

EXPOSING THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN:
EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND LATENT LESSONS IN L. FRANK BAUM'S *OZ* BOOKS

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2007

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To my Patchwork Girl,
my wife Rebecca, who fell in love with me because I fell in love with Oz

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have sacrificed a great deal to make this dissertation possible. My committee has been invaluable in the process. The friendly encouragement of Dr. R. Brandon Kershner, Dr. Elizabeth Bondy, and Dr. Arthur Newman made working with them a pleasurable and enriching experience. Studying under Dr. Sevan Terzian has proven to be greatly rewarding. His honest and constructive criticism, exacting standards, professionalism, and patience have taught me what it means to be a true scholar and have led me to create the quality dissertation he believed I could write. I also owe a great deal to the librarians at the archives at the Florida State Library who were friendly and helpful (even as I was looking into some unfortunate events in their history). Also, I appreciate the aid of the librarians at the University of Minnesota who were kind enough to let me access their beautiful and sizable *Baum Bugle* collection.

The contributions of my wife, Rebecca, cannot be overestimated. Her passion for my work, abilities as an editor, and willingness to listen to me discuss Oz endlessly kept me dedicated to this project. I'd like to thank my parents who (despite wondering when this dissertation would finally come to fruition) have provided emotional and financial support throughout my school career. I also appreciate my brother's contributions, not the least of which was constantly reminding me that Baum's work is magical and fun and academic writing frequently is not, but that it can and should be.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2007

Chair: Sevan Terzian

Major: Foundations of Education

In the introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum claimed, “the modern child seeks only entertainment in its wondertales.”¹ This statement presaged a radical shift in the educational function of children’s literature – a genre then dominated by overly educational, heavily moral works.² Also, Baum was among the progenitors of the field of advertising. His *Oz* series changed the way children’s books were marketed, becoming one of the early commercial empires in American children’s literature.³ Publishers responded to rapid industrialization in the late nineteenth century with their own revolution in the production of literature. The series book, as an outgrowth of the dime novel, allowed publishers some degree of standardization of written product. Writers could reuse characters, develop name recognition,

¹ L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), 4.

² Cornelia Meigs, *A Critical History of Children’s Literature: A Survey of Children’s Books in English from Earliest Times to the Present* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953), 152-164; B. Edward McClellan, *Moral Education in America: Schools and the Shaping of Character from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 21.

³ William Leach, “Strategists of Display and the Production of Desire,” in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 107; Mark Evan Swartz, *Oz Before the Rainbow: L. Frank Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz on Stage and Screen to 1939* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000),

and complete works on strict deadlines.⁴ Baum's *Oz* series was an early example of this literary form. In sum, Baum's work spearheaded a movement in children's literature toward commercial books without direct pedagogical intentions.

By their nature, however, literary utopias present ideas in social and political philosophy to a mass audience in the form of an accessible narrative.⁵ Steeped in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Populism, *Oz* straddled modernism and anti-modernism, embracing the technological and economic developments of its day, while clinging to traditional community values (such as courage, wisdom, compassion, and a sense of home). The *Oz* books served an important educational function: easing the ache of modernity felt by their readers. The more utopian elements of Baum's work, however, made them suspect during the Cold War, when librarians, such as Florida State Librarian Dorothy Dodd, reinterpreted early twentieth century utopianism as communism and banned the works of Baum.⁶ This dissertation argues that the education embodied by Baum's *Oz* books, resulting from their unique position at the nexus of changes in the moral function and commercial nature of children's literature, developments in the utopian literature subgenre, and the standardization of literary production (giving rise to the series book), locked the books in a six-decade battle with librarians who had a very different vision of the type of education children's literature ought to provide.

⁴ John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

⁵ Philip E. Wegner, *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁶ "Dorothy the Librarian," *Life*, 16 Feb. 1959, 47.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* had been read by 80 million people before MGM released the iconic film version, *The Wizard of Oz*, in 1939. Baum's children's novel went on to become one of the fifteen best-selling books of the twentieth century.¹ The story of Dorothy's journey to the land of Oz has become part of American cultural mythology — a quintessentially American fairy tale and a distinctly American utopian vision. As such, many children in the early twentieth century United States grew up reading Baum's *Oz* books. As this dissertation will argue, parents and librarians have viewed children's literature from its inception as a means of transmitting cultural values to children.² Additionally, the utopian novel can also be seen as inherently educational; utopian novels attempt to teach their audience that a given social and political philosophy will lead to the creation of a more perfect society.³ With respect to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the series of books that followed, this meant that Baum's works inherited a long legacy of educational expectations, straddling two genres with long histories of providing texts with predominantly pedagogical functions.

By spearheading a transition within children's literature that sought to create a less didactic and more commercial genre, the *Oz* books opened themselves to a great deal of criticism

¹ Paul Nathanson, *Over the Rainbow: The Wizard of Oz as a Secular Myth of America* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 4.

² Sylvia W. Patterson, *Rousseau's Emile and Early Children's Literature* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1971), 40; Charlotte S. Huck et.al., *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* (Fort Worth, TX: Jovanovich College Publishers, 1989), 125; John Goldthwaite, *The Natural History of Make-Believe: A Guide to the Principal Works of Britain, Europe, and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 48. While they will not be dealt with explicitly, dystopian novels function in a similar (but inverse) manner. Utopian novels provide a vision of a more perfect society as a means of allowing the reader to imagine how the world in which they live might be made better. Dystopian novels, on the other hand, provide their readers with a warning about what type of society may result if certain social changes are not instituted.

