other texts and other readers additionally helps to establish the space of the work in the body of what becomes the Text, that eternally-constructed creation as it operates within the dialogic space of being.

T. S. Eliot spoke of this interdependent relationship all works of art have with one another in his 1917 essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," where he suggests that a poet, or artist of any kind, gains his significance only in "the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (538). For Eliot, a continual reappraisal of texts occurs as each new work is created. The reader's appreciation for, and understanding of, any new work comes into being because of its relationship to all of the works ever created or experienced, which are then altered in their significance, meaning, and value because of the addition of the new work's aesthetic presence and what it adds to the tradition of composition and poetic form. Allen writes:

To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts.

Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext. (1)

To understand how Baum's text comes to fruition, we have to consider its intertextual reality. The term "intertext" was first used by Julia Kristeva in her 1980 essay "The Bounded Text," to describe the process by which any text is "a permutation of texts," an "intertextuality in the given text" where "several utterances, taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another," thereby creating the illusion of newness in the work at hand (36). Kristeva's "intertextuality" operates alongside the "dialogism" of semiotics in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, for whom the experience of the text is the result of a dialogic relationship, first discussed in his essay "Discourse in the Novel" (1934) as a continual alteration of meaning and understanding that occurs in a two-way communication stream between the spoken and the heard. Here, the kind of reliance and support received from past, present, and future utterances (as Eliot describes them in "Individual Talent") is understood as necessary for any signifier down to the level of the word. Just as the term "Nazi" cannot be used without inflicting it with the weight of its history, the place of the fairy tale cannot be understood without consideration of past utterances like it and in expectation of future responses to it in similar veins of creation. Gérard Genette's trilogy of transtextual theory – *The Architext: An Introduction* (1979), *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982), and *Paratexts: Thresholds of*

Interpretations (1997), from which much of the term's rhetorical connotations are derived, considers the dialogue of intertextuality through what he terms the "hypertext," a space in which the constant relation of one text to another is traceable, where reading in layers leads the reader further and further into the origins of narratological and sociocultural composition towards the "hypotext(s)," the work(s) from which any given text derives its major source(s) of signification. Constructing textual meaning in the hypertext leads to the figuration of what Genette calls the "architext," the structure from which readers best articulate understanding, first by means of genre and various types of discourse and on through the relations of one text to another: "The architext is, then, everywhere-above, beneath, around the text, which spins its web only by hooking it here and there onto a network of architecture" (Genette 83). As discussed by Allen, "Literary works, for a theorist like Genette, are not original, unique, unitary wholes, but particular articulations (selections and combinations) of an enclosed system. The literary work might not display its relation to the system, but the function of criticism is to do precisely that by rearranging the work *back into its relation to the closed literary system*" (93; emphasis in original).

It is through this network of architecture that readers create the Text of the fairy tale, the process of which, I believe, allows for internalization of a tale that is not always supported by the literal printed work before the reader. Rather, in a dialogic web of intertextual references, the text that is received is created through the works on which it stands and those that spring from its creation as they have been presented or represented to the reader at and before the time of reading. Considerations for what constitutes the

text for Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as we read it today, then, must necessarily include the work as it was composed, the reception of that work by audiences and critics, and all of the various intertextual and paratextual components that have, over time, attached themselves to the tale – with or without formalized recognition – and contribute to the ways a reader constructs meaning each time they meet with the text in discourse.

Realistically speaking, tracing all of the limitless intertextual webs for any given work would be entirely impossible. However, a concentrated examination of those pieces *most* influential in constructing today's textual understanding of Dorothy thanks to the very traceable patterns of popular culture, does offer some sense of the architext at work. While the various pre-existing webs from which Baum's composition gained strength – international interest in traditional fairy tales and folklore, ever-expanding sales of American children's literature, earlier attempts at an American fairy tale tradition, and references within the novel to texts and traditions known by his contemporary audiences – have already been discussed in the previous chapters, those works still in need of examination are the paratexts⁶ operating alongside and after *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900 that contributed to, and continue to contribute to, the creation of the text for today's readers – most specifically, the way those readers view the character of Dorothy.

⁶ As first discussed by Gérard Genette as being “thresholds for understanding,” Jonathan Gray's *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* extends the consideration of the paratextual into twenty-first century media studies. In the context of this dissertation, paratexts will be considered points of entrance or exit/negation/avoidance for the consumption of texts over time: advertisements, “new” editions or re-issued texts, illustrations or posters, formal criticism and reviews, academic discussions, audience reactions, spin-offs, tie-ins, material/tangible goods in reflection or extension of the work or its character(s) (all of these things both authorized/institutionalized and fan-based/unsolicited), participatory media platforms, fan-vids, mash-ups, memorabilia, organized clubs, virtually any publicly expressed or accessible utterance made in connection or response to the “original” text at hand constitutes the paratextual.

THE SHIFTING SANDS OF DOROTHY

When Baum's young heroine and her strange new friends appeared for the first time in 1900, they were enthusiastically received by readers and critics alike. Katharine Rogers notes that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* "was widely reviewed, by at least 202 publications, and generally praised" (89). As discussed in a September 8, 1900, review published in the *New York Times*, Baum's critics read the work "in some respects like a leaf out of the old English fairy tales that Andrew Lang or Joseph Jacobs has rescued for us" ("A New Book for Children" 136) and in others, like a wildly unique creation made specifically for American audiences. The tale had "enough stirring adventure [. . .] to flavor it with zest," that the *Times* reviewer noted it would "indeed be strange if there be a normal child who would not enjoy this story" (136). Often reviews hinged on the dichotomy of the familiar and the foreign present in Baum's work. Mostly, they associated Dorothy (when they spoke of her at all) with another popular child heroine of the day, Lewis Carroll's "Alice." As Hearn notes, Carroll's death in 1898 "inspired a subgenre in American juvenile literature as the trade fed the market imitations of the famous English fantasy" (*Annotated* xliii). Baum himself highly praised Carroll's girl as being "a real child," with whom "any child could sympathize with [. . .] all through her adventures" ("Modern" 138). Martin Gardner notes the parallels between the two girls, who both find themselves "in a mad world where animals talk and nature behaves in a thousand unexpected ways," throughout stories from which "Mother and Father are conveniently absent" ("Garden" 19). And yet, part of Dorothy's popularity also stemmed from her lack of striking characterization, her difference from Alice, who was so

thoroughly English and so incredibly active – “doing something every moment, and doing something strange and marvelous, too; so the child follows her with rapturous delight” (Baum, “Modern” 138).

Dorothy, whom Attebery sees as “heir to an American conception of character, especially of its own character,” is far less individualized than Carroll’s girl (97). Allen Eyles suggests, “Dorothy is an average, bright, but unremarkable girl who could be any young reader” (39). She embodies those essential characteristics for appropriate socialization and normative behavior, and she does so in a genre in which American children were being trained to find lessons,⁷ during a time when the market for children’s texts was growing exceedingly well⁸. As Rogers notes, she “is not individualized, which makes it easier for readers to identify with her [. . .] even her age is not specified” (76). Like many fairy tale characters, Dorothy works best because she is, essentially, an Everychild, a blank slate, nothing special – a quality reiterated by C. Warren Hollister, in his defining of Oz’s fifth criterion for judgment, as a positive trait for the young heroine: “Dorothy is superficial? Rather she is broadly sketched so that children can *become*

⁷ See Zipes, Jack. “Second Thoughts on Socialization through Literature for Children.” *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Vol. 5, 1981. p. 22, on the dependence of children’s literature on “market conditions and cultural institutions”; and Zipes’s “The Changing Function of the Fairy Tale.” *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Vol.12, No. 2, December, 1988. p. 24, on the formal use of the fairy tale in twentieth-century school curriculum and primers.

⁸ See Daniel T. Rodgers, “Socializing Middle-Class Children: Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth-Century America.” *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 13, No. 3. Spring 1980, p. 360, on the use of Felix Adler’s *The Moral Instruction of Children* (1892) in popular childrearing, a book which sought to “demonstrate the efficacy of myth and heroic literature in infusing a child’s mind with ethical impulses, ready to spill over into everyday life,” further encouraging the authorship of such work by American writers for children.

Dorothy for a time, ride the cyclone with her, walk in her silver shoes on the Yellow Brick Road as they could not if Dorothy had hated her father or been astigmatic or had an I.Q. of 156, or were tormented by oncoming puberty” (196).

Though Baum’s lessons for Dorothy are reflective of popular expectations regarding young women, she is young enough to be, as Gore Vidal writes, “a perfectly acceptable central character for a boy to read about” (262). Hearn claims “boys liked her too” (*Annotated* 14), a phenomenon highlighted through Baum’s assertion that “in childish requirements sex is clearly not defined” (“Want” np), and exemplified in late nineteenth-century social standards that generally sexed all of childhood as feminine, thanks to the increasing attention placed on the role of the mother in child-raising and the lack of gendered differences for the very young in most material regards. Baum’s work appeared at a time in which the separation of literature for boys and literature for girls was just beginning to make itself a “necessity,” and even less of a separation existed between literature for adults and literature for children.

However, Dorothy *is* a girl, one McReynolds and Lips insist “represents the experience of woman in America in a way which not only makes that experience accessible to a male audience but also makes it attractive” (91). In their article “A Girl in the Game: *The Wizard of Oz* as Analog for the Female Experience in America,” the two argue that Dorothy’s “search for Aunt Em is no less exciting, no less heroic, and no less dangerous than the escape from Aunt Sally” made by Twain’s Huckleberry Finn (McReynolds 91). I would argue that that search, though attended by Dorothy, is largely carried out thanks to the actions of her male companions. Dorothy’s role in her Ozian

adventure is negligible; her autonomy flexes its strength in fulfilling needs from the domestic sphere, but no further. She is motherly, kind, obedient, and often looking for guidance. Essentially, she's along for the ride. Dorothy is the catalyst for the journey's beginning, but once she takes on companions her presence moves in to the shadows of adult males who *do* things. She shares the stage with the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Lion equally in terms of motivation and wish fulfillment. As Carol Billman writes, "Multiple protagonists are not uncommon in children's literature [. . .] but here their separate origins and individual goals [. . .] contribute to the lack of narrative focus and divert readers' attentions away from the author's main character, Dorothy" (243-44). This is quite likely the result of her serving as "primary" heroine only thanks to her appearance chronologically in the narrative.

Baum employs a female protagonist because he knows that audience expectations will see her fantastic journey as it relates to that of Carroll's tale; but he requires nothing more from his heroine than to be a good girl and make it home by the end. Because the book is labeled "Dorothy's" story first, thanks to her placement as central focus in the Kansas scenes, and because her *need* is made plain as the first task of the journey, the young girl piques audience interest as a possible "American Alice"; and yet she completes her travels through a strange new world under the guidance of three more-than-capable men (even if they do not recognize their own capabilities until those are pointed out by the Wizard) and under the protection of an ethereal, maternal, all powerful witch – a wonderful element of wonder for Baum's new and modernized tale.

Thanks to Baum's claims in his "Introduction," audience expectations as they relate to the fairy tale genre suggest for readers that Dorothy's lack and the start of a quest *should* mean it is her story to be followed and that those she meets along the way will serve as "helpers" in fulfilling her lack. By fairy tale standards, Dorothy's status back in Kansas at the journey's end should be raised *at least* in equal proportion to that of the male helpers she meets along the way, so long as she behaves appropriately: after all, fairy tale heroes are rewarded for *good* behavior, not just granted wish fulfillment for going along. And so, when Dorothy arrives at home and Aunt Em calls out "My darling child!" (357), the generic expectation for the audience is that Kansas will be somehow improved after the tale is over. Zipes writes of the ending and the lessons it serves in his reading of the tale:

To be smart, compassionate, and courageous is to have qualities that can be put to use to overcome alienation. [. . .] Dorothy sees and feels this. She is 'wizedened' by her trip through Oz, and Baum knows that she is stronger and can face the drabness of Kansas. This is why he closes the book in America: Dorothy has a utopian spark in her that was to keep her alive in gray surroundings. (*Subversion* 133)

And yet, there is nothing textually supportive of this idea. Readers are aware of nothing beyond the child's return. She is home; Em is glad to see her; but after the book ends, life could just as easily return to gray despair. Losing their niece, Aunt Em and Uncle Henry could just have easily rebuilt their home without space for the child, or have adopted a new "daughter" (or son!) to take her place, or have found the greatest relief at her return

in no longer needing to pay farmhands for additional assistance in their work. All of these *less* positive futures are possible for the child, but audience expectations of the fairy tale genre suggest she will return to a better place than the one from which she began – elevated, as her male companions each rise to a throne of their own, in her own special way.

