

A Textual Analysis of Songs from *Wicked*

by

Delanie McDonald

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by Delanie McDonald

APPROVED:

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Dr. Tricia M. Farwell, Professor  
Journalism & Strategic Media

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Dr. Philip E. Phillips, Associate Dean  
Honors College

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## Abstract

By studying the history of Broadway, feminism in theatre, and the musical *Wicked*, this thesis analyzes how the lead female characters in *Wicked* are represented through a critical analysis of the language and themes in three songs from *Wicked*. The musical has become one of the most highly attended Broadway shows as fans around the world gather to see the famous Witches of Oz. The songs analyzed show the growth of these characters as they recognize the importance of empowerment and the impact they had on each other's lives. Although *Wicked* is a progressive musical, its characters sometimes exhibited characteristics that go against the themes of fourth-wave feminism in addition to the many themes represented in the songs. This thesis nevertheless shows the importance of feminism and how, if we let them, the people around us can change our lives for good.

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## Introduction

*Wicked: The Untold Stories of the Witches of Oz* depicts the story of Glinda (known in the beginning of the musical as Galinda) the Good Witch and Elphaba the Wicked Witch of the West and retells *The Wizard of Oz* from the perspective of the two witches. Throughout the musical, Glinda and Elphaba's strong personalities often lead them to struggle with their friendship, love interests, and outlook on certain situations. Although initial theatrical reviews described the show as "overproduced and overblown," the musical has become the second highest-grossing show in Broadway history and has grossed over \$1 billion (McPhee, 2017).

Musicals have grown increasingly popular and more accessible over the past few years due to the recent innovation of broadcasting live performances such as *The Sound of Music Live!* (Tepper, 2018). Another breakthrough allowing musicals to become a part of pop culture was the production of *Hamilton*. Ever since Lin-Manuel Miranda published *Hamilton* in 2015, social media has allowed the knowledge and support of modern theatre to rapidly expand and become more widely accepted among members of society (Tepper, 2018). These developments brought more attention to theatre and helped more people discover and enjoy previously produced musicals such as *Wicked*. In the past few years, it also became more socially acceptable and popular for millennials to attend live theatre performances (Koenning, 2016). In addition to attending the shows, social media was a strong medium that young adults utilized to spread their love and support for theatre—particularly for *Wicked* and the strong female characters who have inspired them in 2018 during *Wicked*'s fifteenth anniversary (Fitzpatrick, 2018).

## History of Broadway Musicals

In 1750, Thomas Keen and Walter Murray founded the first theatre company slightly east of Broadway on Nassau Street in New York City (Kenrick, 2005). Called the Theatre on Nassau Street, the structure held 280 seats and was home to the first documented performance of a musical in New York City—John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* (Bruce, 2019). Several other companies moved from the colonies to be closer to Broadway before all entertainment was temporarily suspended during the Revolutionary War after several colonies placed a ban on going to or participating in public performances (Kenrick, 2008). By 1798, New York’s citizens had established themselves as avid theatre goers and the city’s first world-class performance space was built (Kenrick, 2005). The Park Theatre had the ability to accommodate 2,000 patrons and had various performances such as operas, circus acts, drama, and dance (Kenrick, 2005). Before, the smaller theatres were filled with upper class citizens who were willing to pay the ticket price; however, because of the size of Park Theatre, a large array of classes could attend in different sections which allowed more of the “common men” to attend the performances (Kenrick, 2008).

In the early 1900s, many theatres began arriving near Times Square, and over the next 30 years, the junction of Broadway and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue became home to the majority of theatres in New York City (Bordnam & Norton, 2010). It was also during this time the modern version of the musical was created by adding original music and dance numbers to better convey the storyline (Snyder, 1995). Over the next several years, many improvements—such as improved transportation and street lights—allowed the theatre scene to grow into a more respectable and widely enjoyed activity (Kenrick, 2005).

During World War I and World War II, the theatre became a way to address the political turmoil happening around the world and the lack of American aid sent to their allies (Porter, 1997). During World War II, Rodgers and Hammerstein began working together and went on to create some of the most popular musicals in history including: *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), *South Pacific* (1949), and *The Sound of Music* (1959) (Porter, 1997). *South Pacific* focused on the relationships between Americans and Asians and analyzed racial prejudice in a post-World War II world (Beidler, 1993). In addition to *South Pacific* bringing attention to the racism that continued after World War II, *The Sound of Music* depicted an Austrian family whose father morally opposed Nazism and led his family to escape the regime and flee to Switzerland (Hirsch, 2018). During these tumultuous times, Rodgers and Hammerstein used their musicals to bring attention to important themes such as war, international politics, fascism, and the triumphant power of love over hate (Porter, 1997).

Although theatre suffered low attendance and support from the 1960s to the 1990s, Broadway theatre has since grown into one of the biggest tourist attractions in New York City (Grant, 2004). During the 2018-2019 season, Broadway performances had an attendance of 14,768,254 people, 72 shows to choose from, an average ticket price of \$124, and an overall gross profit of \$1.8 billion (Paulson, 2019). The 2018–2019 year was the best attended and highest grossing year in Broadway history—due in part to live broadcast shows and popular hits like *Hamilton*—and had a higher attendance than all New York and New Jersey professional sports teams combined (The Broadway League, 2019). The president of the Broadway League stated, “The trend is clear, Broadway has never been more appealing to so many different people ranging from kids to grandparents

and everyone in between. This substantial growth in attendance clearly reflects the large variety of offerings including long running shows, new hit productions and stories relevant to our society today” (The Broadway League, 2019). This growing popularity of Broadway musicals has allowed attending musicals to become more widely accepted in society and has also allowed popular shows like *Wicked* to build a strong fanbase around the world.

### **History of *Wicked: The Untold Stories of the Witches of Oz***

*Wicked: The Untold Stories of the Witches of Oz* initially opened in San Francisco on March 28, 2003, as a tryout in an attempt to measure the musical’s success and revise it before it debuted on Broadway (Cote, Marcus, & Schwartz, 2005). After receiving feedback from the critics, Stephen Schwartz, the composer and lyricist, and Winnie Holzman, the musical book’s author, spent months editing and revising the musical before its opening on Broadway that October (Buckley, 2004). Since its Broadway debut in October 2003, the show has held more than 6,200 performances at the Gershwin Theatre on Broadway, been performed in over 100 cities and 15 countries, and gained over \$4.5 billion in global sales (Gans, 2018).