³ Phillip E. Wegner, *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, the Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002), 15, 98.

by Progressive educators and librarians. Being utopian novels, the *Oz* books were implicitly political. Fears of subversive political messages increased the fervor with which librarians fought to keep Baum's works off shelves in their collections. This dissertation details the qualities of the books that made them anathema to librarians, including, but certainly not limited to, commercialism, feared communism, low art status, and a perceived amorality. It presents an exhaustive history of the trials of a rare sort of educational text — a children's book that was able to enter the canon by sheer force of will of the children who loved it and in the face of great opposition. By examining how Progressive librarians and educators conceived of appropriate literature for children and delineating the ways that Baum's works upset those goals, this dissertation argues that the phenomenal popularity of his *Oz* books threatened the carefully constructed literary canon for children, ultimately leading to a drastic change in the educational function of children's literature; children's literature went from being comprised of guidebooks for moral living to commercial texts written for entertainment and amusement.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is a unique book in the history of children's literature as educational texts. This dissertation examines the limits of the power of librarians and educators to determine the types of educational reading materials to which the nation's children would have access. Most importantly, while much educational scholarship has concentrated on how Progressive educational reforms reshaped American society, this dissertation argues that these same educators mounted ineffective attempts to prevent changes to children's literature precipitating from the cultural changes that were occurring at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries — even as these changes to literature were threatening their educational mission. Progressive librarians were eventually handed a major defeat, as *Oz*

became the Utopia Americana, and the educational nature of American children's literature was fundamentally altered.

In seeking to meet these goals, this dissertation needs to serve two functions and is, therefore, divided into two parts. First, the dissertation should establish the locus of Baum's *Oz* books both in the history of children's literature and utopian literature. Thus, Part I seeks to characterize the deceptively philosophical nature of the *Oz* books by arguing that they belonged to a historical trend in children's and utopian literature that prized the pedagogical aspects of texts in each genre. Part II builds on Part I by discussing in greater detail the reasons librarians sought to keep the books out of public libraries. In part, they were doing so because of the pedagogical nature of the books established in Part I: their affront to the traditional function of children's literature and utopian literature which established them as politically and educationally subversive. Additionally, however, the status of series books as descendents of dime novels and the *Oz* books' position at the vanguard of the transition toward a more commercial children's literature hurt their reputation among librarians.

Baum's emphasis on the entertainment value of his literature for children over its educational value threatened the traditional function of children's literature. Even the series' status as fantasy works made them suspect with pragmatic early twentieth century librarians — for fear they were teaching children not to think realistically. The dissertation will concentrate extensively on librarian responses to Baum's works throughout the first half of the twentieth century. As professional educators charged with determining the types of books children would be able to access, an examination of librarian fears regarding Baum's works can serve as an important indicator of the type of educational role the *Oz* books were seen as serving. Moreover,

it does so by delineating the educational function many concerned educators thought that children's literature ought to perform.

The Political Lessons in the *Oz* Books

Henry Littlefield's *American Quarterly* article, "*The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism*" represented something of a watershed in the history of scholarship regarding the fantasy works of L. Frank Baum. Littlefield envisioned Baum's most famous book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, as an extended allegory designed to promote the ideals of Populism. The article claims, for instance, that Baum meant the Scarecrow to represent the American farmer, the Tin Woodman to represent the industrial worker, the Cowardly Lion to represent William Jennings Bryan (as a good hearted politician without the courage to support U.S. involvement in the Spanish-American War), and Dorothy's silver shoes walking atop the Yellow Brick Road to represent the superiority of the silver standard to the gold standard.⁴ Littlefield's position was, at least in part, bolstered by assertions made by Baum's son in his biography of his father. Young Frank Baum remembered his father taking an interest in Populist politics and, perhaps, being involved in a campaign for Bryan.⁵ Littlefield's article began a renaissance of scholarly debate over the politics of the works of Baum.

Scholarship regarding the work of Baum prior to the publication of Littlefield's article was sparse. There are various reasons for this. One, scholars, like many librarians in the first half of the twentieth century, accused the *Oz* books of being poorly written, and, thus, unworthy of serious scholarship.⁶ Two, scholars tended to see books in a series, especially series books for

⁴ Henry M. Littlefield, "*The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism*," *American Quarterly* 16 (Spring 1964): 47-58.

⁵ Frank Joslyn Baum, *To Please a Child: A Biography of L. Frank Baum* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1961), 85.

⁶ Martin Gardner, "The Librarians in Oz," *Saturday Review*, 11 April, 1959, 18-19; Martin Gardner, "Why Librarians Dislike Oz," *The American Book Collector* 13 (December 1962): 14-15; Beverly Lyon Clark, *Kiddie Lit:*

children and adolescents, as overly commercial, consequently unlitrary, and inherently lacking in quality.⁷ The *Oz* books, many felt, were particularly blameworthy for being blatantly commercial. Stage musicals, a series of silent films, toys, games, radio programs, and store window displays created an entire commercial world dedicated to the promotion of the *Oz* books. While such cross-promotion is commonplace now, it was quite radical at the turn of the twentieth century and was often met with hostility by the literary critics, scholars, and librarians.⁸ Few serious students of literature were willing to dedicate work to examining the content of the *Oz* books, largely because of the books' marketing and status as works of popular, low-culture fiction. Such sentiments can still be found among scholars of children's books. In his 1996 book, John Goldthwaite proposed that Baum "was essentially a pulp writer who drew from every passing fashion, sometimes to the benefit of the story, sometimes not."⁹ Although extremely popular with many segments of the American public, Baum's work was derided by librarians and literary scholars who viewed his work as pulp fiction, devoid of artistry.