As discussed by Deborah Thacker, “If this is an indication of Baum’s opinion of the drive for female emancipation, it is important to note that Dorothy returns to the domestic sphere at the end of the story, and ceases to play a part in the larger world” (90). Any considerations for Baum’s first iteration of Dorothy must be made in light of that one overwhelming truth: Baum never intended for Dorothy to go beyond the farm again. Through her “gravely” recalling the Land of Oz to Em (Baum *Wizard* 357), Dorothy illustrates exactly what she was intended to show: American children should know that home is the greatest place in all of the world for them to be; and American girls should run towards those responsibilities that make them most valuable, those found firmly in the realm of domesticity and the family. To consider other places for themselves to rule would be a grave matter, indeed. And for 1900, this is a temporally acceptable, culturally valuable lesson for Anglo-American families, who were already concerned with the decentralizing of the home and what it might mean for their children, children Baum’s *New York Times* reviewer called “the country’s hope, [. . .] worthy of the best, not the worst, that art can give” (135).

Baum’s fairy tale speaks to the consensus of his community. As much as today’s history books like to highlight the voices of suffragists in the latter half of the nineteenth

century, Phillida Bunkle reminds us that “a sexual ideology with profoundly antifeminist implications developed in the northern United States during the forty years after 1830” (13), those years in which Baum lived and formed his own opinions on the roles of women while living in New York. Bunkle claims, “This middle class ideal of sentimental womanhood, defining women as spiritual, emotional, and dependent, has received less attention than the ideology of the small minority of feminists and reformers who rejected a passive stereotype of women in their search for autonomy. Yet [it] dominated the perception of women in the nineteenth century” (13). This is not to say that Baum himself was antifeminist. As demonstrated in Chapter One, identifying the “authentic” opinions of a man so steeped in fictionalizing a life for himself is a task that can only be conducted on a shaky foundation. However, as Evan Schwartz notes in his biography of the man, it is summarily demonstrated in his choice of careers that Baum “thought himself to be a great student of human nature. He professed to know what motivated people, what values Americans cherished, what made his neighbors angry or happy or what riled them up” (19). In giving them a “modernized” fairy tale of their own, his intentions were to mirror those values in a narrative that would last, one that would please the children, pacify their parents, and sell a lot of books for a very long time.

Of course, Baum’s intentions aren’t the only ones that matter. In fairy tale tradition, a story must continue to pass on, entering at various places in time and space to support the cultural needs of the teller and their audiences over and over again. In that respect, fairy tales are an irresistible site for adaptation. As Maria Tatar notes, “Much of the magic of fairy tales derives from their mutability” (*Cambridge* 3). This, perhaps, is a

good reminder for understanding the positive endings many readers find for Dorothy's life after Oz, even in Baum's original written work. Because fairy tales allow us to work out psychic and social dramas relevant to the civilizing processes for our distinct cultural frameworks, the spaces they leave for what Zipes calls the "art of subversion" are innumerable (*Subversion* 109). But filling those spaces, resituating or contesting situations for readily acknowledged tales, requires an acknowledgment of the hypotext and a subsequent interpretation of that text to be inherently central in the new composition; to be a retelling, a tale must acknowledge its predecessor in a very real way for its audience, one in which the audience recognizes the hypotext and is free to read the retelling as commentary in the dialectic space of tale formation.

Each new iteration of a tale, regardless of its mode of dissemination or medium of presentation, contributes to the larger Text of the *Ur-tale* as it stands in the cultural memory of its recipients, but as Linda Hutcheon argues, "Multiple versions exist laterally, not vertically" (xv). So those retellings, revisions, adaptations, and intertextual references made in the body of the Text in any space for which reception can be measured – in an audience as great as a nation or as small as a single child-reader – irretrievably alter the meaning of the text for current, previous, and future audiences and observers. The greater the alteration, the more significant the reception of adaptation for a reader, the more likely the recipient of the tale will acknowledge that for a retelling "to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative" (Hutcheon xv). In the case of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum's voice

may not be the only one that matters for Dorothy's creation; it may not even be the most important one, regardless of its chronological place as the voice of "origin."

Tracing the paratextual presence of the Oz story in *The Wizard of Oz Collector's Treasury* (1992), Jay Scarfone and William Stillman note that "aside from book posters advertising the 1900 publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* [. . .], there were no further promotional materials issued that year by George M. Hill Company, the book's publisher, despite nearly unanimous public and critical acceptance of the story" (*Collector's* 10). According to Scarfone and Stillman, Baum longed to "count himself among those elite colleagues who could readily point with pride to their own book or comic characters, the ensuing merchandise spawned by their popularity *and* all the inherent financial trappings" (*Collector's* 11); but his first real chance for that didn't come until 1902 when a stage production named for the novel, *The Wizard of Oz*, was produced in Chicago. Though the exact impetus for the project is cloudy, what is certain is that on September 30, 1901, L. Frank Baum and Paul Tietjens applied for music and lyric copyright, and W.W. Denslow presumably started looking for a producer.

What finally hit the stage as what Mark Evan Swartz calls "an institution" that "would stand on its own terms and be appreciated and loved in its own right, side by side with its source" (132), was a musical extravaganza vastly different from the novel printed and adored in 1900. Its structure is loose, held together with some vague fairy-tale themes, a few recognizable characters – some of whom would go on to inspire endless imitation on stage and screen – and places vaguely familiar (in name, at least) from Baum's tale. The fidelity of the adaptation, however, to the original narrative is present

only in a whisper, a situation that would not have been the case had Baum remained in charge of writing the script. A stage translation from the novel was an easy write for a man with Baum's background in playwriting. As Swartz notes:

The book itself is eminently adaptable [. . .] because it contains so many visual and theatrical elements. The book's visual aspects doubtless are due both to Baum's earlier work in the theater and his experience as a show-window designer. In any case, his descriptions of the physical environments of Oz evidence a strong sense of color and design. There is also a great deal of vaudeville-style humor and physical comedy in the book [. . .] filled with dialogue that easily translates to stage or screen. (24)

Though the script Baum presented to producer John A. Hamlin and director Julian Mitchell, both of Chicago's Grand Opera House, has never been published, a surviving copy "clearly shows the author's original dramatic vision" (Swartz 30). Just as in his novel, Baum's plan for Dorothy is one of exemplary status. Swartz notes her introduction in the play as being accompanied by a song titled "An Innocent Kansas Girl" (31), one dropped for the final production but re-established through a number of other iterations of Dorothy's "innocent" status in song. Baum's depiction of Dorothy's faithfulness to her domestic role in his dramatization of the work goes even further than his novel did. Because of the impracticality of staging the script with a young child and a dog, Baum chooses to age Dorothy to an adolescent and make her new traveling companion a cow called Imogene. Though Dorothy's exact age is not mentioned, she is generally read to be approximately fourteen. She was originally played by fifteen-year-old Anna Laughlin on

stage. This older Dorothy is wiser than Baum's child protagonist. Upon visiting the Throne Room of Oz in the Emerald City, she "removes her glasses and realizes they were under a trick. She and her companions expose the Wizard himself as a fake. He in turn sings 'When You Want to Fool the Public,' about being a humbug" (Swartz 32) and then leaves Dorothy behind as he ascends in a balloon after being further exposed as a conman by the Guardian of the Gate. Wise to the trickery of the city and the lack of ethics held by those in power, Dorothy desires nothing more than to return to her place in Kansas. She "states that she has no royal aspirations and performs the 'Milkmaid's Song'" (Swartz 33), before returning home via the silver slippers and Glinda's gentle direction to click her heels together three times. However, Swartz explains, her character "is not as well developed as in the book. She is not nearly so commonsensical nor so refreshingly direct" (33). Though there are other changes in the narrative in Baum's script, its lack of publication or production renders it largely insignificant in Dorothy's public history, but considering it here is interesting for the reiteration of Baum's original intentions of Dorothy's faithfulness to her domestic presence. In his plan for the stage, as in the novel, Baum's Dorothy plays second fiddle to the active roles of her male companions, and she falls quite simply into the role of the American "good girl."

Baum and Tietjens had turned to the newly popular comic opera for inspiration for their show. Differing from the musical extravaganzas largely performed in theaters of the day, this new genre incorporated lively, comic-driven plotlines, romance, and music that was, at the very least, thematically linked to the plot and used for furthering the narrative or character development. When Mitchell and Hamlin received the script,

however, the two felt that, as Eyles explains, “the stage play needed professional revision [. . .] to have it appeal to adult audiences” (42). The resulting production was radically altered from the Baum/Tietjens composition: Mitchell “wanted to rework it in line with a broader approach to musical theater, giving it a looser structure and enhancing the spectacle” (Swartz 36), and enhance it he did. *The Wizard of Oz* that appeared was only “peripherally related to Baum’s 1900 fairy tale and differed drastically from his original dramatization” (Swartz 38).

In Mitchell’s stage production, a teenage Dorothy and her pet cow (still Imogene) are whisked away from their golden-hued Kansas farm in a cyclone to a land called Oz. Mitchell’s Kansas lacks the gray desolation of Baum’s, and his Oz is less distinctly American in its presentation, relying heavily on European ideals for fairy worlds and royalty. Dorothy is no longer the niece of Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, but is a lost girl terribly worried about her farmer father back home. She is mistaken for a girl called Caroline Barry and in that identity becomes the love interest of a poet, Sir Dashemoff Daily, who is quite distraught when he later learns he has written a love song for the wrong girl. Mitchell’s Dorothy is urged forward in a journey by a Good Witch, and, like Baum’s Dorothy, she does travel to see the Wizard of Oz for help in getting home to her farm. She meets both a Scarecrow and a Tin Woodman along the way, but her journey there and her relationships with them do not constitute the central plotline of the play⁹. In

⁹ The Cowardly Lion character is absent but for a run-in with King Pastoria, who plans to use the Lion to pretend to be a circus group and raise money to fund the revolution that he hopes will return him to his rightful place as ruler of Oz.

fact, very little constitutes the plot at all: as Swartz relates, “Mitchell felt that in this type of entertainment [plot] was more of a hindrance than a help” (36). Instead, the girl’s story is overlapped by the lovers’ woes of Niccolo Chopper (the Tin Woodman) and Cynthia Cynch (his lost Munchkin lady who has been driven insane since his departure); the story of the once-lost rightful King of Oz, Pastoria, and his flirty girlfriend the waitress, Tryxie Tryfle; a saga about a poorly-crafted fundraising effort for King Pastoria II’s upcoming revolution; and a medley of songs only tangentially related to any of the ongoing stories, many of which were simply popular songs of the day that would be well-known to the crowd. The hodgepodge of story lines come together in a triumphantly spectacular scene that takes place in a field of dangerous poppies (made up of beautiful chorus girls) from which all of the characters are rescued from certain death by a “Snow Boy and Snow Girls, with a sleigh and a team of reindeer” (Swartz 45), sent through a snow storm by the Good Witch, who is enraged when she discovers the danger encountered by all of the travelers.