The play is based on the novel by Gregory Maguire *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* published in 1995. Although the novel provided the foundation for the musical, many of the main characters and plot elements changed when the final musical debuted on Broadway. Maguire wrote the novel for a mature audience and included adult themes such as sexual assault and explicit brutality (Maguire, 1996). Holzman based the musical more on the main characters and plot and did not follow the

details written in the novel. In the novel, Maguire takes a commonly disliked antagonist (the Wicked Witch of the West) and tells the story from her point of view (Buckley, 2004). The musical examines the origin of Glinda the Good Witch and Elphaba the Wicked Witch of the West from both of the witches' points of view and examines what it really means to be "wicked." Instead of using the approach Maguire's novel took, Holzman frames Elphaba as an innocent young adult standing up for what she believes in despite the unaccepting society she lives in (Boyd, 2010). Throughout the musical, the audience is led to examine how both good and bad intentions can result in bad results.

### **Plot of *Wicked***

In Act I, *Wicked* opens to a crowd of excited Ozians celebrating the recent death of the Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba, and the arrival of Glinda the Good Witch. There is a flashback to the night Elphaba's mother conceives her and has an affair with a man who gives her a green elixir afterwards. The reason Glinda arrives is to thank Dorothy Gale for her part in restoring peace to the land. While there, a munchkin asks Glinda if she knew Elphaba in college, and Glinda admits that she and Elphaba were roommates at Shiz University. Although Elphaba arrives at Shiz University with her sister Nessarose, who uses a wheelchair, the headmistress separates the sisters, so she can take special care of Nessarose, and forces Elphaba to room with Glinda (known at the time as Galinda). This forces Elphaba to live with Glinda since they were the only girls who did not have an assigned roommate. Although Glinda and Elphaba are both very upset about this rooming assignment, Elphaba's anger over this results in an explosion

causing Headmistress Madame Morrible to realize Elphaba has special powers and that she should be taught sorcery.

Elphaba's newfound attention continues to drive her away from her roommate and causes them to develop a strong loathing for each other. When a new boy (Fiyero) arrives at school, Glinda looks for ways to publicly humiliate Elphaba to gain Fiyero's attention. However, after Elphaba makes a deal for Glinda to receive sorcery lessons in exchange for Glinda finding a date for her sister, Glinda treats Elphaba kindly and decides to give her a makeover. The two girls bond, and Elphaba has a pivotal moment when she realizes no matter how much she loves Fiyero, she will never be the type of girl she thinks he deserves.

Madame Morrible takes Elphaba to visit the Wizard where Elphaba discovers he is plotting to destroy the animal's ability to speak. While there, Elphaba also realizes that the Wizard has no real powers. Although Madame Morrible and the Wizard try to trick Elphaba into using her powers to help them stop the animals from speaking, Elphaba refuses to help the Wizard and runs away, resulting in Madame Morrible spreading the rumor that Elphaba is a wicked witch. In this climactic moment, Elphaba discovers her true worth and realizes that no one can have power over her unless she allows them.

During Act II, the rumors grow stronger about Elphaba being a wicked witch, and Fiyero accepts a position as captain of the guard in an effort to find her. During a panic, someone in the crowd shouts that pure water will melt her. When Elphaba is almost caught in the Wizard's palace, Fiyero helps her escape and goes away with her. Glinda finally suggests to Madame Morrible and the Wizard that they should use Nessarose as bait to capture Elphaba. Glinda and Elphaba meet again at a house with a girl named

Dorothy inside that has crushed Nessarose. Glinda and Elphaba argue over Fiyero and after Elphaba fails to keep him from being taken away, she decides from that point on she will embrace the evil rumors people have spread about her and be a “wicked” person. Grieving her sister’s death, Elphaba goes to find Dorothy and get back the slippers Dorothy took from Nessarose. Glinda follows Elphaba to warn her that a mob is forming to attack her and sees Elphaba receive a letter that Fiyero is dead.

Shocked by this news, Elphaba and Glinda apologize to each other and agree that they both made mistakes throughout their friendship. After they say goodbye, a mob arrives and throws a bucket of water on Elphaba where she seems to melt into the ground. Glinda discovers the Wizard was Elphaba’s father and demands he leave the Land of Oz and never return. Everyone assumes Fiyero is dead, but he returns to the spot Elphaba “melted” and together they leave Oz—the entire event having been planned to give the two of them a way of escape.

### **Feminism in Theatre**

Throughout history, theatre has been dominated by male writers and producers. Since the 1970s, women have endeavored to bring the more of the issues and stories of women to light through feminist theatre (Wolf, 2011). Feminism in theatre has allowed more women to share their point of view as well as allowed the audience and writers to analyze how many shows do not accurately portray women and instead merely restrict them to their roles as a supporting character (Kreie, 2019). Since the 1970s when feminism became more popular in theatre, women have had the chance to play more than the stereotypical, passive roles usually written for them. Musicals such as *Company*

(1970), *The Wiz* (1975), and *A Chorus Line* (1975) allowed women to have more powerful roles throughout the show instead of merely being in a relationship with a man (Wolf, 2011). *The Wiz* changed history with its all-African American cast and female star that referenced the strong female African Americans leading their communities in the 1970s (Wolf, 2011). Characters and stories that had typically been ignored were now given the opportunity to be celebrated and enjoyed by diverse cultures around the world (Wolf, 2011).

While in the past women were seen as objects to be attained, feminism in theatres gave them the opportunity to be strong, dynamic characters and to challenge the political systems that have caused their oppression (Wolf, 2011). With the growing audience size and popularity of musicals, it has also become increasingly important to have inclusive representation and diversity of actresses and actors on stage. Not only does feminism advocate for female representation, it also champions the representation of all races, which not only affects how we see other races, but also affects how other races see themselves (Yuen, 2019). Feminism in theatre promotes female characters that are not portrayed as accessories to the main male characters merely to serve their interests but instead represent their own strengths and abilities.

For the majority of its history, male writers have dominated musical theatre—implying the lack of female representation could be due to the lack of female writers and producers (Coleman and Sebesta, 2008). In the West End (an influential area of theatres in London), male musical writers outnumber female musical writers nine to one, and, without the female perspective and contributions, half the population is continually misrepresented and presented from the viewpoint of a man (Acers, 2019). Playwrights

such as Cathy Churchill helped redefine feminist theatre with her show *Top Girls* about what it means to be a successful woman, how successful women are viewed in society, and if it is possible to have a healthy family and thriving career at the same time (Brantley, 2008). Not only are shows with progressive female representation more relatable to women, the presentation of these issues and characters in modern musicals can help educate audiences on the influence and capabilities women have (Acers, 2019). More broadly than its impact on theatre, the four waves of feminism have drastically increased the opportunities women have through its focus on women's rights, gender discrimination, and fighting the inequalities in women's daily lives.