Intellectual commentary about the *Oz* books before Littlefield's article, although uncommon, was not entirely absent. In the first piece of scholarship on Baum's work, Edward Wagenknecht extolled the *Oz* books for creating a "utopia Americana" — recognizing political impulses in the work of Baum and viewing Oz as the expression of American ideals, such as individual liberty, self-sufficiency, adventurous spirit in the face of a tamable wilderness.¹⁰ Famed children's book scholar Martin Gardner, from time to time, would write defenses of the

The Cultural Construction of Children's Literature in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 136.

⁷ Richard Flynn, "The Imitation of Oz: Sequel as Commodity," *Lion and Unicorn* 20 (1996): 121-131.

⁸ Suzanne Rahn, *The Wizard of Oz: Shaping an Imaginary World* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 19.

⁹ Goldthwaite, 212.

¹⁰ Edward Wagenknecht, *Utopia Americana* (Seattle: University of Washington Book Store, 1929).

Oz books — generally against librarians seeking to remove the books from their shelves or against other academics for their distaste for the *Oz* books.¹¹ More often, however, the *Oz* books were ignored. Despite being one of the best-selling books in the first half of the twentieth century, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was missing from many important encyclopedias of children’s literature and lists of recommended reading for children. None of Cornelia Meigs’ *Critical History of Children’s Literature* (1953), May Hill Arbuthnot’s *Children and Books* (1947), *Bookman*’s 1922 list of “One Hundred Story Books for Children,” Laura E. Richard’s *What Shall the Children Read?* (1939), Alice M. Jordan’s *Children’s Classics* (1947), nor dozens of other such books mentioned either Baum or Oz.¹² There seems to have been a deliberate effort by many scholars of children’s literature and librarians in children’s libraries to keep the works of Baum out of the canon, although they were beloved by several generations of children by the time many of these lists and encyclopedias were published.

This reticence among librarians who collected children’s books and the scholars who recommended them to include Baum’s series among the major works for children written in the United States had stemmed largely from feelings that the books lacked serious educational content and were written in a lackluster style. Littlefield’s argument that Baum had embedded a Populist treatise in the subtext of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* opened up the work to deeper content analyses. Most of these scholarly pieces have largely agreed with Littlefield’s thesis regarding Baum’s Populist sympathies.¹³ More recently, however, several scholars have argued that the Populist themes in Baum’s work have been exaggerated. Most of these scholars point

¹¹ Gardner, “The Librarians in Oz,”; Gardner, “Why Librarians Dislike Oz”

¹² Clark, 27, 133; Gardner, “Why Librarians Dislike Oz,” 14.

¹³ See, for examples: Neil Earle, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in American Popular Culture* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 6-8; Nathanson, 167.

out that Baum avoided politics most of his adult life and viewed politicians (like his own Wizard of Oz) as humbugs. While there may be a few elements of Populist political thought contained in the *Oz* books, viewing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a complex political allegory may be over-reading the political intent of the author.¹⁴ Littlefield's article, however, put an end to the tendency in academia to view Baum's works as little more than pure escapism.

While most scholars agree that the *Oz* books contain some embedded political thought, there is strong debate over what those political sentiments may actually be. Andrew Karp, for instance, explains that, despite Baum's own affection for populism, democracy, freedom, privacy, and individuality, Oz is a communist monarchy. After the Wizard is deposed in the first book of the series, he is replaced in the second book by Ozma, a loving mother-figure. Oz is a land in which there is no money, and everyone strives to give his or her neighbor everything he or she might desire. This contrasts with the harshness of Kansas — where Uncle Henry and Aunt Em are in danger of losing their home to the mortgage company. Karp argued that, implicitly, Baum supported the view that a benevolent, all-powerful ruler is capable of creating a much more harmonious society than competitive capitalism and democracy.¹⁵ Other scholars have disputed Karp's view. Michael Hearn, for instance, argued that the socialist structure of Oz is, at best, superficial. Oz may operate under a form of benevolent despotism. It is a land in which the good are rewarded and the bad are forgiven. However, it is far from an idealized Marxist state. It is, for instance, not classless; Ozma lives in her palace in the Emerald City, while the Munchkins live in farm-houses and perform menial labor.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ranjit S. Dighe, *The Historian's Wizard of Oz: Reading L. Frank Baum's Classic as a Political and Monetary Allegory* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 2-18, 32.

¹⁵ Andrew Karp, "Utopian Tension in L. Frank Baum's Oz," *Utopian Studies* 9 (Summer 1998): 11.

¹⁶ Michael Patrick Hearn, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 2000), xcvi.

While it seems that scholars were slow to discover the political undertones of the *Oz* books, librarians and much of the reading public were not. Libraries throughout the country were more likely to carry copies of Baum's books before the Bolshevik Revolution than after it. In fact, after 1917, copies of the Baum's books began disappearing from library shelves across the country in small, but noticeable, quantities.¹⁷ Despite what seem to be budding suspicions about the political intentions of them in the late 1930s, the *Oz* books remained hugely popular across the country throughout the post-war era. The political debate over the *Oz* books (although not the censorship of *Oz* books for non-political reasons) remained a quiet one until the late 1930s. Anticipating the 1939 release of the MGM film version of *The Wizard of Oz*, the political publication *New Masses* published an article revealing Baum's communist sympathies: "Good Heavens! The land of Oz is a fairyland run on communistic lines, and is perhaps the only communistic fairyland in all children's literature."¹⁸ By the 1950s, the political debate over Baum's books had grown quite heated, and the *Oz* books had been removed from library shelves around the nation, including across Florida, in Detroit, Washington, D.C., New York City, and, ironically, Kansas City.