Swartz describes Dorothy’s character in the production as simply “confused and innocent” (52). She appears through her costuming as “both innocent country girl and alluring young woman” (Swartz 73). Furthermore, “her character lacks real self-determination, and instead she is buffeted about by forces beyond her control. [. . .] Dorothy does not really learn anything on her journey, nor does she emerge a richer character for having made it” (56). In fact, although the play promises she will return home after meeting with the Wizard, the audience never sees that happen, so her quest is left without any real closure. “She is no longer the center of the action, but shares the

stage with other principle female characters, such as Cynthia Cynch and Tryxie Tryfle. In addition, she is not formally introduced until well into act I, and she spends a good deal of the play offstage” (Swartz 51). Instead of carrying the narrative, Dorothy serves as the background against which the play’s two most popular characters can react and perform. Though, certainly, with considerations for the weight her character holds in Baum’s narrative by comparison, this may be less of an alteration than it appears.

Carried by vaudeville comedic greats Fred Stone and David C. Montgomery, Mitchell’s presentations of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman were overwhelmingly the stars of the show. Utilizing physical comedy and extremely stylized choreography for dance and action, Dorothy’s two former “helpers” maintained the spotlight night after night. *The Wizard of Oz* ran successfully in Chicago, New York, and on a national tour for nearly a decade. It opened Baum’s audience to include a much broader demographic while continuing to pique interest for children in the novel that started it all. The overwhelming public adoration for the characters performed by Montgomery and Stone provided the catalyst for creating another story set in Oz two years later (*The Marvelous Land of Oz*), in which the lives of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman are further explored and, as previously mentioned, the images of these on-stage performers grace the endpapers and inspire Baum’s new illustrator’s vision for the novel’s drawings.

During the pinnacle of the show’s popularity, *The Wizard of Oz* was impossible to miss in American popular culture. While the script worked, in many ways, “to dilute the import” (Swartz 55) of Baum’s tale, in a long-running theatrical performance, a script serves as only one tiny piece of text creation: “the cast, the staging, the spectacle, and the

promotion were what really drew audiences” (Swartz 59). While Montgomery and Stone certainly did their fair share of the work in keeping the seats packed, it was the show’s publicity man, Townsend Walsh, whom many credit for making *The Wizard of Oz* and its performers household names (Swartz 61). Thanks to his immeasurable labors of promotion, long before opening night “newspapers were publishing frequently teasers and short articles about the show and the cast that was being assembled” to drum up interest (Swartz 60). In pictorial campaigns, the show was first seen in “lavishly lithographed color” through advertising posters, while “souvenir programs and penny postcards of Montgomery and Stone in play scenes were available for sale in theater lobbies” (Scarfone, *Collector’s* 12). Sheet music, including entire folios for the songs, were sold beginning in 1902, “and at least two of the musical numbers were printed as newspaper supplements as part of the press coverage the play received” (12). At the 100th performance, audience members received “small metal jewelry boxes – embossed, dated, and ornamented with a three-dimensional Cowardly Lion” (12), while “for the 125th performance they were given picture books, and for the 200th and 225th, collapsible silver drinking cups” (Swartz 128). Children reportedly were given “little cardboard figures of the Scarecrow and Tin Man” on several occasions, as well (Scarfone, *Collector’s* 12). As noted by John Fricke, “Though not the norm in 1900, massive exploitation grew with the recognition and diversification of Oz, and related products became prime examples of the twentieth century’s ever-increasing commercialization” (13) after the appearance of Mitchell’s play. From the last curtain fall on the night of the very first (four hour!) performance, Walsh’s masterful publicity campaign went beyond typical poster-based

advertising: “countless special features, articles, and small news items about the show, many of them planted or encouraged by Walsh,” filled local magazines with everything “from news pieces about embarrassed gentlemen in the ‘Sammy box’ to articles about milliners who were designing hats based on those worn by the Poppy chorus” (Swartz 127). Whatever brought the audiences to Mitchell’s production – the appeal of family entertainment, fond recollections of Baum’s tale, the spectacles reported by critics who “noted the opulence and visual splendor of the production” (Swartz 67), or the media-hyping the play received thanks to what seemed an unending flow of news regarding its place in popular culture – Walsh made sure it kept bringing them in. By the end of its first fourteen weeks “the show had been seen by 185,000 people, and gross receipts had amounted to \$160,000. Only two performances saw box office sales of less than \$1,000, and the show never played to a losing house” (Swartz 66). Michael Riley reports, “It was actually the most spectacularly successful musical extravaganza of the first decade of the twentieth century” (78). And in the wings, watching and raking in his earnings, L. Frank Baum recognized his cash cow. Then he tried to milk it.

While the author would never see another success in adaptation like Mitchell’s production during his lifetime, a quick succession of attempts by Baum for a permanent place in the spotlight contributed vastly to public construction of Oz, its strange inhabitants and history, and, slowly, to their understanding of the young girl who started that first journey in a cyclone. As Helen Kim notes, “The spectacular success of Baum’s astonishingly innovative and diverse career was due to his astute exploitation of the intersection between the fantastic and modern commodity culture” (218). Nowhere is this

more apparent than in the rapidity with which he produced material after *The Wizard of Oz* in 1902. As previously mentioned, in 1903 Baum wrote *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (published in 1904), a book in which Dorothy is totally absent. Instead, he capitalized on public adoration of Montgomery and Stone with the use of the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman's adventures in Oz as central to the tale. Filled with a number of characters who gain audience approval thanks to the comedic handling of their intentional anti-feminist presentations (General JinJur, her army of women, and the witch Mombi, for example), the book ditches its female protagonist and follows the adventures of a young boy, Tip, through the Land of Oz. Tip is later discovered to be the lost Princess Ozma, and a transformation into her form takes place near the end of the novel. As noted in Chapter One, Baum's composition is ready-made for a stage adaptation, complete with spectacle and long-legged chorus girls, but *The Woggle-Bug*, as he called it, missed its mark when Montgomery and Stone did not commit to the performance and Baum's script fell flat as less than fitting for a more diverse audience of adult theatergoers. Hearn calls it "one of the worst failures of the summer of 1905" (*Annotated* lxiii).

Despite the lack of success for the play, Baum and his new publishers, Reilly & Britton, had learned a great deal about paratextual promotion from Walsh's campaign for *The Wizard of Oz*. So long as *The Woggle-Bug* and *The Marvelous Land of Oz* could remain in public view, audiences for *The Wizard* would continue to rise; and a re-released edition of his 1900 novel by Bobbs-Merrill, now titled *The New Wizard of Oz* (retitled *The Wizard of Oz* in its second printing), further encouraged their return. Reilly & Britton saw great promise in the prospect of an Oz series and signed Baum on to write two more

books under their publishing house, and Baum worked furiously to expand upon the characters from *The Marvelous Land of Oz* to ensure his success. Reilly & Britton published the *Ozmapolitan*, a “newspaper to keep readers updated on ‘current events’ in Oz” (Scarfone, *Collector’s* 14), and Baum began publication of a comic strip called “Queer Visitors From the Marvelous Land of Oz” illustrated by Walt McDougall in what Scarfone describes as “the rambling ‘slapstick’ style,” similar to Stone’s Scarecrow costume from Mitchell’s play (*Collector’s* 14). A great number of newspapers participated in a contest called “What Did the Woggle-Bug Say?” based on a character from Baum’s book, and an advertising campaign distributed “celluloid ‘Woggle-Bug’ buttons, advertising posters, character postcards, and Park Brothers’ *Wogglebug Game of Conundrums*” (*Collector’s* 14). Less successful than Walsh’s campaign, the attempts of Baum and Reilly & Britton nevertheless contributed to keeping Oz on the public’s brain¹⁰.

Though the script for Mitchell’s production veered far from Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, as Eyles writes, “its influence was considerable” (42) as both a work in its own right *and* a site of influence for Baum’s continuation in *Marvelous Land*. The character Mombi, Baum’s answer to the Wicked Witches’ absence in Oz, and King Pastoria, who holds the throne of Oz before Ozma, derive from the 1902 play and appear

¹⁰ Alongside Baum’s attempts to continue Ozian fame, W. W. Denslow created a short gravy train of his own – *Denslow’s Scarecrow and the Tin-Man* (1904) – to capitalize on the fame of the crowd favorites and take advantage of his shared copyrights to the tale from 1900. Additionally, Denslow ran a competing comic strip which “followed the travels of the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Cowardly Lion throughout the United States and South America” (Scarfone *Collector’s* 14).

in the second Oz novel. An act of borrowing between Baum's *Wizard*, Mitchell's play, Walsh's campaign, Denslow's creations, and the public's creative and material interaction with these narratives would continue through the rest of the author's life (and beyond when considerations for later adaptations are made). However, as Richard Flynn notes, "By the time of the first Baum sequel [. . .] market forces had conspired to render the ideal of an 'original' *Wonderful Wizard* problematic at best" (123). Flynn additionally asserts that scholars "might be tempted to view all the Oz sequels as 'simulacra' in Jean Baudrillard's sense of 'the reproduction of copies that have no original'" (123). While I agree with Flynn's assertion of the simulacra-like appearance of the later Oz novels, I would also suggest that each are produced not in place of the original but rather as independent explorations of the first story. As products of popular culture, attempting to approximate the aura of the fairy tale of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, I would suggest that the remainder of the Oz novels, their material goods, and the adaptations created based on their influence, should be read as paratexts for Baum's originally expressed tale. "Popular fiction," as explored by Ken Gelder in *Popular Fiction: The Logics and Practices of a Literary Field*, "is not just a matter of texts-in-themselves, but of an entire apparatus of production, distribution (including promotion and advertising) and consumption" (2). In the case of Baum's work, as is the case for any number of fairy tale paratexts, following the evolution and subversion of the tale over time and space should not render those works simulacra, but re-imaginings. I would suggest that the same allowances be made here as are made with evolutions of other tales: "simulacrum" seems hardly an appropriate term for describing the 345 variants of "Cinderella" collected by

Cox in 1893, or the innumerable iterations and explorations of that tale since then.

Baum's work in Oz encourages creative exploration, even by its author, of the space of Oz and the entities which might inhabit it. These are different from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, but all contribute to the Wizard of Oz Text.

In 1907, fulfilling his first obligation to Reilly & Britton for another book about Oz, and in his words answering requests for "more about Dorothy" (Baum *Ozma* 2), Baum released *Ozma of Oz*, in which Dorothy is cast overboard on her way to Australia with Uncle Henry and finds herself washed ashore in the Land of Ev with her yellow hen Billina. Baum's third book maintains its presentation of Dorothy as a well-behaved child, but this time he allows her a *little* more activity in the narrative, as it is Dorothy who is responsible for taking up a magic belt that frees her and an Ozian hero-group from an evil Nome king. The novel's most difficult problem, however (the release of Ev's royal family from an enchantment placed on them by the king), is solved by Dorothy's chicken and not by the young girl. After leaving Ev's saved royal family restored to their rightful places, the book's party of heroes returns to Oz where Dorothy is made a Princess of Oz (and Billina decides she's much happier and will stay) before the child realizes how much she misses her family and is returned to Uncle Henry in Australia via the powers of the Magic Belt.