### **Theoretical Framework: Fourth Wave Feminism**

Throughout history, feminist movements have been divided into waves categorized by what each movement worked to achieve for women. In the 19th century, the first wave of feminism emerged and focused on legal rights such as a woman's right to own property, the right to gain custody of her children in the case of divorce, and the right to vote (Freedman, 2002). The second wave arose during the 1960s and focused on issues including workplace discrimination and women's reproductive rights (Freedman, 2002). The 1990s brought the third wave of feminism which emphasized the importance of diversity and inclusion of all those who faced discrimination not just white women (Brunnell, 2008). While earlier waves of feminism fought for suffrage, equality, and diversity, fourth-wave feminism addresses a myriad of injustices such as lack of representation, harassment, and human rights (Abrahams, 2017).

Fourth-wave feminism gained prominence since 2010 due to the inauguration of President Donald Trump and the creation of a webpage by Laura Bates called *Everyday Sexism* (Clarke, 2019). Many women were especially outraged over a man being elected to the highest public office in the United States of America after publicly bragging about touching women inappropriately and the “hypermasculinity” he portrayed while on the campaign trail (Abrahams, 2017). With the publication of the *Everyday Sexism* webpage, women found a safe place to tell others about the daily discrimination they face, which sparked another flood of information about how established the everyday sexism they faced had become in their lives at home and in the workplace (Clarke, 2019). These events empowered women to speak up both online and in-person through women’s marches and rallies.

Fourth-wave feminism advocates for women and has a call to action for others to advocate for underrepresented people. Through its internet campaign, women have the ability to spread information quickly and publicly hold responsible those in positions of authority who have the power to address the discrimination issues they are facing (Clarke, 2019). There is a particular emphasis through this wave for activism on social media, allowing a younger, more diverse generation the opportunity to make their voices heard (Zimmerman, 2017). Throughout the history of feminism, feminists strongly advocate for white, cisgender, heterosexual females, but there is a strong urge in the more recent waves of feminism to focus more on the many other diverse women who are underrepresented (Townsend-Bell, 2012). Fourth-wave feminism not only calls for more equality for women but also focuses on the framework of power and how it impacts underrepresented portions of society. This wave of feminism fights for more

representation in politics and business and contends that the more perspectives represented the better society will be (Munro, 2013). Fourth-wave feminism brings attention to the underrepresented women in the world, but, beyond that, it also highlights the strong women in fictional works by looking for characters who are not sexualized or lowered to sidekicks, but who are instead more powerful and diverse in their roles (Frankel, 2018). The musical *Wicked* highlights two strong female characters and emphasizes the diversity of their roles through the lyrics and themes present in their songs.

## **Methodology**

This thesis textually analyzes three songs from the musical *Wicked*. The lyrics for the songs analyzed were accessed using a personally owned songbook (Schwartz, 2003). The songs analyzed were “The Wizard and I” sung by Elphaba, “Popular” sung by Glinda, and “For Good” sung by Glinda and Elphaba at the end of the show. By analyzing the lyrics, this thesis describes the themes that fourth-wave feminism identifies in women and how these themes are presented to society. The songs were first textually analyzed for the meaning of the lyrics in relation to the characters themselves. Using the themes of fourth-wave feminism, the songs were then analyzed for the feminist themes represented in the lyrics. These songs were chosen because the two solos both describe each of the strong female characters very well and how they correlate their worth as a person to their outward appearance and the opinions other people have of them. The duet is a pivotal moment in which the two friends realize empowering each other and recognizing the strong impact they have had in each other’s life is what really matters.

Two of the main characters this thesis analyzed through their songs were Glinda and Elphaba. Glinda is a beautiful, vivacious blonde who is the most popular girl in school. She is incredibly jealous of Elphaba when she realizes she has magical powers and only begins to tolerate her after Elphaba persuades her teacher to let Glinda join her sorcery class. Throughout the play, she appears to society as the embodiment of happiness and perfection when inside she is distraught over losing her best friend and accepting that Fiyero does not love her.

Elphaba has striking emerald green skin, and people consider her an outcast from the moment she arrives at Shiz University. She has spent her entire life believing something is wrong with her because she can do magic spells and does not realize she has a gift. She discovers she must fight for what is right because no one else understands the evil things the Wizard is trying to do. Although known as the horrible Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba is the one who fights for good and attains a happy ending.

### **Thesis Statement**

Through the framework of fourth-wave feminism, this thesis explores the portrayal of the lead female characters through their song lyrics in the musical *Wicked*. This wave of feminism encourages diversity, inclusion, representation, and powerful female leaders which are exemplified in *Wicked*. By using this theory, this thesis analyzes how these characters are represented specifically through a critical analysis of the language and themes in three songs from the musical *Wicked*—“The Wizard and I,” “Popular,” and “For Good.” By analyzing the lyrics these main female characters sing,

this thesis documents the representation of female empowerment and the discursive elements in the songs.

### Textual Analysis of “The Wizard and I”

“The Wizard and I” is the third song performed in the musical *Wicked* and is the first solo sung by Elphaba. In this song, Elphaba realizes she does not have to hide her powers and how life-changing it can be to have someone acknowledge the powers she has instead of just focusing on who she is on the outside. As she sings, the audience sees how being defined by her emerald skin has impacted Elphaba and caused people to judge her throughout her life.

The song occurs soon after Elphaba’s arrival to Shiz University and the tumultuous moment she learns of her new rooming assignment with Glinda. Glinda and Elphaba are both upset when hearing this news, but Elphaba’s reaction causes an explosion—resulting in the moment when Madame Morrible realizes Elphaba has magical powers. Initially, Madame Morrible tells the students she will not be teaching any sorcery classes this semester, but this display of power compels Madame Morrible to tell Elphaba in front of the other students that she will take her on as her sole pupil. This scene leads into the song “The Wizard and I” where Madame Morrible begins speaking and then singing to Elphaba,

(Spoken) Oh, Miss Elphaba:

(Sung) Many years I have waited for a gift like yours to appear

Why I predict the Wizard could make you his

Magic grand vizier! My dear, my dear

I’ll write at once to the Wizard tell him of you in advance

With a talent like yours, dear, there is a defin-ish chance

If you work as you should, you’ll be making good: (See Appendix A)

Elphaba is shocked to hear this and sings:

Did that really just happen? Have I actually understood?