The debates over the political undertones of the *Oz* books support several important theses regarding the cultural reception of pieces of children's literature in the U.S. during the decades following the death of Baum. First, events such as the Bolshevik Revolution and the beginning of the Cold War influence the extent to which libraries were willing to carry certain children's books. Consequently, one sees that adults have historically viewed the texts their children read as inherently educational and have actively worked to prevent their children from reading books

¹⁷ Michael Patrick Hearn, "Toto, I've a Feeling We're Not in Kansas City Anymore... or Detroit... or Washington, D.C.!" *The Horn Book Magazine* 77 (January/February 2001): 25.

¹⁸ Stewart Robb, "The 'Red' Wizard of Oz," *New Masses*, 4 Oct. 1938, 8-9.

that may have contained messages they found detrimental — even if such messages occurred at the level of subtext. Second, scholars of children’s literature have been slow to examine the political lessons contained in children’s literature — especially those lessons found in popular series books occupying a place outside the traditional literary canon. In fact, scholars have been slow to admit some seminally popular children’s books to the canon because of the perception that their status as low-culture texts signifies an implicit lack of literary quality. With regard to L. Frank Baum’s *Oz* books, recent literary scholarship has overcome the early prejudice against the works of Baum and taken significant steps toward interpreting the complex political ideas that pervade them.

However, this dissertation treats L. Frank Baum’s works as educational texts — as an important part of their literary function. Baum’s books for children are intriguing, not only to the literary scholar, but also to the educational scholar, precisely because of their complexity. They express adult political ideas in simple, easily understood language for children. In a sense, the *Oz* books represented introductory texts in political philosophy for young readers.

In order to untangle the educational messages of the *Oz* books one must establish the philosophical ideas Baum was promoting in his books. How might he have used his books to impress these beliefs upon the children reading them? The resoundingly negative librarian responses to his work give special importance to this question, since it is evident that many prominent educators feared the influence the books had. The reasons for the animosity were two-fold. First, educators often believed books like Baum’s *Oz* series adversely impacted the development of a healthy reading habit — giving the young a taste for low and commercial art. Second, the *Oz* books were seen as especially dangerous because of the perceived subversive political undertones. If viewed as a set of political treatises for youth, why were these books

seen as politically subversive by certain segments of the population, while maintaining an immense popularity within mainstream American culture — becoming one of the central texts in American cultural mythology? That is, how was the extraordinary popularity of the *Oz* books able to overcome the extreme stand that many of the nation’s librarians took against them?

The dissertation will consider the *Oz* books’ place within the traditions of the genres of children’s and utopian literature and how socially traumatic political situations at the time of their writing are reflected in them, because examining the them “in relation to other works, to economic conditions, or to broad social discourses... within whose contexts [they] makes sense” will lead to a broader understanding both of the educational lessons provided by the books and the cultural milieu that led to the creation of these books for that purpose.¹⁹ In providing a detailed description of the contentious relationship between mass popularity of and educator distaste for Baum’s works, the dissertation will rely on a wide array of sources, including discussions of Baum’s *Oz* in popular media (including newspapers and magazines), letters and editorials written by librarians and scholars of children’s literature of the period, articles in librarians trade journals, and other secondary scholarship on the function of the *Oz* books as elements of American cultural mythology. In sum, this dissertation seeks to examine the political undertones of a prolific work for children, thereby broadening our understanding of educational forces that existed outside of the walls of the schoolhouse in late nineteenth and early twentieth century United States. Indeed, the dissertation will shed light on how the line between which books would be used in the nation’s schools and libraries and which would not was determined.

In taking a very broad definition of education, “the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and sensibilities, as well

¹⁹ Ross C. Murfin, “What is Cultural Criticism?” in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, ed. John Paul Riquelme (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998), 554.

as any learning that results from that effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended,” Lawrence Cremin’s work drastically increased the scope of history of education scholarship.²⁰ According to Cremin’s definition of education, examining the educational properties of children’s literature can deepen our understanding of the types of educational forces that have historically acted upon children. Much has been written about the works of L. Frank Baum (with the *Oz* books making up the bulk of this scholarship). Since the publication of Littlefield’s article and the introduction of the idea that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* might have elements of the parable, literary scholars have been attuned to the possibility that Baum’s works are implicitly educational. Educational researchers, however, have left the subject largely unexamined. This dissertation bridges that gap, using literary scholarship on Baum’s *Oz* books to position them within the history of education.

The *Oz* Books as Utopian Novels

In the late nineteenth century, the utopian novel found a new popularity in the United States. Between the years 1888 and 1900, more than sixty visions of ideal societies were published by American authors.²¹ The most influential of these narrative utopias (and the one that opened this era of the utopian novel) was Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (1888). As Phillip Wegner points out, the Bellamy-inspired utopian novels departed, in many ways, from the utopian visions of previous centuries. Works such as Thomas More’s *Utopia* were primarily works of philosophy. While they used the narrative form to make their philosophies more palatable to a wide audience, their primary purpose had been to teach audiences ideas concerning political and social philosophy. Utopian novels of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth

²⁰ Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), x.