Dorothy does exhibit a more active role here, and she is altered in other ways, too. Having dissolved the partnership between himself and Denslow after the 1902 stage debacle, Baum's second book was illustrated by John R. Neill. While Denslow's Dorothy had been a plump child with long, red, braided pigtails in a blue and white gingham dress

and pink sunbonnet, Neill's Dorothy had a much more mature look. As Raylyn Moore notes, Dorothy "became a kind of composite junior Gibson girl, with fluffy hair, an elongated jaw, low-belted frocks, and a disconcerting habit of posing in profile, head thrown back on her shoulders, and more often than not a picture-hat in her slender hand" (38-39). The image of Dorothy that graces the book's cover shows a young girl of around twelve. She leans in a relaxed posture on the letter "Z," in a sort of hooked-letter logo for "Oz" and Princess Ozma stands over her. Billina, the yellow hen, is in her arms, and she wears a polka-dotted dress. Interestingly, the dress of Mitchell's Dorothy, Anna Laughlin, was also polka-dotted, and Swartz notes Laughlin carried "a hat with trailing bands," (73) as Dorothy will on every book cover that features her image for the remainder of the series under Baum's authorship. But while Dorothy's character gains physical action, she does not seem to gain anything in terms of Baum's hierarchy of focus. The book's full title is *Ozma of Oz: A Record of Her Adventures with Dorothy Gale of Kansas, Billina the Yellow Hen, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, Tik-Tok, the Cowardly Lion and the Hungry Tiger; Besides Other Good People Too Numerous to Mention Faithfully Recorded Herein*. This is Ozma's book. Dorothy's new surname, "Gale," is also of Mitchell's invention. Still, two important things happen to Dorothy in this book. Her matured image and change in dress tie her to the older, romanticized version of herself in *The Wizard of Oz* on stage, and she becomes a princess. Both alter Dorothy's role in Oz for the remainder of the series and, arguably, the way she is seen today. Though modern views of the character do not recognize her "royal" status, nearly every later adaptation received by a wide audience base shows her as a matured or

maturing young woman, even when harkening back to Denslow's illustrations, as in the 1939 MGM film *The Wizard of Oz*.

In Baum's series, however, Dorothy's royal status removes her from the realm of ordinary children and allows her to develop a relationship with Princess Ozma and Glinda the Good Witch, who trust Dorothy to use their magical tools – Ozma's Magic Picture and Glinda's Book of Records – to watch over the Land of Oz and find people in need of help. In literature, for the remainder of Baum's authored books, Dorothy is seen as either a problem solver or a tour guide, a set up he devises in *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz* (1908), when his plans for a series are made most evident. Here, Dorothy reveals her dear friendship with Ozma, who checks in on her each day at four o'clock to make sure she is well. As promised, Ozma checks on the girl – who has been travelling with the just-returned Wizard, her cat Eureka, cousin Jim, and his horse Zeb, and is trapped in a terrible predicament – and rescues the entire group from harm. While the Wizard decides to stay on in Oz forever to learn *real* magic from Glinda, Dorothy and the rest are transported home, Zeb and Jim because they are tired of Oz, and Dorothy and Eureka because it's where they belong. In the book's cover image Dorothy's blond hair from *Ozma* has taken on a slight reddish hue, while her puff-sleeved dress has returned along with a hat with trailing bands, a dainty umbrella, and bright red shoes, a feature that will reappear thirty years later in the magic of Technicolor. In 1909 (*The Road of Oz*) she gives directions in Kansas to a traveler who ends up walking her straight into Oz where she serves as a friend to Ozma for a grand birthday party. And in 1910 (*The Emerald City to Oz*), she plays the ultimate guide when she brings Uncle Henry and Aunt Em to live in

the Land of Oz forever and accompanies them on a tour of the Ozian countryside while the “real” action happens elsewhere, as the focus of the book is on the actions of the evil Nome King Roquat/Ruggedy who tunnels towards the Emerald City to try to gain control of the land and retrieve his magic belt from Ozma.

As is noted by Zipes, Baum’s 1910 novel is probably the most important for consideration in terms of the author’s intentions for the narrative series, as this is the novel he *thought* would be his last. Many critics, Zipes included, have noted the intense social commentary made by the author in this novel, significant in popular scholarly considerations for the Land of Oz as Baum’s version of an American utopia. While the argument for Baum’s play in authoring a utopian fantasy is clearly necessary for understanding the placement of the series in literary history – Zipes notes “between 1888 and 1901 there were more than sixty utopian novels published in the United States, and Baum, an avid reader, was particularly fond of Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Forward* (1888) and Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1891)” (*Subversion* 127) – the trend only tangentially helps understand the allure of a fairyland like Oz during the time of Baum’s authorship. It does not, however, make clear our cultural obsession with *The Wizard* rather than the series as a whole or our establishment of its position as an American fairy tale. What I find more significant in *The Emerald City of Oz* than Baum’s attention to the trends his audience would pay good money for (remembering his knack for trend-watching), are the ways in which the author continues to inscribe Dorothy’s role in terms of familial importance. Dorothy is a princess in Oz, by fairy tale standards the dream of many a young girl, and yet she denies her chance for power and returns to Kansas again

and again out of obligation for her responsibilities back home. She only makes the decision to live permanently in Oz when she can bring her family with her, and she does so because her resources in Oz can be used to save them from certain financial ruin: Uncle Henry has been drowning in debt since rebuilding after the cyclone and is headed for bankruptcy and homelessness. Dorothy does not return to Oz to be a princess; she returns as a child to her guardians and a savior to her forthcoming homestead. She preserves the joy of domesticity beyond all other institutions. This is what makes it possible for the Gales to, as Eyles writes, “live their happily ever after” (47); Dorothy puts them first.

Outside of this first phase of series novels, Baum continued to search for ways to expand visibility for his growing Ozian empire. Consistently in touch with technological advances, he turned next to the budding art of movie making. As Swartz notes, “Fairy-tale films were extremely popular with audiences during the early part of the twentieth century, and Baum hoped to capitalize on their appeal” (161). It was in September of 1908 that Baum debuted *The Fairylogue and Radio-Plays*, a series of entertaining sketches that combined the use of lecture (with Baum as deliverer), storytelling, lantern slides, stage action, and short films for what Hearn calls “a complex advertising campaign for Reilly & Britton Oz books and another fairy tale illustrated by John R. Neill, *John Dough and the Cherub* (1906)” (*Annotated* lxvi). Of interest for Dorothy in this presentation is her appearance: “Dorothy wears a polka-dot dress with white socks and a necklace. In her hair, which is short, she wears a bow.” (Swartz 169). Fashioned after Neill’s illustrated Dorothy, who was fashioned after Laughlin’s on-stage costuming,

the child in Baum's *Fairylogue* makes use of the gaps between fantasy and reality. In the piece, Baum opens with a black and white still picture of a large book with cutouts for each of the characters. As he introduces them to the audience, they step out onto stage, in real-life color, and interact with Baum, one another, and the audience to give a "tour" of the Land of Oz, a history of their adventures there, and to sign autographs in books in the lobby. Just as in previous exploitations of his novels, Baum's *Fairylogue and Radio-Plays* serve as a reminder that the "origins" of these characters are a conglomerate of all the narratives at once. This Dorothy is no more the child of Baum's *Wizard* than she is the young woman of Mitchell's play. She is somewhere in between.

In 1910 the Selig Polyscope Company of Chicago received the rights to film Baum's novel. Baum was not involved in making the films and yet, as noted by Swartz, "Even without Baum's involvement [. . .] Selig, in pre-release publicity for the film, felt free to quote from the author's introduction to the novel" (173). Though their intentions were to adapt Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the influence of the 1902 play are clearly visible in the use of a character called Momba the Witch, the presence of a cow alongside Dorothy's dog, the Stone-like physicality in the performance of the Scarecrow, and the admittance of humbug-ness by the Wizard. Like Mitchell's production, in the Selig film for *The Wizard of Oz* Dorothy is offered an opportunity for royal status but refuses it. And also like Mitchell's production, the film uses Baum's novel only as a reference point. "Dorothy does not obtain magical shoes or enter a poppy field. What is most important, the film does not express the idea that Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion journey to the Wizard to find home, brains, a heart,

and courage. There is no real sense of a quest here” (Swartz 184). Instead, the film uses the recognition of the characters to show a journey within a fairy land to defeat an evil witch – one whose melting results in a black hat left behind – alongside talking animals and strange surroundings. Dorothy does not return to Kansas, which is presented in a much more positive light than in other works, and she worries not about her family back home. As Swartz relates, Dorothy is “a cipher about whom little is known” (186). What the film did, more than anything, was serve as a sign to other directors that there was opportunity for filmic adaptation in Baum’s world.

While Baum’s book series continued on from 1913 to 1920, Dorothy and her Ozian companions continued to live on in the world of commodities. Baum had resumed the series on the brink of bankruptcy after a major financial loss in producing *The Fairylogue and Radio-Plays*, and an annual Oz novel being released around Christmas time had become, as Fricke writes, “both a staple of American youth and the Reilly & Lee¹¹ catalog” (47). But on May 6, 1919, after suffering a severe stroke the day before, L. Frank Baum died in his home in California. A *New York Times* editorial published two days later cried, “L. Frank Baum is dead, and the children, if they knew it, would mourn” (“Fairy Tales” 140). The children would not, however, have to miss the annually released Oz novel; Reilly & Lee appointed a new “Royal Historian of Oz” to take his place that same year. “The heir apparent was discovered in Ruth Plumly Thompson, a blithe, endlessly imaginative, self-starting writer who’d made her reputation in contributions to

¹¹ The Reilly & Britton partnership was renamed Reilly & Lee after reorganization in 1919 led to the sale of Britton’s portion of the company.

St. Nicholas magazine and as the editor of a children's page for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*" (Fricke 47). The 1920 installment, *Glinda of Oz*, was written entirely by Baum; and, under the guise that he had left notes of another tale, 1921's *The Royal Book of Oz* was also credited to the original Historian. In reality, however, it was entirely the work of Thompson.

Thompson's books differ from Baum's in some distinct ways. Most importantly, they embrace the use of romantic relationships that Baum so carefully avoided. Thompson's Dorothy, though not the target of a relationship herself, must navigate a world in which romantic love sometimes acts as a catalyst for adventures or despair. With Neill remaining as illustrator, her image remained the same.

Baum's death encouraged another wave of Oz-mania in the form of commercial goods. A "magical" board called "The Scarecrow of Oz Answers Questions by Radio" was released in 1922; Parker Brothers introduced *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* board game, "an elaborate affair issued in homage to the Oz books. It was replete with figural markers depicting Dorothy and her three companions, dice that spelled out 'W-I-Z-A-R-D' and a superbly lithographed box cover and game board" (Scarfone *Collector's* 19) that same year, and, after being passed up for replacing his father as the new Royal Historian, Baum's oldest son (Frank Joslyn) started the Oz Doll & Toy Manufacturing Company, which created "a line of colorful oil-cloth stuffed dolls" in the image of Baum's Patchwork Girl (Scraps), Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and Jack Pumpkinhead (*Collector's* 20). Though the dolls were not major sellers on their own, Frank J. managed to sell the remaining inventory to Reilly & Lee as accompaniments for Oz books in special editions.

When word was released that Larry Semon, a wildly popular comedic actor and director, was planning for a movie adaptation for the novel in 1925, the media hummed with the promise of an exciting adventure in film. Semon's film was produced by the Chadwick Pictures Corporation, whose advertising campaign rivaled that of Walsh in 1902. Along with poster and billboard advertisements throughout metropolitan New York, where the film would open, "advertisements, often including whimsical drawings of the film's characters, were carried in all the major dailies" (Swartz 206). Bobb-Merrill published a "photoplay edition" of the original novel "illustrated with eight black-and-white movie stills instead of color plates, and wrapped in a brightly graphic 'movie edition' dust jacket" (Scarfone, *Collector's* 20). The White and Wychoff Company printed boxes of Oz stationary, large cutouts of Semon and the rest of the cast were placed all over New York, and window displays arranged by Frank Joslyn were used to advertise the film in every major department store, which also carried large and elaborate book displays of Baum's work. In all of these advertising efforts, the Chadwick Corporation worked to create the aura of nostalgia and tradition, moving forward in Semon's film as a reminder of the great tales of childhood. And as one final connection, Frank Joslyn, who worked with Semon to devise the film's script, would appear in the credits as "L. Frank Baum, Jr." lending a sense of authenticity to the revisions.