This weird quirk I've tried to suppress or hide

Is a talent that could help me meet the Wizard

If I make good, so I'll make good: (See Appendix A)

When Madame Morrible sings those words, it is the first instance in the musical that Elphaba receives a positive reaction to her powers, and she cannot believe the “weird quirk” she has tried to conceal from the world her entire life could actually assist her in gaining the recognition and the cure for her green skin that she so desperately longs for.

Although Madame Morrible gives her some of the recognition and praise she craves, she also says “if you work as you should, you'll be making good,” which implies that Elphaba is not good enough as she is and will need to work to gain the Wizard's attention and prove she is enough. Elphaba accepts this and seems to agree that if she uses this talent and “makes good” she will finally be worthy enough to meet the Wizard. Throughout the musical, “good” is used as the perception of someone achieving what they want, but true goodness is found when the characters are true to themselves. In “The Wizard and I,” Elphaba is told to make “good” but later will realize that she did not need to change herself to become the “goodness” other people wanted from her.

Elphaba continues singing about how excited she is to meet the Wizard and how much the recognition will mean to her after being scorned and looked down on by her father and sister all her life. As soon as she arrives at school, the other students are scared of her due to her bright green skin and begin making fun of her. Elphaba spent her life

being mocked by others because of her skin, but she believes this can all end as soon as she is with the Wizard. This is seen when Elphaba sings the lyrics:

And with all his Wizard wisdom by my looks he won't be blinded  
Do you think the Wizard is dumb? Or like munchkins so small-minded?  
No! He'll say to me I see who you truly are—a girl on whom I can rely!  
(See Appendix A)

These lyrics refer to the small town where Elphaba grew up, and the discrimination she faced there due to small-minded people. To Elphaba, the Wizard and his wisdom symbolize inclusion and the opportunity to be valued for the good things she wants to accomplish instead of how the ignorant munchkins view her. Elphaba wants to defend others who are discriminated against and help them find a place of acceptance in the world. This is seen throughout the musical as she tries to defend the talking animals and free the flying monkeys. She longs to show someone this part of her and prove that although she seems different and ugly on the outside she wants to do good things for others. She wants to show she has intelligent ideas instead of merely being disregarded due to her skin color. She believes when she meets the Wizard and receives the position of power and acceptance Madame Morrible thinks she can attain it will solve all the problems she has. Not only will her father and sister accept her, but the Wizard's acceptance of her will cause the entire population of Oz to love her—something she has never received from her father or sister. Furthermore, she will better understand who she is as a person (where her powers and green skin came from) and what her powers mean in addition to being accepted on the outside. Elphaba expresses no hope beyond this one

dream and believes she cannot be successful in any other way without the Wizard's approval.

At the end of "The Wizard and I," Elphaba has a vision that prophesies many of the events that occur later in the musical. In her vision, she sees all of Oz celebrating her and assumes this will be a celebration of their love for her and the Wizard. Instead, the Ozians will celebrate her, but it will be in response to the news that she is dead. She believes she will be revered as a hero in Oz instead of the wicked witch the Ozians will believe her to be. Elphaba believes once she is celebrated and has this recognition she will long for nothing else in her life and will have finally achieved her dreams.

And so it will be for the rest of my life

And I'll want nothing else till I die

Held in such high esteem when people see me they will scream

For half of Oz's greatest team: the Wizard and I! (See Appendix A)

Elphaba's vision does come true, but not in the ways she imagined it would. People will scream in terror when they see her and, although she will be half of a great team, it will not be with the Wizard. It will be as part of the greatest pair of witches Oz has ever seen: Glinda the Good Witch and the Wicked Witch of the West.

### **Feminist Themes in “The Wizard and I”**

“The Wizard and I” is the first time in the musical that Elphaba realizes the curse she has tried to hide all her life could actually empower her and give her the opportunity to succeed in life. When Madame Morrible tells Elphaba she could be the Wizard’s “Magic Grand Vizier,” she implies that Elphaba can receive a high position of power in the land of Oz. The grand vizier serves at the right hand of the Wizard over all the other magic viziers in Oz (Laird, 2011). One of the leadership positions fourth-wave feminism fights for is more representation of women in politics (Munro, 2013). By learning from Madame Morrible and gaining acceptance from the Wizard, Elphaba has the chance to become a political leader in Oz.

Throughout the musical, Elphaba is rejected as an acceptable figure in society because of her green skin. In “The Wizard and I,” Elphaba sings in detail about how she feels about having green skin and how it has caused her family to dislike her and strangers to fear her. She has spent her entire life being shamed by her sister and hearing her father tell her he is not proud of her. The citizens of Oz mock her and reject her from their social gatherings because she does not fit in with them. Because of this, Elphaba faces discrimination not only for having strange powers or being a woman, but also because she has green skin. This overlapping of discrimination is a theory commonly associated with fourth-wave feminism—intersectionality (Coleman, 2019). Not only do women face discrimination because of their gender, but they can also face overlapping discrimination due to their race, class, wealth, education level, culture and age (Coleman, 2019). In *Wicked*, Elphaba faces discrimination not just in one area but in several. Her

uncommon skin color and strange powers combine into a specific form of discrimination the Ozians have towards her.

For the duration of the song, Elphaba repeats how important it is for her to be accepted by the Wizard. Although Elphaba wants the Wizard to change her skin so she will not be green anymore, it is more important to her that she be recognized for who she is inside instead of constantly being judged for her outward appearance. Not only does she long for his inward approval, she also believes his recognition can cause the citizens of Oz to love her and will result in her being an accepted member of society. Elphaba seems to believe that mere association with a powerful person like the Wizard is enough to prove her worth to the public. According to the themes in “The Wizard and I,” being associated with another person with a good reputation adds value to who you are as a person. Elphaba believes being associated with a powerful leader such as the Wizard will add worth to her status as a human being. This is obvious in the lyrics:

Once I’m with the Wizard my whole life will change

‘Cause once you’re with the Wizard no one thinks you’re strange

(See Appendix A)

Elphaba sees the Wizard as a powerful figure whom she wants to be like. He has the ability to give her freedom from the discrimination she faces—a powerful force that could make her more acceptable in the eyes of society, so she would no longer be viewed as a lesser citizen. By giving Elphaba a position in politics, it would show the citizens of Oz that she should be respected even though she was different from the rest of them. Although the Wizard himself does not represent female freedom, he represents the ability to give a female the chance to be an equal in society—what feminism has fought

for since it began. In reality, the Wizard juxtaposes who Elphaba is in many ways. The Wizard is an older, powerful white man who is afraid to move forward and accept progression. In contrast, Elphaba is a young, green girl who is unsure of her powers but fearless when defending other outcasts like herself and bravely fighting for the rights of those whom society wants to abolish. These characteristics personify fourth wave feminism and its cause to give a voice to the powerless and defend those who cannot speak for themselves.