²¹ Rahn, 33.

centuries fulfilled a slightly different purpose. Publishers of utopian novels became more concerned with commercial matters. They tended to downplay explicit discussion of philosophical ideas—relegating them to the level of subtext — in order to attract the widest possible audience. Negotiations between politics, art, and commercial concerns became more complicated. The increasing dominance of the book market by major publishing houses (usually located in the Eastern United States) made mass marketing an increasingly prominent phenomenon. In order to attract an audience from a variety of differing levels of education, geographic areas, political beliefs, social classes, and age groups, book publishers sought works that were less explicitly political, less tied to specific regional concerns, and concentrated more fully on narrative. Artistry and frank political discussion often were forced to give way to narrative development.²²

These changes in the genre, however, did not alter the niche of the utopian novel in the cultural environment. They remained important texts in educating the populace about various philosophical positions. In a certain sense, because they were trying to appeal to a wider range of social classes and age groups, they became more pivotal texts in educating the public than they had previously been. The utopian novel existed as a means of evaluating the inadequacies of the present socio-political situation. The shift in the genre resulted from the rise of new problems, new situations, and changes in the desires of the people. The domain of the narrative utopia is to provide the readers with the tools to orient themselves in a unfamiliar cultural context.²³ In this sense, the utopian novel must be viewed as primarily an educational text,

²² Wegner, 3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 15.

because it provides people with the ability to understand shifts in culture and deal with the feelings of social uneasiness such shifts can cause.

The turn of the twentieth century was a time of great social upheaval and radical technological change in the United States. The period was typified by a process of centralization — in areas such as transportation (particularly regarding the expansion of railroads), government (stronger state and national governments assuming duties once performed entirely by local governments), demographic shifts (with increasing numbers of people congregating in cities), and business (with movements toward vertical monopolies in the business sector).²⁴ Education scholars have argued that public school systems also underwent a similar process of centralization during this period. The Progressive era saw the centralization of power over education across the country into the hands of city-wide school boards and a corresponding decrease in the market share of privately operated academies.²⁵ Centralization of the process of schooling, in itself, was an expression of utopian thinking. Schooling began to be viewed as “a vehicle for... social reconstruction... [Educators since the late nineteenth century]... have tended to view schooling as one of the major institutions for shaping human behavior and dispositions, including an individual’s conception of a preferred social order.”²⁶ If a perfect society were to be built, organized, centralized, and systematized schooling would be the primary social force responsible for its construction.

In the post-Reconstruction U.S., there seems to have been a fervid hope (particularly among Progressives) for the potential of this process of centralization — in the realms of

²⁴ Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1967).

²⁵ David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

²⁶ William B. Stanley, *Curriculum for Utopia: Social Reconstruction and Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 191.

education, politics, and economics. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* envisioned that ultimately society would reach an ideal state as a result of the increased efficiency of centralized power. However, even while many Americans were feeling hope for the potential of the future, they feared the anonymity of city life and bemoaned the loss of rural values.²⁷ The country was quickly changing and many people felt the growing pains.

At the turn of the twentieth century, feelings of dislocation were common — as many people either moved from their rural homes into the Eastern and burgeoning Midwestern metropolises or to the Western frontier from Eastern cities. These feelings were also shared by the waves of new immigrants who found themselves in a new country and a foreign culture.²⁸ This angst may have been most acute for the hundreds of thousands of orphaned youngsters from cities who were “placed out” to farming families in the West who were looking to create larger families to help with difficult farm work.²⁹ Rapid technological development also required adjustments—and may have been accompanied by uneasy feelings about the modern world. Cities are more anonymous places than villages, and there was a fear that a certain moral laxity would follow people as they moved to the city.³⁰ The combination of these factors caused many people to approach modern America with a level of apprehension.

Utopian tales tend to be written in transitional ages, when a new social order is in the process of developing. People use tales of fantasy lands as maps to orient themselves in a real

²⁷ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1925* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

²⁸ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 64-69, 211.

²⁹ Marilyn Irvin Holt, *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

³⁰ T.J. Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930” in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, eds. Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 6.

world they do not fully understand. As Wagenknecht claims in his *Utopia Americana*, there is little reason to create a fantasy world if you are fully satisfied with the actual one.³¹ Baum's literature seems to embody the complex hopeful, yet fearful, attitudes regarding demographic shifts, changes in the moral belief system, improvements in technology, and increasing centralization felt by many Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. Baum idealizes the potential of the metropolis in the sparkling Emerald City while extolling the values of rural America represented by Kansas. He praises the magic of technological developments (near the end of the first book the Wizard escapes from Oz via hot air balloon, for instance) within the antiquated form of the fairy tale. According to Lears, this type of tempered anti-modernism (uplifting traditional values while simultaneously rejoicing in new developments) revitalized familiar values and, thus, eased the transition to modernity.³² In effect, the *Oz* books may be understood as "wishing to restore order by reducing to the most simple lines and shapes a world that seems to lack an inner principle and coherence."³³ That is, by creating a simple fantasy world into which children could retreat, Baum was providing young readers with a world in which many of the problems they were encountering in their daily lives were easily resolved. The *Oz* books, in this way, served their function as utopian novels. They reassured youngsters in a rapidly changing society and educated them about how to live in a new and unfamiliar world — teaching them to deal with the ache of modernity.

By discussing the political lessons that were included in Baum's *Oz* books, one can determine at least one aspect of what these texts were teaching the children who read them —

³¹ Wagenknecht, *Utopia Americana*, 7.

³² Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 301.