Maria Tatar reminds us, "Rewriting is often just as likely to produce an unsatisfying text as it is to produce an improved version of the story" (*Off* 19). If ever there were a poster child for that statement, Larry Semon's 1925 *The Wizard of Oz* film would be it. Semon's film presents itself as an adaptation of Baum's book through the

utilization of a framing narrative in which Semon, who later plays the part of the Scarecrow, appears as an old toymaker carving wooden dolls of the Oz characters in his shop when his young granddaughter appears and asks him to read to her from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The book opens and the audience is transported inside the pages to the tale of Dorothy – an eighteen year old girl, compared to a rose, played by Semon’s rather alluring brunette wife, Dorothy Dawn. She “is costumed in styles fashionable for the 1920s; in fact, she resembles nothing less than a flapper, with her bobbed hair, eyeliner, and painted Kewpie-doll lips” (Swartz 228). In Semon’s film Dorothy is the charge of an adoring Aunt Em and an abusive Uncle Henry, the love interest of two farmhands – one played by Semon, who will later disguise himself as a Scarecrow, and one played by Oliver Hardy, who will disguise himself as a Tin Man of sorts in Oz. There is a third farmhand present (Snoball) played by Spencer Bell, an African American actor performing as G. Howe Black (yes, really), and he dons a lion costume for a while in Oz to help a conman frighten some visitors. The film is a confusing drama that Swartz notes “places much greater emphasis upon life on the Kansas farm than did any previous incarnation of the Wizard of Oz tale” (123). Its story is that Dorothy is a lost princess of Oz and is primed to have this secret revealed to her on her eighteenth birthday in a letter that was left with her as a baby when she was dropped off on the doorstep of Henry and Em. Desperate to keep her from reclaiming her throne, an evil Prime Minister Kruel conspires to keep the girl’s true identity a secret. But when a cyclone whips Dorothy, the three farmhands, Uncle Henry, and the shed they’re hiding in to the Land of Oz, Princess Dorothea discovers her true place as royalty. In the process, Semon, Hardy, and Bell

disguise themselves as the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion to avoid being turned into monkeys by the Wizard, who is Prime Minister Kruel's "yes-man" and a traveling medicine salesman with no real magic to perform the tasks he's asked to do. Dorothy falls in love with a hero-figure, Prince Kynd, who duels with the Prime Minister over her honor before being helped in defeating him by the Scarecrow. Sad to learn that his love interest has fallen for a Prince, Semon's Scarecrow abandons the lovers and climbs a tall tower to leap towards a bi-plane passing overhead and driven by Snoball (Bell) to try to escape Oz. His reach comes short and the character falls to the ground with a thud, returning the audience to the framing narrative of the toymaker and his granddaughter who has been awoken by the thud of a Scarecrow doll falling to the ground. Led to believe the tale has been a dream, the little girl takes up the Oz dolls and leaves her grandfather in the shop with Baum's book, to which he returns to read the end of the tale, as Dorothy marries Prince Kynd and the two live happily ever after.

As Swartz notes, the film is "light years away from Baum's original conception" (219). Dorothy differs in all ways. She is near a marriageable age, involved in a romantic relationship of her own, finds her home in Oz rather than in Kansas, has no loyalty to her family, and serves no part in a journey. "Apparently, Semon aimed to emphasize farce and slapstick humor and felt that too much fantasy and reflection would detract from these. He was also likely aware that old-fashioned fairy-tale films, with their supernatural elements, had little appeal in the jazz-age 1920s" (22). And yet, the film managed to make a reasonable draw at the box office, particularly for one from an independent movie house like Chadrick. The film was released through Independent Films of Boston

throughout much of the United States and, because Semon had an international fanbase as a comic actor, the film also appeared in foreign markets. As Swartz notes, “European audiences were very receptive to the film” (237), particularly in France, though Baum’s novel was unavailable in translation until 1932. Semon played on some of the extravagance of the 1902 stage play, recalled Baum’s novel in the framing narrative, and exploited the toys available from Frank Joslyn’s toy company, which gained in popularity after the film’s release. It also provided a number of important concepts for what would be Oz’s most significant adaptation in 1939. Furthermore, Semon’s film reinscribed Baum’s tale in a typical fairy tale narrative sequence. Though not the one used in the original story, Dorothy’s fall from royalty, hiding among common people who treat her cruelly, discovering her true identity, and being restored to her rightful place as ruler, is another popular formula for fairy tale heroines. Swartz suggests “Dorothy’s restoration to power conveys an optimistic message that the true order of the world can be set right” (227), one not out of line for Baum’s original tale.

Along the way to Semon’s film as Princess Dorothea of Oz, Baum’s young Dorothy had moved from child to teenager to child and back again. She moved from innocent girl, to love interest, to flirty princess. She served to remind children of the importance of home and the power of following the rules. And, after Semon’s film, she and the other characters of Oz served as spokespeople for a great number of American products, beginning with the American Seating Company’s school chairs in 1929, for which “a poster was issued featuring a stylized Patchwork Girl and Scarecrow modeling inappropriate seating posture” (Scarfone, *Collector’s* 21). Throughout Dorothy’s shifting

images, she mostly served as gatekeeper to Oz. Because of Baum's first journey with the girl into the magic land, her presence was necessary for any "legitimate" retellings. But many of the tales were far less concerned with the development of her character than they were the exploration of Oz's strange population of wondrous creatures. Toy books, and puzzles, and calendars, and Jell-O recipes, and peanut butter spread, and board games, and postcards, and *Ozmapolitans* continued to flow with or without her. But the story didn't *really* become *about* Dorothy, in any meaningful way, until MGM cast Judy Garland to play her on screen. As Swartz writes, "It was a project that would change Oz history forever" (238). Even that might be an understatement.

JUMPING THE RAINBOW

After Semon's film, *The Wizard of Oz* did not disappear from public interest. As was the case after other adaptations, years of commercial goods connecting the latest iteration of Baum's story led to an endless chain of advertisements referencing both the newest and the earliest *Wizard* and all of the stops in between, encouraging old readers to return to familiar tales and new readers to explore them for the first time. The late 1920s saw the first official grouping of Oz fans in "The Ozmite Club," devised as an advertising ploy by Reilly & Lee in 1928 to supply readers for the revived *Ozmapolitan*. A syndicated comic strip in the early 1930s, as well as a "Wizard of Oz" radio program sponsored by Jell-O and "broadcast over as many as twenty-six NBC affiliates every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 5:45 to 6:00 P.M." continued the adventures of Dorothy and friends in audio format (Scarfone, *Collector's* 22). In an ironic connection between the life of the author and a source of inspiration for the book, "a sky-high

Denslow-inspired Scarecrow served as sentinel for the Enchanted Island at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. [. . .]. A similar Tin Woodman figure [. . .] stood directly parallel to the Scarecrow" (Scarfone, *Collector's* 166). Even without L. Frank Baum, the Land of Oz lived on and continued to inspire wonder. Its most iconic adaptation, the one that many claim surpassed its literary origins, would be made on the silver screen at the end of its fourth decade in print.

Film lovers know that 1939 was a miraculous year for motion pictures: *Gone with the Wind*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Stagecoach*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Dark Victory*, *Ninotchka*. The list could go on, but it could never not include *The Wizard of Oz*. Though the film has been the subject of countless explorations since its theatrical debut, most important here is its depiction of Dorothy by the now-legendary Judy Garland. It is Garland's Dorothy who gains the confidence, spunk, and bravado placed on Baum's 1900 creation, thanks to the adaptations and re-imaginings that occurred before the film's production and the shift in American ideology involving the appropriate level of action for a young woman to take by the end of the 1930s.

As relayed by Aljean Harmetz in the most widely recognized history of the MGM film, *The Making of The Wizard of Oz* (1977), Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was undergoing a massive studio restructuring in the late 1930s. The death of long-time producer and studio founder Irving Thalberg in September of 1936 left a gaping hole in the studio's heart and the film industry at large. Immeasurable in his influence, Thalberg was also well-known to be a very controlling force in the films he produced, down to "the subtle level of scripts and camera angles" (Harmetz 13). He was replaced by the equally dedicated, if

slightly less heavy-handed, co-founder of the studio, L. B. Mayer. Mayer, Harnetz notes, “believed fervently in God, America, and motherhood” (11). His deep devotion to the studio and its employees was heavily entwined with those ideals and the structure of the family unit. To join the team at MGM was to be invited into that family, and anyone who left for another studio was subject to Mayer’s antagonism and distrust. With that kind of atmosphere in tow, Harnetz notes, “By 1938, a year and a half after Thalberg died, the emphasis at MGM had already shifted from sophistication to sentimentality” (11). It was in 1938 that Mayer hired Mervyn LeRoy, a 37-year-old actor/director/producer then working for Warner Brothers, to become the new head of production. Swartz notes that LeRoy “told Mayer that he was particularly interested in producing a film based on the Wizard of Oz story” before being hired by MGM: “as a boy he had enjoyed both the book and the 1902 musical” (240).

MGM’s film would be an intentional adaptation of Baum’s book, hoping to ignore the changes made to the narrative through previous adaptations. But ignoring the conglomeration of Ozian interpretations and attempting to produce the film in a cultural vacuum would prove impossible. As evidenced by the round-robin game of writers and directors for the film, finding someone who could give the fidelity LeRoy’s vision asked for was an unlikely task. Eventually crediting Noel Langley, Florence Ryerson, and Edgar Allan Woolf with writing and Victor Fleming with directing the film, advertisements for its release promised the biggest technologically innovative picture made by the studio to date. Promotional photos for the film show the cast in character seated atop an over-sized edition of Baum’s novel with their likenesses on the cover. To

further legitimate the film (and capitalize on its release), the Bobbs-Merrill Company “issued an edition of Baum’s original book with stills from the new film, just as it had done for Semon’s film” (Swartz 253).

At its opening credits, following the lists for creative forces and the cast, MGM’s sepia-toned screen of clouds shows a title card that reads “For nearly forty years this story has given faithful service to the Young in Heart; and Time has been powerless to put its kindly philosophy out of fashion. / To those of you who have been faithful to it in return / . . . and to the Young in Heart / . . . we dedicate this picture” (00:01:34-:53). The notice summons the tradition of the narrative in American popular culture and offers nostalgic recollection of its history for viewers, and there are some notable elements that harken back to earlier adaptations. The presence of farmhands and the framing of the tale with a life in Kansas before Dorothy’s journey to Oz originated in the 1902 stage play but also appear in both the 1910 Selig and 1925 Semon films. The performance of the Scarecrow by Ray Bolger includes the shaky legs of Fred Stone, also seen in Larry Semon’s portrayal of the stuffed man. Semon’s film also roots the relationships Dorothy has with her companions in Oz in “real” relationships back home in Kansas. The rescue of Dorothy and the Lion from a field of deadly poppies, which in Baum’s book is thanks to an enormous army of mice, comes in the form of a snow storm sent by Glinda, the Good Witch, as was the case in Mitchell’s production on stage. When the Wicked Witch of the West is melted by Dorothy in the MGM film, she leaves behind her clothes and broomstick, as Witch in the 1910 Selig film had done, leaving a tall black hat in her absence. And, in what Hearn calls “one of the unforgiveable changes made in the 1939

MGM film,” the adventures of Dorothy are revealed in the end to be those of a dream. Though the framing narrative for Semon’s film had employed the dream of a secondary narrative character – that of the toymaker and his granddaughter – to ground the elaborate land of Oz in a dream world, for MGM’s film the journey is the dream of young Dorothy – a decision that outraged many Oz enthusiasts at its release (and still does today!), and which Swartz asserts makes “the characters and events of Oz function as a psychological signpost to the inner workings of the girl’s mind” (252), the object of many an academic study. Still, regardless of these earlier-produced changes to Baum’s novel, much of the MGM film does stay true to the tale of 1900.