Elphaba struggles to conform to what a patriarchal society says is “good” because of her inner battle with being told to “make good” and the rest of society telling her she is wicked and evil. She grew up being told by her father to serve as a helper to her differently-abled sister Nessarose and, although she tries desperately to contain her powers and make them both proud of her, her father repeatedly tells her he is not proud of her and she should do a better job. Elphaba believes if she can gain the Wizard’s approval she will finally prove she is worthy of her family’s love. No matter how hard Elphaba worked to achieve her goals, her family and society as a whole never believed she was “good.” To most of society, being “good” is an admirable quality and leads to respect among other people. Throughout the musical, Elphaba discovers that “good” is not always what society thinks it should be. For Elphaba, being “good” meant giving up the desire to be admired and accepted by society. Elphaba’s true “goodness” came when she accepted who she was and stopped trying to change herself to appease others.

## Textual Analysis of “Popular”

The song “Popular” is the first solo sung by Glinda and captures her materialistic, naive view of life. Glinda is very spoiled and manipulates others into getting what she wants. Earlier in the musical, she manipulates Boq, another student at Shiz University, into going to a dance with Elphaba’s sister Nessarose so Glinda can go to the dance with Fiyero. Because Glinda told Boq to take Nessarose to the dance, Elphaba convinced Madame Morrible to let Glinda take sorcery lessons. Glinda sees that Elphaba is not as horrible as everyone says and feels obligated to give Elphaba a makeover in a misguided attempt to help her become more socially acceptable.

In “Popular,” Glinda believes one’s value as a person is directly determined by how you are viewed within society. Glinda has spent her entire life getting her way and using her popularity to her advantage when influencing other people, so she can attain what she wants in life. She has always been very traditionally beautiful and has learned throughout her life how to use this to her advantage as well. She uses her experience of being popular to tell Elphaba how to look and act in ways that will cause people to be attracted to her.

In the beginning of the song Glinda says,

Elphie—now that we’re friends I’ve decided to

Make you my new project.

(Elphaba) You really don’t have to do that

(Glinda) I know. That’s what makes me so nice! (See Appendix B)

To Glinda, changing people was her way of fixing them to be more acceptable by society. This implies Glinda recognizes Elphaba is someone who is not accepted by society, which causes Glinda to view Elphaba as more of a project and not a person. Glinda sees Elphaba as a thing she can fix, which dehumanizes her and reinforces Glinda's view of herself in relation to society. Glinda sees herself as part of the whole rather than apart from it as Elphaba is. Instead of using Elphaba to further Glinda's own personal gain, Glinda claims condescending down to Elphaba's low level in society is what makes Glinda so nice to her. Although Glinda's friends touted her as a caring martyr for having to live with Elphaba and being nice to her, Glinda's decision to give Elphaba a makeover was rooted in the obligation she felt towards Elphaba because she had convinced Madame Morrible to teach Glinda sorcery.

For Glinda, niceness is tied to superficiality and expectations, which is seen throughout the song "Popular." Instead of being "good" towards other people because it is the right thing to do, Glinda views herself as someone who is more "fortunate" than everyone else. This is seen in the lyrics Glinda sings,

Whenever I see someone less fortunate than I,

And let's face it, who isn't less fortunate than I? (See Appendix B)

Glinda considers herself to be "good" simply because she is fortunate enough to be well-liked, popular, and beautiful. It is not a true self-expression of goodness that Glinda is having. Because Glinda has never faced hardships or rejection, she has a naive outlook as a university student that will later change as she experiences life with Elphaba and grows to understand what true goodness is.

In this song, Glinda represents what the traditional woman is expected to be. She wears sparkly dresses and matching high-heeled shoes in light colors—traditionally both very feminine attributes—and has soft golden hair typically adorned with flowers or a crown. Glinda is very beautiful, and her naivety leads her to believe that even if a person is not beautiful, they can become popular if she “fixes” them and teaches them other ways to appear attractive to the citizens of Oz. Because of this, Glinda tells Elphaba all the ways she thinks she can become more acceptable by doing what Glinda does. Glinda says she will show Elphaba,

The proper ploys when you talk to boys  
Little ways to flirt and flounce I’ll show you what shoes to wear  
How to fix your hair. Everything that really counts to be popular.

(See Appendix B)

It is stereotypical for soft, beautiful things to represent goodness and for harsh, ugly things to represent evil (Cothey, 2013). In contrast to Glinda’s sparkly dress in this scene, Elphaba wears simple dark clothing with no accessories and plain brown boots. She is opinionated and strong and represents characteristics society typically does not desire in a woman or view as beautiful. In *Wicked*, this is emphasized by the contrast of Elphaba and Glinda’s characters and the line, “when I see depressing creatures with unprepossessing features,” where Glinda reminds Elphaba how important it is to be considered beautiful in Oz. According to Glinda, if you cannot be beautiful then you have to attain popularity to achieve anything. Elphaba longs to be powerful but at this point in the musical the girls are both still young and have not yet discovered the true meaning of good and evil and how that will lead them to powerful positions in society. At Shiz

University, the most powerful social status you can maintain in this setting is being popular.

Throughout the musical, Holzman and Schwartz want the audience to realize that the assumptions we know about life are not always correct (Laird, 2011). They use “Popular” to show the audience that Glinda is obsessed with how people view her and making sure they love what they see. By framing Glinda in this way, Holzman and Schwartz establish who Glinda is in this song and show the growth her character experiences from “Popular” to the end of the musical. Although Glinda and Elphaba began as arch nemeses, this song shows that the two girls officially bond and form a friendship.

## **Feminist Themes in “Popular”**

Throughout the musical, Elphaba is viewed as an outcast whom society does not value, and Glinda represents everything society traditionally wants in a woman. Fourth-wave feminism recognizes that the former waves of feminism (especially the first and second wave) were focused more on the traditional white women advancing in society and did not advocate for women with different skin color or abilities different than themselves. In “Popular,” the writers not only use Glinda’s character as a representation of the outdated, traditional woman, but also as an example to the audience about how important it is to be all the things Glinda was not: progressive, someone who recognizes the worth in others, and speaks up for them when you possess privileges they do not have. They portray Glinda as silly and naive to emphasize how irrational it is to behave that way towards other women.