³³ Ulrich Baer, *Remnants of Song: Trauma and the Experiences of Modernity in Charles Baudelaire and Paul Celan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 214.

how to cope with the rapidly changing world around them. In essence, then, the question of the *Oz* books' place in the history of the utopian novel moves the dissertation much closer to achieving one of its major goals; by placing the *Oz* series within a resurgent genre of utopian literature, the dissertation will establish how historical developments in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century influenced the educational messages of the works of Baum. Examining the place the *Oz* books occupied within the history of utopian literature brings up another series of questions. If one of the major functions of the utopian novel is to enable the reader to orient him or herself in a new and unfamiliar world, in what ways did Baum's *Oz* stories function as utopian novels? That is, in what light did the books cast political, economic, social, and technological developments of the time, and how did they encourage readers to view these changes? More specifically, how did the books express the period's hopes (embodied by the Progressives) and fears (represented by the Populists)? To answer these questions, the dissertation will take a three-pronged approach. First, it will seek to characterize the turn-of-the-century United States as an era of rapid social change (and often traumatic social change for the populace) — as outlined in the historical works of T.J. Jackson Lears, Robert Wiebe, and Michael McGerr. Second, the dissertation will employ secondary scholarship on the utopian novel and readings of several major utopian novels from the period (relying heavily on Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*). Finally, by comparing the results of these two discussions to close readings of Baum's *Oz* books and other scholarly discussions of the *Oz* books as utopian novels, the dissertation will characterize the books as the inheritors of the traditions of a unique, and inherently pedagogical literary genre. Ultimately, the discussion of the *Oz* books as utopian novels may demonstrate how an examination of the works of L. Frank Baum would inform the

way scholars (including those in social foundations of education) view the socializing importance of books for both children and adults containing imaginary communities.

While the educational function of Baum's works as early twentieth century examples of utopian literature for children may have been self-evident, this did not imply a librarian advocacy of the books. Even as the books were presenting young people with a cognitive map for transitioning into life in the modern world, teachers, librarians, and critics worked actively to prevent children from reading the books. Certainly, many Progressive educators worked tirelessly to increase the access of children to public library collections, and by the twentieth century public libraries began to cater to the reading needs of children in an unprecedented way. These efforts did not translate, however, into the creation of a space friendly to new works of fantasy fiction for children that would ease their transition into the modern world. Instead, educators dismissed works of popular fiction, despite (or perhaps because of) the lessons they contained for modern children. In their place, teachers and librarians strongly encouraged children to devote their time to reading classic literature dispensing traditional morals: fables, fairy tales, the plays of Shakespeare, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and other perennial works. This dissertation also, then, provides an important look at the largely anti-modernist approach Progressive librarians and other educators brought to English education.

The *Oz* Books as Children's Literature

Adults who write children's literature often conceive of their work as a tool for passing on information and a set of political, theological, economic, and especially moral values.³⁴ Like utopian literature, children's literature has been viewed, from its inception, as an inherently educational genre. Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books (1865, 1871) represented a shift in thinking

³⁴ Deborah C. Thacker and Jean Webb, *Introducing Children's Literature: From Romanticism to Post-Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 13-25; Clark, 105; Goldthwaite, 48.

about the nature of children's books. First, Carroll's books were outwardly hostile to contemporary educational texts. "What is the use," mused Alice, "of a book without pictures or conversations?"³⁵ The Duchess is mocked in Chapter Nine for her insistence that there must be a moral to every story.³⁶ Second, the books seem designed solely for the pleasure of the child, rather than some serious educational purpose. The arrival of Carroll's two *Alice* books represented a revolution at a time when Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Aesop's *Fables*, and the fairy tales of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm were among the most popular works for parents to give their children to read. By showing direct hostility to overly didactic children's books and writing his *Alice* books largely without such pedantry, Lewis Carroll was re-envisioning the function of children's literature.

Despite the popularity of the *Alice* books, authors and parents seemed hesitant to give up didactic children's literature, particularly in the realm of fantasy. As Beverly Lyon Clark points out, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* also departed from the tradition of moralizing in literature written for children.³⁷ Alcott's book is, however, a noteworthy exception to the general rule that literature for children had to have a higher educational purpose. Moreover, her book was far from a work of fantasy. Fantasy literature had its roots in fairy tales and fables — forms with centuries-long traditions of containing moral lessons.³⁸ As a result, when Baum, who idolized the works of Lewis Carroll, wrote in the introduction to his *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that, "Modern education includes morality; therefore the modern child seeks only entertainment

³⁵ Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, in *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll*, (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1994), 15.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 86-90.

³⁷ Clark, 105.

³⁸ B. Edward McClellan, *Moral Education in America: Schools and the Shaping of Moral Character from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1999), 15-30, 46-70.

in its wondertales,” it represented a coup in the world of children’s literature.³⁹ Baum was claiming to be endeavoring to write a fairy tale without a moral.

The previous two sections have delineated several reasons Baum’s books must be viewed as educational texts: utopian novels are inherently pedagogical and Baum’s works are imbued with political subtexts. The importance of Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is that it is one of the first novels for children that intentionally moved the moral of the tale to the level of subtext. As such, it represents an important work for scholars of education. Children’s literature represented (and still represents) an extremely important dimension of a child’s education. The nature of texts offered to children and how they learned lessons from these works shifted drastically as a result of the precedent set by Baum’s work. By changing the level at which literature for children taught its lessons, Baum was fundamentally re-envisioning the educational function of children’s literature.

Relegating the moral of a tale to the level of subtext allows for various interpretations of the meaning of a given text. Take, as one example, the numerous theories regarding gender and the *Oz* books. Some scholars have derided Baum for pushing a sexist agenda through his books. They argue that Dorothy’s desire to return to her home is Baum’s affirmation of the patriarchal domination of women.⁴⁰ Others believe that Dorothy’s desire to return home is merely a trope common to many works of fantasy and science fiction and is not necessarily a gendered phenomenon.⁴¹ Still others claim that Baum’s Oz, a land featuring only women in positions of

³⁹ L. Frank Baum, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 2000), 4.