The most notable shift in the work, however, is not in the script. As was discussed with relation to Mitchell’s play, in a grand production the script is only a tiny part of the work. In this addition to the Text of the Wizard of Oz tale, the most notable shift is in the character representation of Dorothy. Historically remembered as a part for which MGM wanted Fox’s Shirley Temple loaned to the studio, the role was instead filled by sixteen-year-old Judy Garland, whose 1938 feature debut in *Broadway Melody* had been wildly well received and marked the girl’s star-status, something for which the MGM studio was well-known for producing in that era. Swartz notes Garland’s portrayal of Dorothy is “less innocent than the five- or six-year-old in Baum’s novel but not as sexually mature as the teenager in the 1902 play or the 1925 film” (252). He insists the character is meant to be about twelve in the film. MGM’s Dorothy wears the blue gingham dress from Baum’s novel; her hair is plaited in two long braids with a ribbon on each end. Yet, as Bonnie Friedman notes, on the matured body of Garland, the pinafore “crams her breasts

against her and spills into a frothy white yoke of blouse; every other woman in the movie wears a dress. Dorothy seems to have outgrown her childish frock without noticing, or perhaps she's installed in a sort of transitional training dress," like a training bra for her blossoming form (11).¹² Thanks, in part, to this presentation, Dorothy's journey in the MGM film reads like a coming-of-age tale. Before her trip in the cyclone, the framing narrative shows a young woman teetering between doing what she knows she should and displaying childish outbursts of selfish temper.

When the film opens, Dorothy is seen running up a long dirt road with her tiny dog, Toto, away from an unknown entity trailing somewhere behind her. Identified only as "she," the audience soon learns of Elvira Gulch, a rich woman who Auntie Em says "owns half the county" and tries to control the people in it (00:10:03-03). Gulch's presence foreshadows that of the Wicked Witch of the West, Dorothy's dream-induced characterization of the powerful woman who wants to take her joy and keep her from home. Back in Kansas, she is the first victim of Dorothy's temper, when the child swats away a basket meant for Toto and yells out "Oooh! I'll bite you myself!" (00:09:33-34) in promise of retaliation for her little dog's date with the law. Dorothy's run-in with Gulch highlights the dichotomy between what Dorothy wants at home – autonomy, power, a voice – and what she feels she receives – cruelty, dismissal, and a lack of

¹² Friedman's recognition of Garland's "stuffing" is given further credence in the context of what is known about the girl's "grooming" for stardom at MGM. Harnetz notes, "In signing Judy Garland, MGM had bought an extraordinary voice unfortunately attached to a mediocre body. In the next seven years, the voice would be trained, the teeth capped, the nose restructured, the thick waist held in by corsets, and the body reshaped as well as possible by diet and massage" (107). For *The Wizard of Oz*, Garland wore a binding to hold in her breasts and retain a juvenile appearance. "The corset was extremely uncomfortable, but she rarely complained" (Harnetz 184).

protection. When Gulch opens the basket for the little dog it is her Uncle Henry who places him within the evil woman's possession, and despite looking desperately to both of her guardians for assistance, her needs are unmet because of Em's recognition that they "can't go against the law" (00:09:21-23). Unlike Baum's Dorothy, the Dorothy of 1939 *wants* to leave home. She is told by Em to go where she won't be any trouble, a place Dorothy then idealizes as "not a place you can get to by boat or train," but somewhere "far, far away, behind the moon, beyond the rain" (00:05:32-46) – one she wishes to find "Over the Rainbow" in the film's most iconic song: "Somewhere over the rainbow / way up high / there's a land that I've heard of / once in a lullaby" (00:05:48-00:06:08). The film is the first to show Oz as a fairy land, somewhere beyond Kansas, as indicated in the still of the Kansas clouds with rays of sunshine breaking through as a bird sings during Garland's instrumental bridge. The gentle note of childhood lullabies serves as a reminder of the nostalgia of childhood locked to Baum's fairytale.

Dorothy meets her fate with the cyclone in this film, not because she misses her chance for shelter thanks to a runaway Toto, but because *she* runs away, purportedly to save Toto from being taken by Gulch, whose grip he escapes by jumping from the basket on the back of her bicycle as she rides away from the farm. But Friedman notes, "her motive isn't just to save Toto" (16). Along the way down the road Dorothy meets Professor Marvel, the man who will occupy a number of figures in her Oz dream, but most notably that of the Wizard. Marvel is a conman, like that of Semon's film-fame, but he recognizes in Dorothy a child running away and takes the opportunity to trick her into going home, patronizing her longing for independence as she leaves: "Poor little kid. I

hope she gets home alright,” he tells his horse (00:15:01-03) . In questioning her reasons for leaving, Marvel has a vision that reveals Dorothy’s perception of her status on the farm: “They don’t understand you at home. They don’t appreciate you. You want to see other lands, big cities, big mountains, big oceans.” To which Dorothy replies, “Why, it’s just like you could read what was inside of me” (00:12:06-16). Her journey here is one to save herself as much as it is to save Toto. But, like Baum’s Dorothy, MGM’s heroine must also show her audience the recognition of her family’s needs over her own. As Marvel reads of Aunt Em’s feigned illness in a crystal ball, Friedman notes “Dorothy’s going out into the world is such an abandonment of her mother it may kill her. [. . .] The professor reads the fears Dorothy cannot admit to herself, and he knows just when to stop – at the brink of the unthinkable. The crystal’s gone down; the mind obscures itself. Guilt drives Dorothy back home” (18).

Whatever guilt Dorothy has is only multiplied in her journey to Oz. Steeped in emotional connection between the girl and her Aunt, demonstrated as mutual love through Em’s frantic screams for the child into the storm, the MGM film’s consistent desire by the heroine to return to Kansas from Oz is intensely more understandable for a 1939 audience than that of Baum’s child. It is obvious Garland’s Dorothy feels a sense of familial obligation for the people in Kansas from the very beginning. What this allows the MGM Dorothy to do is freely explore other areas of her development along her journey. While Baum’s Dorothy spends her days building recognition of her love for her aunt and uncle, demonstrated through the difficulties a child without parents would find in navigating the world alone, the Dorothy of Garland fame spends her time in Oz

learning what she is capable of performing without the ones she loves. That is the defining difference between the two films. In Garland's image, Dorothy is motivated enough to get home that she actively challenges herself in the journey, unlike the first Dorothy who relies heavily on her companions to get her through it. While Baum's Dorothy asks the Good Witch of the North to travel with her to Oz and frets going alone, MGM's Dorothy takes the start of the Yellow Brick Road with a literal song and dance, waving enthusiastically to the Munchkin people she leaves behind.

This enthusiasm for the journey remains consistent throughout the film. While Baum's child becomes a passive observer when danger arises, Garland's Dorothy is just as active as her male counterparts. As previously noted, the Dorothy of 1900 allows each character to accompany her when asked and is repaid many times over by each of the characters through their assistance in overcoming obstacles. By 1939, Dorothy is the instigator for bringing new members to the pack. And in this film, the four comrades share equally in their desire to go to the Wizard for wish fulfillment, but the desires of the others are always underlined by their love for Dorothy: they are fairy tale helpers here, rather than equal heroes, as demonstrated in the reactions of the Scarecrow and Tin Man to the promise of their destruction from the Wicked Witch of the West. "I'm not afraid of her! I'll see you get to the Wizard now, whether I get a brain or not. Stuff a mattress with me – ha!" quips the Scarecrow; the Tin Man supplies equal backing, "I'll see you reach the Wizard whether I get a heart or not. Beehive! Bah! Let her try and make a bee hive out of me!" (00:46:40-56). These helpers are determined to assist Dorothy at all costs, and are further gleaming examples of good men who stand against evil without fear.

Considering the film in context with other American musicals of the day, Raymond Knapp suggests that, regardless of the image of what becomes the inseparable foursome on screen, the audience's "sympathetic orientation remains centered squarely throughout on Dorothy/Judy, who, earnest and breathless, plays to both children and adults, desperate to reassure us that the film's more purely moral lessons are the point of it all" (141).

Despite what can be read as Garland's modern-girl rendition of Baum's 1900 child, grown up in the world for which female assertiveness is no longer taboo, the MGM film still strongly reverberates the message of domestic responsibility and the significance of family. Just as Baum's heroine uses the drive to get home as her motivation to complete her journey, MGM's Dorothy also consistently reminds her friends and the audience of her ultimate desire to go back to Auntie Em. However, relying on the sentimental nature of the age, MGM's use of the theme is brought to the fore ahead of all others. Indicated most clearly at the film's end, Dorothy travels home by repeatedly stating her mantra, "There's no place like home. There's no place like home. There's no place like home" (01:38:58-01:39:38). This return comes only after she learns she has the power to leave on her own magic request – a lesson given by Glinda, who asks of Dorothy what she has learned during her time in Oz. Dutifully, like the good American girl she is, Dorothy sums up her lesson for her friends in Oz and for the audience: "I think that...that it wasn't enough just to want to see Uncle Henry and Auntie Em. It's that if I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own back yard, because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with. Is that

right?” (01:36:48-01:37:10). Glinda’s response, “That’s all it is,” is chuffed off by the Scarecrow who says, “But that’s so easy. I should have thought of it for you” (01:37:11-13). Of course, for Dorothy, a young woman who came to Oz only because she wanted so desperately to break away from her own back yard, coming to grips with her place at home is not so easy to do. Still, as a good girl, it’s the lesson she must learn. She recites her knowledge dutifully and reiterates it upon returning to her room back at the farm, as she breathlessly exclaims to a bedroom full of onlookers, “This is my room and you’re all here and I’m not going to leave you ever again, because I love you, and oh, Auntie Em, there’s no place like home” (01:40:58-01:41:14). Unlike Baum’s novel, the MGM film ends without a warm embrace from Aunt Em. Rather, the woman seems to laugh off the girl’s “silly” dream of Oz and steadies herself to return to work, patting Dorothy’s bedcovers just out of frame. Perhaps our fairy tale understanding of the Wizard of Oz tale encourages a reading of the sugary-sweet final scene that means a happy return to the homestead for Dorothy. However, as with Baum’s book, she may just as easily slip into a life of gray despair; only now, she’s asking for it – breathlessly and teary-eyed, clutching her little black dog in overwhelming gratefulness for her position in Kansas.

The MGM adaptation greeted audiences in the throngs of the Great Depression. Its world premiere was a five-day affair in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin – a space Swartz recognizes “was probably selected as a testing ground for the film’s marketability in Middle America” (253). Middle America was exactly the film’s targeted demographic, hardest hit by the country’s economic woes, where spending money to see a film while struggling to eat might seem a frivolous expense by today’s standards. Yet, as Tracey

Mollet writes, “During the darkest days of the Depression, movie attendance still averaged 60-75 million people per week, proving both the power and popularity of the cinema” (112). *The Wizard of Oz* on film is the quintessential illustration of public desire to escape from desolation and get lost in the magic of the movies. In a technological feat not yet managed on screen, MGM’s film utilized Technicolor to differentiate between Dorothy’s world in Kansas – now literally gray thanks to sepia-toned footage – and the fairyland of Oz. After a terrifying ride on her bucking bed in the cyclone, Dorothy and her house land with a sudden thud in an unknown land. She cautiously walks from her bedroom, approaches the home’s front door, and opens it to a world of brilliant color. It was a fantastic bit of spectacle for the film’s producers – one that Baum would have surely approved of – and is regularly recounted by film critics and audience members alike as one of the most significant moments in movie history. Mollett writes, “People sought deliverance from their black and white lives, filled with unemployment, hunger, and despair, hoping for escape into a colorful utopia” (112). No visual gave the public this dream more completely than MGM’s, but *The Wizard of Oz* was not the only fairy tale film at the time. As Zipes notes, “Filmmakers did not realize how rich and compelling fairy-tale material really was until the 1930s – [. . .] just as fascism of all kinds was on the rise. The fairy tale was to speak for happiness and utopia in the face of conditions that were devastating people’s lives all over the globe” (*Happily 2*).