“Popular” recognizes how much of the value placed on these characters is related to their looks. This is a very gendered approach to the characters and it is unlikely the same approach would be taken if the characters were male. Some of the themes in “Popular” show how important Glinda thinks it is to attain male attention and impress people with the clothes the girls wear which goes against the themes of fourth wave feminism. Glinda believes Elphaba needs to appear attractive to the opposite sex and the nuances of beauty are things other girls will notice and help her gain acceptance.

Elphaba is uncertain if Glinda’s makeover idea is necessary and does not think changing her hair or the way she carries herself will have much of an effect on how society perceives her. However, Elphaba does see that Glinda’s beauty and self-

confidence contributes to why she is so popular among her peers. Elphaba faces the pressures from society to believe that changing oneself to become traditionally beautiful is a good thing. Not only is Elphaba being encouraged to change herself, but she is also pressured not to be offended when someone says she needs to change something about herself to become more popular.

Glinda repeatedly tells Elphaba that intelligence is not important and reminds her that the people Elphaba thinks were powerful actually became powerful simply because they were very popular and could charm a group of people—also a belief that in part inspired fourth-wave feminism. Glinda sings in “Popular,”

Celebrated heads of state or specially great communicators

Did they have brains or knowledge? Don't make me laugh!

They were popular! Please - it's all about popular! (See Appendix B)

This portion of *Wicked* shows the political climate in the United States at the time *Wicked* was written (Wolf, 2011). At this time in California, Arnold Schwarzenegger became the state's governor after having a successful career as a movie star. Events such as this helped normalize celebrities becoming involved in politics, which resulted in one of the biggest influences that inspired fourth-wave feminism—Donald Trump's election. Ten years after this event, Donald Trump became the President of the United States of America after a career on television and in the business world. Donald Trump's reputation of disrespecting women caused women to march in the streets after his election to protest him becoming president. These women believed he did not have “brains or knowledge” to hold the highest office in the United States and were shocked to see him elected after the derogatory remarks he made about women throughout his career

and presidential campaign (Abrahams, 2017). According to “Popular,” political figures did not have intellect or any other qualities that made them eligible for public office. Their popularity is what made them acceptable for the position. Fourth-wave feminism advocates for political leaders that better represent the diverse citizens of countries instead of electing representatives on the basis of being recognizable or popular for their past achievements.

“Popular” represents the way women are typically viewed by society and how Glinda’s characteristics represent several of the traditional characteristics expected from women. This song shows how a woman’s value is often equated to their looks and how society views them instead of who they are as human beings. Fourth-wave feminism fights to change this perception of women and bring to light their accomplishments and intelligence instead of merely who they are on the outside. Although this song does represent some of the feminist themes through the political leadership aspect that helped inspire fourth-wave feminism, it serves as more of a juxtaposition of Glinda’s character in contrast to fourth-wave feminism by emphasizing how traditional Glinda’s character is at this point in the musical.

## Textual Analysis of “For Good”

“For Good” is the last song in the musical before the show’s finale and is a reconciliation of the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda. This song portrays how they have both matured as women and how they understand the deeper meaning of what it means to be “good” and “evil.” Instead of flaunting their “goodness” or embracing their “wickedness,” Glinda and Elphaba drop the facade and share an authentic moment that highlights the goodness inside both these women and the understanding they have of each other. The two women have been through turmoil and tragedy, but, through this song, they acknowledge the impact they have had on the other’s lives and how they have been changed because of each other.

Elphaba begins “For Good” by singing to Glinda:

I’m limited. Just look at me I’m limited

And just look at you, you can do all I couldn’t do—

Glinda, now it’s up to you (See Appendix C)

This is set to the same melody and refers to “The Wizard and I” when Elphaba sings “Unlimited! My future is unlimited.” Elphaba tried to achieve her dreams and “make good” as Madame Morrible told her to do, but every good thing she tried to do was twisted into something evil. Elphaba wanted to believe her future was unlimited but realized that society would never be able to look past her differences and see the good inside of her. She understands that Glinda is beautiful, popular, and more socially acceptable, and that she has the opportunities to do all the things Elphaba never had the privilege to do. Elphaba tells Glinda that she is the only friend she has ever had, and

Glinda responds that she has had so many friends—but Elphaba is the only one who truly mattered.

Elphaba longed to have the power to help others and wanted to be loved for her part in changing society. Glinda dreamed of being popular and living happily ever after with Fiyero. Elphaba does not have the chance to be the powerful political figure she dreamed of but instead ends up living an unexpected happily ever after with Fiyero. Although not what she imagined for herself, Glinda becomes the powerful leader of Oz and the musical ends with her loved by the citizens of Oz but very unhappy and alone.

Elphaba and Glinda both suffered great tragedies because of knowing each other. Elphaba's sister Nessarose died under a flying house after Glinda suggested Madame Morrible and the Wizard use Nessarose to lure Elphaba out of hiding. Glinda loses Fiyero and has to pretend to be happy because he left her for Elphaba. In spite of their heartache, in "For Good" they understand that although it was not always in "good" ways, they have both been permanently changed by the impact the other had on their life. This is evident in the lyrics Elphaba sings to Glinda,

It well may be that we will never meet again  
In this lifetime so let me say before we part  
So much of me is made of what I learned from you  
You'll be with me like a handprint on my heart (See Appendix C)

Glinda also acknowledges the impact Elphaba has had on her life and sings,

I know I'm who I am today because I knew you...  
Like a comet pulled from orbit as it passes a sun  
Like a stream that meets a boulder halfway through the wood

Who can say if I've been changed for the better?

But because I knew you, I have been changed for good. (See Appendix C)

These lyrics show how much these women influenced each other and how they both finally accept each other for who they really are without changing to make the other one happy. They not only accept each other but also go on to accept blame for the hurtful things they were responsible for and apologize for how those things impacted the other person. This forgiveness and acceptance was what both of the girls wanted most throughout the musical.

Elphaba may not have altered society for the “better” or achieved the fame and power she thought she would, but she did change society for good. Elphaba and Glinda recognize the other’s choices as “good” without judgment, acknowledging the subjectivity of their decisions, and forgiving each other despite the consequences.

Throughout the musical, the two women search for acceptance and love from society and the people around them, but in “For Good,” they realize that accepting each other for who they truly were is what really mattered all along.