⁴⁰ Linda Rohrer Paige, “Wearing the Red Shoes: Dorothy and the Power of the Female Imagination in *The Wizard of Oz*,” *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 23 (Winter 1996): 148-154; Madonna Kohlberschlag, *Lost in the Land of Oz: The Search for Identity and Community in American Life* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988).

⁴¹ Andrew Gordon, “You’ll Never Get Out of Bedford Falls!: The Inescapable Family in American Science Fiction and Fantasy Films,” *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 20 (Summer 1992).

power (with the exception of the Wizard — who is a humbug), is Baum’s way of advocating that women be given political power (possibly in the form of women’s suffrage). In this respect, he would have been in agreement with his mother-in-law, famed suffragette Matilda Gage — who co-authored *The History of Women’s Suffrage* with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.⁴² Each of these divergent theories represents an interpretation that is made possible as a result of Baum subsuming his moral to the level of subtext. Without an explicitly delineated lesson, readers were free to take their own lessons from the work — and they often used the work (and still use the work) to justify radically different political positions.

In effect, relegating the morals to subtext opens Baum’s works to literary scholars as a source worthy of serious inquiry, but it makes the task of educational scholars more difficult. Answering the question, “What did these works teach young people?” becomes more difficult as the text is more easily opened to a variety of interpretations. While it may well be impossible to establish definitively the political orientation of Baum’s works, by looking at the historical conditions under which the *Oz* books were written and how social conditions informed the books’ production, one may begin to understand the educational relationship between Baum and his audience.

Understanding the sub-textual political lessons of the *Oz* books may be further hampered because they may have been left intentionally cryptic. As Alison Lurie points out, the sub-textual messages in children’s literature often allow authors to discuss topics with children that may be considered taboo for direct discussion.⁴³ The *Oz* books’ status as contested texts (particularly after the Russian Revolution) seems to indicate that there are some topics that could

⁴² Earle, 25; Rahn, 3; Hearn, xx-xxiii.

⁴³ Alison Lurie, *Don’t Tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children’s Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1990).

not be broached with children, even at the level of sub-text. After all, as Selma Lanes suggests, “children are notoriously quirky in their observations, and unpredictable about the things that touch them deeply.”⁴⁴ For a scholar of education, then, looking at stories for children without explicit morals, although more difficult, can be highly fruitful. These texts can address topics with children that parents would be unlikely to allow to be discussed directly with their sons or daughters.

The *Oz* books occupied a unique position in the history of children’s literature. They were among the first children’s texts to move the educational lesson to the sub-text, but they did so while maintaining the other traditions of the fairy tale and fable. As such, the *Oz* books signaled a shift in the educational function of children’s literature. What were the social forces that allowed Baum to write and publish a book without an explicit moralizing agenda in an era when such an endeavor had been virtually untried? How exactly does the work of Baum fit into a general history of children’s literature (and what were the historical trends it inherited and worked against with respect to the morally educative function of children’s literature)? In sum, delineating the niche of the *Oz* books within the history of children’s literature will help accomplish one of the major goals of the dissertation — to explain the relationship between developments within the history of children’s literature and the educational status of Baum’s work. The answers to these questions will rely most heavily on secondary scholarship regarding the development of the genre of children’s literature — with special attention paid to the educational function of children’s literature.⁴⁵ Ultimately, pinpointing the *Oz* books’ status as

⁴⁴ Selma G. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole: Adventures and Misadventures in the Realm of Children’s Literature* (New York: Atheneum Publishing, 1971), 197.

⁴⁵ For instance, the dissertation will heavily utilize these works: Beverly Lyon Clark, *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children’s Literature in America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Selma G. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole: Adventures and Misadventures in the Realm of Children’s Literature*, (New York: Atheneum Publishing, 1971); Alison Lurie, *Don’t Tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children’s Literature*, (Boston:

innovators in the history of children's literature as educational texts may shed light on the question: how do scholars of education approach their examinations of the role of children's literature outside of the school in an era in which children's books are often no longer conceived as educational texts (an era ushered in by the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*)?

Some Concluding Remarks

Overall, this dissertation seeks to answer three questions. What characterized the educational messages of Baum's works? How did historical developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century cast Baum's works as utopian texts — and, hence, as philosophically educative? Finally, given the contentious educational and philosophical history of the *Oz* books, how and why did Progressive librarians and educators respond to Baum's works as they were re-envisioning educational institutions in the United States? The first part of the dissertation will concentrate most heavily on the educational impact of Baum's work between the years 1900 and 1925. This will allow the dissertation to focus on the impact of the *Oz* books during Baum's lifetime and, consequently, during the era in which they were produced.⁴⁶ The second part of the dissertation will examine the lasting historical impact of Baum's political message. This section will extend the scope of this study from the inception of the American Library Association in 1876 through the Cold War battles over the *Oz* books ending in the early 1960s. L. Frank Baum's *Oz* books were written between 1900 and 1920. Although forty *Oz* books were published by Reilly and Britton (the original Chicago publisher), only fourteen were authored by

Little, Brown, and Co., 1990; Deborah C. Thacker and Jean Webb, *Introducing Children's Literature: From Romanticism to Post-Modernism*, (London: Routledge, 2002); Jack Zipes, *What Dreams Come True: Classical Fairy Tales and their Tradition*, (New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁴⁶ Choosing this era will also allow the dissertation to explore the educational function of these books before the release of the MGM film (in 1939). The famous film version of *The Wizard of Oz* fundamentally changed the way the books were received. It was so phenomenally popular that, after the release of the film, far more children read the books because they enjoyed the film than vice versa. As a result, most children evaluate their readings of Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* by comparing it to their readings of the film. Nathanson, 5.