Acknowledged by many scholars as the model from which MGM sprung its fairy tale concept, Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* had been the recipient of incredible audience acclaim in 1938 after its 1937 Christmas season release. All five of

the major studios hoped to succeed in matching that success by offering fantasy and fairy tale work to rival Disney's release. As discussed by John Douglas Eames, the MGM studio mantra "Make it good. . . . make it big. . . . give it class!" set the precedence for their answer to *Snow White*'s newly-raging fairy tale trend to dominate at the box office (8).

Scarfone and Stillman note, "Just as it had done in actually creating the movie itself, MGM spared no expense when it came to promotion and reportedly spent \$250,000 [. . .] on a phenomenal advertising blitz that was detailed in an extravagantly illustrated campaign book distributed for theater owners for use in exploiting *The Wizard of Oz*" (*Collector's* 23). A copy of a press release heralding the studio's incredible dedication to the film's extravagance reads: "For the picture a total of 3,210 costumes were designed and made, 8,428 separate make-ups were sketched in color and applied to faces, sixty-five fantastic settings built from 1,020 separate unites, 212,180 individual sounds were placed in the picture and eighty-four different effects created for the unusual events of *Oz*" (Scarfone *Wizardry* 13). MGM's advertising for the film far exceeded any campaign of the past. To not know of *The Wizard of Oz* by the time of its release would have been unthinkable for any American in 1939. Still, the film did poorly at the box office largely thanks to forces beyond its control: Fricke notes, "World War II began in Europe in September 1939, two weeks after the American *Oz* premiere" (81).

Not even World War II, however, could keep *The Wizard* from marching forward. An incredible array of tie-ins and spin-offs in everything from toys to calendars kept *Oz* in public favor. Scarfone and Stillman note, "Over the two years after the MGM movie's

release, about thirty manufacturers followed through and actually purchased the rights to market Oz tie-in products” (*Collector’s* 25). The Capitol Records release of the soundtrack for the film, including the score for the songs kept Oz on the brain and Garland in the hearts of many Americans for nearly a decade. In 1949, the ten-year anniversary re-release of the picture “was a triumph for the studio, proof positive that a market existed for classic older films. *Oz* once again garnered superlative reviews and took in enough at the box office to put the picture firmly in the black” (Fricke 85). Another re-release in 1955 had been “unevenly promoted” and did not garner near the success as the 1949 showing (Fricke 97), but disappointment would be quickly forgotten, after what many consider the tale’s most significant moment of cultural recognition the following year.

1956 saw the expiration of the original copyright for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and the story’s entrance to the public domain encouraged a storm of new editions, new illustrations, abridgements, and new retellings. Baum’s characters occupied space in advertising and legend, a cross-pollination of American ideology from fairy tale tradition and the complex of capitalism. An exhibition dedicated to the author’s centenary through the Columbia University Libraries that paid homage to Baum and his work garnered respect for *The Wizard of Oz* as a touchstone in American literary history. And, most importantly, on November 3, 1956, as the last installment of its Ford Star Jubilee, CBS broadcast the film on television, hosted by Bert Lahr, Garland’s ten-year-old daughter Liza Minnelli, and thirteen-year old Baum expert Justin Schiller – who would go on to start The International Wizard of Oz Club and its magazine *The Baum Bugle* the

following year. Fricke notes, “Few families could then boast a color set, and most viewers saw the picture in black and white. But even under those circumstances, the film had found a new home” (99). Ratings reported than more than forty-five million people had tuned in. The film did not rebroadcast in 1957 or 1958, but beginning in 1959 it was shown annually as a television event – not as part of a series, but as a stand-alone special feature. The 1959 showing nearly doubled the audience of the first broadcast: nearly eighty million people tuned in to see Dorothy open the magical door to somewhere “Over the Rainbow.” As Fricke notes, by the mid-1960s, “children had come to anticipate the annual TV appearance of *The Wizard of Oz* as a family event on par with their birthdays and the December holidays” (101). The merchandise and advertising flow following the annual televising event was incalculable, but most importantly for the narrative of Oz, syndication created a *tradition* for American households in the regular retelling of Baum’s modernized fairy tale.

THE SELFISH MEME GOES TO OZ

In 1965, *TIME* magazine called the annual showing of *The Wizard of Oz* something akin to the Super Bowl for children, noting “the program has become a modern institution and a red-letter event in the calendar of childhood” (np). But children were clearly not the only audience for *The Wizard*. Back in 1945, in an article called “45 Years of ‘The Wizard’,” *Collier’s* magazine had tapped into what the film meant for Americans as representative of our national spirit: “Don’t believe in the big bad wolf. . . don’t be overawed by people who talk big. . . dig out the facts for yourself. . . don’t depend on hearsay and propaganda”(np). Those were the lessons Americans could draw

from *The Wizard*. Hearn notes, “It was this philosophy that helped America defeat the Axis powers” in the Second World War; ““Let’s just hang onto that realistic, inquiring, skeptical, and fearless attitude of mind,’ [Collier’s] concluded. ‘It’s a priceless national asset’” (*Annotated* xcvi). This was the core of *The Wizard of Oz*: what evil these good people would overcome could be seen in the annals of American history. Dorothy – the determined future-homemaker – was a great American gal, ready to take on a terrifying journey so long as she had good friends by her side and the promise of her family at the end of it all. The Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and Lion – metaphorical carriers of the light within us all – were just what America was about: the tale typified, as *Collier’s* wrote, “that attitude, if you’ll pardon a bit of flag-waving, that did much to make this country great” (np). And the *Collier’s* sentiments on the film were keeping in line with general American beliefs about the film and Baum’s tale that continues even today.

As perhaps most interestingly documented through the evolution of Dorothy’s position in the world of academia, beginning in the early 1950s in what is sometimes called the “Wizard War,” American ownership of Baum’s tale as containing our most treasured national characters raged on in essays and articles that often connected the presence of *The Wizard* with upholding American nationalism and moral ideology all on its own. After a number of libraries began unshelving the series, likely the result of a national push to find ‘better’ works of literature for advancing childhood literacy, Martin Gardner and Russel B. Nye went to war, in a very public way, with Detroit Library’s head librarian Ralph Ulveling, who found the books lacked value found in other, more challenging texts. In a press conference, Nye quipped, “If the message of the Oz books –

that love, kindness and unselfishness make the world a better place was, as Ulveling said, of no value today, we should reassess a good many other things about our modern society besides the Detroit Library's approved list of children's books" (Hungiville xi); while Gardner wrote that children's librarians were "self-magnified, badly educated woggle-bugs" and warned that Oz fans were going to "cry out against this conspiracy of silence and say, without being the least bit ashamed, that the Royal History is a great and enduring work of American literature" (*BB* 1); and they meant these things. Articles titled "Why *The Wizard of Oz* Keeps on Selling" (Frank J. Baum, 1952), "The Land of Oz: America's Great Good Place" (Bewley, 1964), "A Child's Garden of Bewilderment" (Gardner, 1957), "The Librarians of Oz" (Gardner, 1959), "A Defense of the Oz Books" (Bernard M. Golumb), "The Utopia of Oz" (Sackett, 1961), even "Oz and the Fifth Criterion" (C. Warren Hollister, 1971) continued to insist that through Baum and in Oz we could see what was *really* good about America and its people; that Baum was, as Gardner wrote in "Why Librarians Dislike Oz," like "a Hans Christian Andersen" who "once lived in the United States" ("Why" 187). Scholarship following the "war" seems to follow suit. Though certainly not too absolute, much of our scholarship regarding Oz contains at least some acknowledgement of the inherent *goodness* of the work and the utopian vision it offers readers, always with Dorothy at the helm. But, as I hope to have demonstrated in this study, those kinds of explorations generally read onto Dorothy the young woman she became by the time she was shaped by Judy Garland, or Ruth Plumly Thompson, or Larry Semon, and not so much who she was in 1900, when she gravely recalled her traumatic separation from home in the Land of Oz.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was America's first twentieth-century fairy tale, and as such, its heroes and heroines were exemplary figures for what American parents hoped their children would emulate one day. As Selma Lanes wrote, "No magic is ever more powerful than the overriding reality of the American life experience. The facts of existence always manage to win out over the fantasy of the author's tale" ("America" 95). Through the repetition of American popular culture linking the characters of Baum's *Wizard of Oz* to American exceptionalism, Dorothy and friends were and are iconic symbols for the gifts each citizen has inside just waiting to be discovered. But Dorothy didn't start that way. She evolved.

In considering the role of the paratextual, Jonathan Gray writes that "for many viewers and non-viewers alike the title of a film or program will signify the entire package" (3). By the mid-1960s, Americans had quite a package surrounding Oz. For child viewers, *The Wizard of Oz* film with Judy Garland was the Text in its entirety. For their parents, however, the weight of Semon's film and the Oz series – which ran annually to forty-one books in total – would still be fresh memories from childhood. And for their grandparents, the aura around Baum's original novel, the growth of the tale through the first fourteen books, the glamour of the Selig film in 1910, and the extravagance and spectacle of Mitchell's 1902 stage production would serve as powerful pieces of nostalgia toward their own childhoods and the years of tales shared with their children. The event created in gathering those three differently weighted generations in a space to watch a television broadcast of the film each year accounts for the power of what television theorist Gregor T. Goethals likens to a modern-day ritual. In his work *The TV*

Ritual: Worship at the Video Altar, Goethals suggests that “commercial television [. . .] has played a major role in expressing and shaping our values [. . .] by weaving a web of easily understood and accessible images that provides fragmented groups with public symbols. In a highly complex society, television has begun to [. . .] visualize common myths and to integrate the individual into a social whole” (4). While concurrently viewing a shared film in living rooms all across the nation, isolated families met in consensus and validated a text as a traditional narrative to continue to be passed on for the future citizens of their nation. The ritual of *The Wizard of Oz* on television, I would suggest, forces the film to surpass its literary origins and perform the work of folklore to a group of people who share a common bond: being Americans.

Now, more than fifty years after that television broadcast became ritual, *The Wizard of Oz* still stands as a figure of American folk ideology. The images of the tale’s characters, their most famous lines of dialogue, the general “lessons” given by the narrative, are as second nature to American children as the stars and stripes on the flag. And more greatly ingrained than Margaret Hamilton’s terrifying “I’ll get you, my pretty, and your little dog, too!” is Dorothy’s mantra: “There’s no place like home.” We feed that story to our daughters while lauding Dorothy for her bravery and independence. This disconnect is astounding, and yet, we will tell it again. As with any fairy tale, there is no logical reason to continue to tell stories by which our children will establish measurements for personal success and tragedy without considering the relevance of those stories for our children’s individual conditions, than to understand our doing so as part of an ongoing Text-creation, spurred by cultural expectations of tradition – a

coloring of our own reading built on the shoulders of generations of readers and recipients who have created a Text wholly romanticized, and often radically transformed in its aura, from the work before us. As Maria Tatar asserts in *Off with their Heads!*, “All printed fairy tales are colored by the facts of the time and place in which they were recorded” (19), a realization that makes it “especially odd that we continue to read our children – often without the slightest degree of critical reflection – unrevised versions of stories that are imbued with the values of a different time and place” (19). These kinds of mindless readings performed in the passage of fairy tales, perhaps the result of nostalgia for traditions deemed a “necessary” ritual in the experience of childhood, create space for lessons and archetypes which may be more a product of adult projection than one of child absorption. This is the reason Salman Rushdie ends his reading of *The Wizard of Oz* film yelling for Glinda to “Hold it. Hold *it*” (57) when Dorothy reveals the lessons she’s learned in Oz. “Must we accept that she now accepts the limitations of her home life, and agrees that the things she doesn’t have there are no loss to her? ‘*Is that right?*’ Well, excuse *me*, Glinda, but it isn’t,” Rushdie writes (57).