## Feminist Themes in “For Good”

In “For Good,” Elphaba and Glinda reminisce on the impact each of these women has had on the other’s life. When Elphaba realizes her limitations and tells Glinda “you can do all I couldn’t do,” she could be referring to how Elphaba is viewed as the “other.” In fiction, “otherness” refers to someone who does not appear to belong to part of a group or society (Campbell, 2019). Throughout *Wicked*, Elphaba expresses feminist traits such as her progressive actions and desires and is often perceived as manly or angry, which further solidifies that she represents the “other” and does not fit in with the traditional feminine characters such as Glinda (Fahs, 2011). Some of Elphaba’s feminist traits include advocating for the underrepresented by fighting to free the flying monkeys and resisting the Wizard’s plan to silence the group of talking animals and take away their rights.

Elphaba and Glinda acknowledge the power they each have in “For Good” and Glinda’s acceptance and approval of Elphaba causes Elphaba to realize that although she may always be considered “other” society, she is accepted by Glinda.

Glinda begins “For Good” by singing,

We are led to those who help us most to grow

If we let them, and we help them in return (See Appendix C)

Although in the beginning of the musical Glinda sings in “Popular” about how she could “fix” Elphaba’s appearance, Glinda looks back on their time together and realizes in return how much Elphaba helped her grow as a person. Instead of following Glinda’s advice and changing herself to fit society, Elphaba empowers herself and those around

her to defy the stereotypes society uses to define them. As time passes in the musical, Elphaba's hair becomes much longer and more beautiful. She also has makeup added to her eyes and cheeks, which causes her to look more beautiful. Instead of changing herself to please others, Elphaba learns to accept who she is and love herself, and it is seen throughout the musical as she empowers herself and becomes more beautiful. This outward appearance of beauty is not Elphaba changing her body to please other people, but instead signifies to the audience that as Elphaba accepts herself as she is she "appears" more beautiful to those who knew her. Elphaba realizes she did not have to conform to society's standard of beauty to be "good," and the people around her realize she truly is beautiful because of the goodness they see inside of her. At its core, feminism stands for equality for all human beings and empowering women to be exactly who they are instead of conforming to be who society is most comfortable with a woman being (Offen, 1988). Elphaba embodies this throughout the musical as she embraces the woman she is instead of changing herself to become a more easily accepted version of herself.

Female forgiveness and acceptance between Elphaba and Glinda led to female healing; whereas, throughout the musical, acceptance or "fixing" from a man did not actually help the female characters when they were oppressed or hurt. For instance, Fiyero's open acceptance of Elphaba did not change her position in the world even when they were together. However, because of Glinda's decision only to forgive privately and love Elphaba, Glinda showed how she chose her own power and acceptance over associating with Elphaba which would have made Elphaba accepted by the citizens of Oz. Glinda had tremendous power after she became the ruler of Oz and could have

changed society's perception of Elphaba, but instead Glinda chose to remain the beloved heroine to the citizens of Oz.

Association is a common theme seen throughout the musical and shows how it can powerfully influence how a person is perceived by society. Ultimately, both girls want the chance to be associated with good but make many mistakes in the process. In "For Good," the women forgive each other for the betrayals they caused. Although they knew other people would question if they had been changed for the better, they did know that because of the impact they had on each other's lives, they had been changed not only for good, but for the better. "For Good" finishes with Elphaba and Glinda singing in unison and embracing each other as a symbol of their understanding and acceptance with one another's choices.

## Conclusion

The friendship and rivalry in *Wicked* between Elphaba and Glinda appeals to generations and keeps Gershwain Theatre full of excited audiences ready to be whisked away on a magical adventure through the land of Oz. It goes beyond the typical megamusical to analyze the overarching theme of good versus evil while showcasing two dynamic heroines. *Wicked* recognizes there is good and evil inside us all and brings to light how those characteristics can cause us to make choices that are misunderstood by other people. More than good and evil, the musical sheds light on subjects such as the possibility of corrupt political leaders and how discrimination can effect and tear down a person's reputation and self-worth. The Wizard of Oz is seen as a powerful political figure but instead is simply a man using a machine to intimidate the citizens of Oz. The musical shows how power-hungry individuals can capitalize on being popular and loved and twist it for their personal gain. *Wicked* questions authority and pushes the conventional boundaries to feature strong women who possess their own power through government and sorcery to change their destiny.

When Holzman and Schwartz wrote *Wicked*, they rewrote the story of *The Wizard of Oz* from the perspective of the two witches and focused on the relationship between the two women. Because of this, the friendship that Elphaba and Glinda shared changed how people view the famous witches of Oz. Instead of being scared of the Wicked Witch of the West, the audience now realizes how easy it is to believe someone or something is evil because that is what society wants you to think. *Wicked* shows that the happiest people are sometimes the people who have to pretend the most and that the seemingly

wicked people are sometimes the ones who achieve their happy ending. It is a story of outcasts and rebels and a reminder to the world that, if we let them, these people have the power to change our lives for good.

By analyzing the songs in *Wicked* through the lens of fourth-wave feminism, these characters represent women in political leadership positions, intersectionality, advocating for the underprivileged and less fortunate, and the power of association. Elphaba uses her voice to advocate for the talking animals in Oz who the Wizard is trying to silence. These women represent both the traditional and progressive types of women in feminism, and throughout their relationship they show the importance of female acceptance and empowerment.

Elphaba represents those in society who do not fit in due to their differences—the color of their skin, their abilities, or their gender. Throughout the musical, she discovers that she does not need society's approval and instead finds empowerment through her individuality and strength as a powerful woman. Instead of relying on a man to validate her character's worth, Elphaba establishes herself throughout the musical as a powerful woman without Fiyero and goes on to save his life and fake her own death before ultimately planning their escape from Oz. As Glinda and Elphaba find acceptance in their friendship with each other, they show how important female forgiveness and acceptance is to continuing forward. Through this, *Wicked* emphasizes not only the importance of female forgiveness and acceptance, but also the importance of acknowledging the goodness in all people. In the beginning of the musical, the girls were young and did not know what goodness truly meant. It was not until they grew wiser and more mature that they realized the goodness was found inside of them. *Wicked* urges the audience to look

deeper than the surface level to see the goodness inside of themselves and others. The musical follows the progression of how Elphaba and Glinda grow as strong women and find their own value without needing the affirmation of people who do not know them. *Wicked* shows the audience the misunderstood perceptions of good and evil throughout the musical and how a perceived happy ending is not always what the character desired.