Rushdie’s reading is a critical reflection on what I see as a product of memetic absorption. In *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*, Zipes writes, “To copy a fairy tale is to duplicate its message and images, to produce a look-alike. To duplicate a *classical* fairy tale is to reproduce a set pattern of ideas and images that reinforce a traditional way of seeing, believing, and behaving” (9). Even thirty-nine years after the authoring of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the reproduction of Baum’s tale in the MGM film reproduced the tradition of the tale in a way that slightly altered the message for its readers. Based on

the paratextual events contributing to the reading of the Text in 1939, Dorothy had evolved in the minds of American readers to be less obedient and more sentimentally idyllic. So while “a traditional and conservative world view is confirmed,” as Zipes suggests it would be for a classical retelling (*Myth* 9), it is repetition with a difference.

The difference between the two, the disconnect between what is said and what is heard, I suggest, comes from the power of memetics. As first discussed by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 seminal text *The Selfish Gene*, memetics is the field of study deriving from the inquiry of what Dawkins called the “meme,” a replicator like the gene of genetics, that achieves “evolutionary change at a rate that leaves the old gene panting far behind” (249). This replicator operates in the field of culture and, in ways similar to the genes necessary for biological evolution, survives by jumping from one being to the next in a way that is most beneficial *for itself*. Further explained by Robert Aunger, “Memetics are the equivalent of a cold virus that, by causing sufferers to sneeze (à la Godin), succeeds in infecting everyone in the vicinity. So memetics is the cultural analogue to the study of how disease-causing pathogens diffuse through populations” (17). While Aunger’s epidemiological metaphor for memetic travel connotes a negative/infection-like process for passing cultural material, a great deal of cultural bits that are passed are positive in presentation, as is the case for Baum’s Dorothy. Connecting this theory to the study of the evolution of the fairy tale in *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, Zipes asserts, “When the fairy tale is articulated [. . .], it is made relevant through the brain that operates efficiently and effectively to draw the attention of the listener/reader to the inferred meaning of the communication. A fairy tale as meme wants

to be understood in a particular relevant way, otherwise it will not stick in the recipient who is *intended* to replicate it” (7). As the American conception of a “good girl” evolved to *also* include words like “independent,” “brave,” and even “feminist,” those characters with whom readers identify older examples for the “good girl” who also maintain an openness to their characterization – like Baum’s Dorothy – can benefit from our projections of cultural evolution. Jo Marsh, from Alcott’s *Little Women* is consistently utilized as a female character who pushes against what is socially expected of her. And yet, literary history shows us that Alcott published two novels after *Little Women* in which Jo absolutely follows the path set for a woman in her day. In Jo’s case, memetics allows us to forget the series to focus on the original, to find the Jo who best fits with contemporary ideals about subversive women. And in the case of Dorothy, memetics allows us to forget the original to focus on the 1939 film adaptation (and all of the various paratextual events before and after it) to find the Dorothy who is brave and strong and spunky and good for *today’s* girls in the same way she was for the girls of 1900. And our Dorothy *is* good for our girls, isn’t she?

In examining the life of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and how it came to fill the shoes Baum laid for it, I have come to believe that the evolution of Dorothy in our cultural memory is the result of our desire to find in a traditional narrative what Baum’s critics looked for: “the best art has to offer” (“A New Book” 135). And while I don’t believe we have conspired against our nation’s girls to teach them that words like those we attach to Dorothy – the character “feminists have naturally claimed” as “one of their own” (Hearn *Annotated* 13) – must necessarily include confining themselves to a life of

domesticity, I do believe that when we inscribe those labels without considering the memetic weight that has made them possible, we open the doors to muddying important terms for defining self-worth and identity. When we leave those doors open in the context of any story it can be dangerous, but when we leave them open in a fairy tale and don't acknowledge the draft, I believe that's a danger we should be unwilling to bear. It's time we realize we're still in Kansas. In fact, we may never have left.

EPILOGUE:

VOLUNTEERING AS TRIBUTE:

THE DANGERS OF MEMETIC ABSORPTION

“Someday we may have better American fairy tales
but that will not be until America is a better country.”

-- Edward Wagenknecht, *Utopia Americana*

The impetus for this project was a personal one. Having battled a familiar question for many parents on what the “right age” might be for introducing my young daughter to *The Wizard of Oz*, I found myself seated on the sofa with my precocious three-year-old by my side, watching Judy Garland open the door to a Technicolor dreamland (with fingers crossed that Margaret Hamilton-induced nightmares would not follow). She was enthralled with the film. I, on the other hand, found myself wondering if Dorothy’s journey had been the right one to show a brain that had admittedly been over-indulged in Disney princesses and their requisite four thousand material artifacts for her role play. I felt balanced in my approach. I *do* read her the Grimm tales, after all. But I remembered Dorothy being a stronger girl than she’d appeared on our television screen that night. She was spunky, yes, and entirely dreamy. I still get pitter-patters from hearing Garland’s voice reach “Over the Rainbow.” And yet, she was far more weepy than I’d remembered her being. After weeks of watching her role-play as “Dorothy,” I thought it might be best to read her Baum’s book. Ordinarily, I would have found such a long-lettered work out of reach for my child’s attention span. At age three, this would be her first real “chapter book.” However, her intense interest in the tale gave me hope it might

lead to a path where the love of words would enrapture her – a scholar’s dream, I suppose. Opening the book from which I myself had read *The Wizard* as a child, one given to me by my grandmother who’d read it to her daughter and thought I might like a story *about a girl*, I paused to read the introduction to myself – Baum’s “manifesto,” as Suzanne Rahn calls it (27) – and the word “fairy tale” stuck with me. It was a fairy tale, wasn’t it? At least, in my brain it was. But, even in book form, it wasn’t the fairy tale I remembered. Dorothy was so....so....Dorothy. As we finished the tome, weeks later, I found myself arrested by my daughter’s reaction to the tale’s end. In an effort to spark an interest in Dorothy’s later adventures, for which there would be no film to show her and many LONG pages to read, I said, “If I were Dorothy, I’d want to stay in Oz. I’ll bet there are so many wonderful things to see there!” Lip quivering, heart on her sleeve, she looked at me and sobbed “But I’d miss you.” *Cue light bulb.*

Baum’s tale accomplishes what *adults* need it to accomplish. Even in Garland’s plucky portrayal, Dorothy teaches our children (ahem, daughters) that the world *can* be a wondrous place, but there really is *no place like home*. The message is a catch-22 for parents. I want my daughter to see the world, to build a space for herself where she is happy and healthy and challenged and loved and . . . that list could go on. And, selfishly, I want her with me always. I know that’s not practical. But I do want her to know that our home will always be open to her. It will always be the place where she is wanted and welcomed. Her father and I will always offer her refuge from places that can be “sometimes wonderful and sometimes dark and terrible,” like Oz. What I’m not so certain Baum’s tale does is offer that message in a way that gives her a “role model” for

independence, bravery, and self-awareness in Dorothy, at least if I weren't there to tell her about it.

For a fairy tale like *The Wizard of Oz*, memetic weight won't allow her to read that tale any other way. Not as an "average" reader, anyway. She can challenge it all she likes as she grows up, and I certainly hope she will, but the social Text we've built around that tale, the same one that tells readers *Pretty Woman* is a "Cinderella" story, is too solidly built to deny her belief that Dorothy is *just* the kind of girl she'd like to be.

Our absorption of the Text we've created for Dorothy and Oz isn't *necessarily* a bad one. How else would we share those tales we feel culturally obligated to share with our children were it not for the ways we read our own understanding onto words written for people entirely out of place in our world today? And, yet, fairy tales are meant to be "subverted," Zipes tells us. They are also meant to be carried on for the selfish reasons of pushing forward those ideological bits we feel most beneficial to the future of our culture.

It is the opportunity for carrying forward I find disturbing in *The Wizard of Oz* tale. It is in the texts that carry it forward that I see room for deeper academic consideration. What happens when *The Wiz* appropriates the tale for black audiences? What is gained when the tale becomes a tool to talk about the experience of travelling the Yellow Brick Road as a black American? When Diana Ross's Dorothy eases on down the road, returning to what is *obviously* a safer place in Harlem than what she finds in Oz, are we simply highlighting a different lesson: Go home, not because you want to, but because the city is a morally corrupt cesspool you've got to get away from? Are we perpetuating ideas about black urban environments and violence, crime, or lost morality?

Equally interesting to me is the intertextual influence of the Wizard of Oz tale as a placeholder for the archetypal figures American children imitate in other works of fiction. Consider Suzanne Collins's 2008-2010 *Hunger Games* trilogy. Like *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* these books found larger audience reception as film adaptations, the first of which (*The Hunger Games*) appeared in 2012 under the direction of Gary Ross. In a review of Ross's film, appropriately titled "*The Hunger Games: Katniss in Oz*," Vibiana Bowman Cvetkovic recites the incredible similarities between it and MGM's 1939 film:

Dorothy has three male companions (the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, and the Cowardly Lion) who personify the qualities needed for heroism – intelligence, a noble heart, and courage. Katniss in the *Hunger Games* has Haymitch (her mentor), Cinna (her stylist and advocate), and Peeta (her loyal friend and co-tribute). The Munchkins proclaim Dorothy their heroine after she kills their oppressor, the Wicked Witch of the East. Katniss inspires an uprising in District 11 after she shows kindness and compassion to their slain tribute, a little girl named Rue. Neither Dorothy nor Katniss seek the status of heroine/figurehead but are anointed so by the adults in their society. (38)

And, as demonstrated through the overwhelming media attention granted to *The Hunger Games* before and after its film debut, that same status is granted to her by the adults in *actual* society. Katniss ranks as heroine for many, many audiences today. The veritable mountain of good press Ross's film received from mainstream media and fan culture for *finally* putting a bad-ass girl warrior on screen for girls to emulate buries

beneath it the character's problematic motivation in the Games. Leaving her desolate, gray District 12 behind, where she is a kind of orphan to a deceased father and a mother whose emotional absence after her father's death has rendered her less than capable of being the skillful healer she once was, Katniss willfully places herself in harm's way to save the life of her sister, Prim. Katniss undergoes all that she does because she wants to get home. No, she *needs* to get home; her family depends upon her for their survival. Is she a bad ass? Yep. Does she *eventually* start a revolution to take down the Capitol's cruel regime and offer hope to the oppressed occupants of the remaining districts of Panem? Yep. Does she do whatever it takes to get home including marketing herself as a woman warrior and having a physically intimate relationship on camera with a man she doesn't have real feelings for so that she can entertain those in control and win the hearts and sympathies of her onlookers to provide entertainment that also exploits the realities of children in life or death situations at the hands of their overtly corrupt government? Yep. Wait, what?

For me, the problem with continuing to perpetuate the role model status of female heroines who do great and grand and wonderful things but do so through motivations that insist they are still *most* necessary in the domestic sphere is an internalizing of a symbiotic relationship between women and home that is less than empowering for young girls than we pretend for them to be. Katniss's place in our cultural memory, like Dorothy's, is the product of a society that *wants* to show girls they can also be heroes and do great things and build great nations. But her reality in the work is outweighed by the selfish memetics of the Text, one that sees what it wants instead of what is written. And

for that, our children will pay. Because when we attach words like “feminist” and “brave” and “independent” and “role model” to characters who find their central motivations within their role of the family unit, we invalidate the work of those terms in the eyes of girls for whom that dream is not a welcomed one. By all means, we should read these works and continue these traditions and tell our children the good things we want them to learn from these tales. At the same time, we should make sure that what we’re reading is what’s really there. The problems a gap between the two might create are too great a risk to bear. I volunteer *The Wizard* as tribute. Let’s read them all again.

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