In addition to being an example of a progressive feminist character, Elphaba breaks through the labels people associate with the Wicked Witch of the West and show the audience that she is not who people think she is. Young and old, rich and poor, male or female, gay or straight, audience members around the world relate to the character and how her green skin represents “other” qualities that society is not quick to accept. At its core, *Wicked* shows how important it is to empower yourself and defy the stereotypes society places on you. As one of the show’s producers David Stone is often quoted saying, there is a green girl inside us all.

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## Appendix A: "The Wizard and I" Lyrics

(Madame Morrible) Oh, Miss Elphaba Many years I have waited  
For a gift like yours to appear Why, I predict the Wizard could make you his  
Magic grand vizier! My dear, my dear  
I'll write at once to the Wizard Tell him of you in advance  
With a talent like yours Dear there is a defin-ish chance  
If you work as you should You'll be making good  
(Elphaba) Did that really just happen? Have I actually understood?  
This weird quirk I try to suppress or hide Is a talent that could help me meet the Wizard  
If I make good, so I'll make good When I meet the Wizard  
Once I prove my worth And then I meet the Wizard  
What I've waited for since: since birth! And with all his Wizard wisdom  
By my looks, he won't be blinded Do you think the Wizard is dumb?  
Or, like Munchkins, so small-minded? No! He'll say to me,  
"I see who you truly are - A girl on whom I can rely!"  
And that's how we'll begin The Wizard and I  
Once I'm with the Wizard My whole life will change  
'Cause once you're with the Wizard No one thinks you're strange!  
No father is not proud of you No sister acts ashamed  
And all of Oz has to love you When by the Wizard you're acclaimed  
And this gift - or this curse I have inside  
Maybe at last, I'll know why When we are hand in hand  
The Wizard and I! And one day, he'll say to me, "Elphaba

A girl who is so superior Shouldn't a girl who's so good inside  
Have a matching exterior? And since folks here to an absurd degree  
Seem fixated on your verdigris Would it be all right by you  
If I de-greenify you..." And though of course That's not important to me  
"All right, why not?" I'll reply Oh, what a pair we'll be  
The Wizard and I Yes, what a pair we'll be  
The Wizard and Unlimited  
My future is unlimited And I've just had a vision  
Almost like a prophecy I know - it sounds truly crazy  
And true, the vision's hazy But I swear, someday there'll be  
A celebration throughout Oz That's all to do with me!  
And I'll stand there with the Wizard Feeling things I've never felt  
And though I'd never show it I'll be so happy, I could melt!  
And so it will be For the rest of my life  
And I'll want nothing else 'Till I die  
Held in such high esteem When people see me, they will scream  
For half of Oz's favourite team The Wizard And I!

## Appendix B: “Popular” Lyrics

Elphie, now that we're friends, I've decided to make you my new project!

(Elphaba) You really don't have to do that...

(Glinda) I know, that's what makes me so nice!

Whenever I see someone less fortunate than I, And let's face it, who isn't less fortunate than I?

My tender heart tends to start to bleed. And when someone needs a makeover,

I simply have to take over! I know, I know exactly what they need!

And even in your case, Though it's the toughest case I've yet to face,

Don't worry, I'm determined to succeed! Follow my lead,

And yes indeed, you will be... POPULAR!

You're gonna be popular! I'll teach you the proper poise,

When you talk to boys, Little ways to flirt and flounce,

Ooh! I'll show you what shoes to wear!

How to fix your hair! Everything that really counts to be...

POPULAR! I'll help you be popular!

You'll hang with the right cohorts, You'll be good at sports,

Know the slang you've got to know. So let's start,

'Cause you've got an awfully long way to go! Don't be offended by my frank analysis,

Think of it as personality dialysis, Now that I've chosen to become a

Pal, a sister and advisor, There's nobody wiser!

Not when it comes to... POPULAR!

I know about popular. And with an assist from me,

To be who you'll be, Instead of dreary who you were...  
Well, are. There's nothing that can stop you,  
From becoming popu-ler... lar... La la, la la!  
We're gonna make you pop-u-lar! When I see depressing creatures,  
With unprepossessing features, I remind them on their own they have  
To - think - of Celebrated heads of state,  
Or specially great communicators! Did they have brains or knowledge?  
Don't make me laugh! They were POPULAR!  
Please! It's all about popular.  
It's not about aptitude, It's the way you're viewed,  
So it's very shrewd to be, Very very popular  
Like ME! Why, Miss Elphaba, look at you. you're beautiful!  
(Elphaba)I, I have to go...  
(Glinda) You're welcome... And though you protest,  
Your disinterest, I know clandestinely,  
You're gonna grin and bear it! Your new-found popularity!  
Aah! La la, la la! You'll be popular! Just not quite as popular as ME!

### Appendix C: “For Good” Lyrics

(Elphaba) I'm limited Just look at me - I'm limited  
And just look at you you can do all I couldn't do, Glinda  
So now it's up to you For both of us - now it's up to you...  
(Glinda) I've heard it said That people come into our lives for a reason  
Bringing something we must learn And we are led  
To those who help us most to grow If we let them  
And we help them in return Well, I don't know if I believe that's true  
But I know I'm who I am today Because I knew you...  
Like a comet pulled from orbit As it passes a sun  
Like a stream that meets a boulder Halfway through the wood  
Who can say if I've been changed for the better? But because I knew you  
I have been changed for good  
(Elphaba) It well may be That we will never meet again  
In this lifetime So let me say before we part  
So much of me Is made of what I learned from you  
You'll be with me Like a handprint on my heart  
And now whatever way our stories end I know you have re-written mine  
By being my friend... Like a ship blown from its mooring  
By a wind off the sea Like a seed dropped by a skybird  
In a distant wood Who can say if I've been changed for the better?  
But because I knew you  
(Glinda) Because I knew you

(Both) I have been changed for good

(Elphaba) And just to clear the air

I ask forgiveness For the things I've done you blame me for

(Glinda) But then, I guess we know There's blame to share

(Both) And none of it seems to matter anymore

(Glinda and Elphaba) Like a comet pulled from orbit

As it passes a sun Like a stream that meets a boulder

Halfway through the wood Like a ship blown from its mooring

By a wind off the sea Like a seed dropped by a bird in the wood

(Both) Who can say if I've been Changed for the better?

I do believe I have been Changed for the better

(Glinda) And because I knew you...

(Elphaba) Because I knew you...

(Both) Because I knew you...

I have been changed for good...