Baum. These are the fourteen volumes that this dissertation will consult. Ruth Plumly Thompson, the woman who took over writing the *Oz* series after the death of Baum, wrote an additional nineteen volumes. While her efforts to keep the *Oz* books on library shelves in the decades following Baum's death will be discussed, her own additions to the *Oz* series will be left aside. This will allow the dissertation to concentrate more specifically on the original author and historical period that originally produced the books — and marked the height of the utopian literature movement in the United States and the beginning of a shift in the educational function of British and American children's literature.

As previously discussed, the dissertation will be divided into two parts. The first part of the dissertation will examine the historical currents that informed the writing and reception of Baum's books. The second chapter will locate the works of Baum within the history of children's literature in an effort to demonstrate the subtly didactic nature of the work of Baum (despite his own claims to writing "only entertainment" for children). By doing so, the chapter will argue that the initial reception of the *Oz* books among librarians was negative because of a perceived lack of an educational function for the books. As changes in attitudes toward the function of children's literature took place (in no small part due to Baum's contributions), however, librarians and anxious parents began to single out Baum's work for what it taught, rather than what it failed to teach. The third chapter will do the same for locating *Oz* in what was a burgeoning genre of utopian literature of the late nineteenth century, and how being a part of this tradition encourages reading the *Oz* books as political treatises.

The second part of the dissertation will focus on librarian censorship and rigid selection policies that made it difficult for the *Oz* books to find a place on the shelves of the nation's libraries — by examining three controversies surrounding them. This examination will allow the

dissertation to discuss the cultural expectations of teachers and librarians regarding the educational function of children's literature during the period and give a deeper understanding of how the *Oz* books' sub-textual lessons often deviated from these expectations. The fourth chapter seeks to delineate library selection policy for series books in the period extending from the formation of the ALA in 1876 to the *Oz* books' times of trial in the 1930s. It argues that prejudice against dime novels led early twentieth century librarians to dismiss series books for children. The fifth chapter will look at the decision of prominent children's librarian, Anne Carroll Moore, to remove the *Oz* books from the children's reading room of the New York Public Library during the 1930s. It will argue that she did this in response to what she saw as the overly commercial nature of the books. The chapter will use Moore's negative reception of the *Oz* books as a springboard to examining the commercial nature of *Oz* — the films, radio programs, toys, and the ilk. The dissertation will, thereby, argue that the rapid economic expansion and the growth of the American city in the early days of the twentieth century gave rise to a consumer culture that allowed the message of the *Oz* books to reach an increasingly large audience and, thus, gain more effectiveness as educational texts. Children experienced the land of *Oz* on the theatrical stage, in film, in store windows, in their toy rooms, and on the radio. By increasing children's exposure to the ideas contained in them, the commercialization of the *Oz* books increased their power as educational tools — but was seen by many librarians as trading the important educational function of children's literature for monetary success. The sixth chapter of the dissertation will address postwar battles over the *Oz* books — a time when many librarians across the nation were singling out Baum's work for promoting communist thinking. In particular, it will examine how librarians in Florida sought to keep Baum's work from children because of the nebulous educational benefit of fantasy fiction for children and the

subversive ideas Baum's books were often seen as promoting. In essence, the second part of the dissertation provides a detailed examination of censorship of the *Oz* books in the first half of the twentieth century.

This dissertation will ultimately endeavor to explore the backlash against the *Oz* books by looking at the steps that librarians took in the first half of the twentieth century to keep the *Oz* books out of the hands of children — for fear that they were teaching unwholesome values. The historical period over which the *Oz* books were written and reached the height of their popularity was one of great change to many social institutions in the United States — not the least of which were public school systems. By characterizing the *Oz* books as relatively complex texts in social, political, and economic philosophy designed for children, this dissertation seeks to look at how Baum's books were functioning as educational texts and what cultural values they were attempting to teach the children reading them. In effect, it will characterize the books as some of the first political and philosophical treatises to which many children were (and are) exposed — political treatises that heavily critiqued the culture in which they were created and were equally heavily critiqued by that culture.

CHAPTER 2
THE GOSPEL OF BAUM:
THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ AS EDUCATIONAL TEXT

In the introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum made it clear that he was not writing his book for didactic purposes: “Modern education includes morality; therefore the modern child seeks only entertainment in its wondertales.”¹ Children’s literature was a relatively new field in 1900 when Baum published *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Literature written for adults had existed for millennia. When Baum was writing his children’s books, the history of writing books specifically for children was only a few centuries old. American children’s literature had an even shorter history; it was barely two hundred years old at the turn of the twentieth century. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, American authors of children’s literature wrote their books with the intention that they be used to teach moral lessons. Baum’s sentiment that children only seek entertainment from their wondertales ran against two centuries of thinking about literature for children. In fact, children’s literature was so new that Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was the first successful, full-length fantasy to be published in the United States.² Prior to and throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, children

¹ L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), 4. All quotes that appear in this paper attributed to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* come from this edition of the book, and the page numbers of the references correspond to the page numbers in Hearn’s volume. Since Hearn’s volume reproduced, in exact form, the text and illustrations of the volume as they appeared in the first edition in 1900, in the interest of using a standard text that is widely available to the reader, Hearn’s edition makes the most sense. In future footnotes, however, when I am citing either Hearn’s annotations or his introduction I will cite the book with Hearn as the author. In the case of citing the work of Baum, I will indicate him as the author.

² Suzanne Rahn, *The Wizard of Oz: Shaping an Imaginary World* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 7; Selma G. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole: Adventures and Misadventures in the Realm of Children’s Literature* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 96-97. Recently some scholars have set out to dispute Baum’s claim to being the first to write a full length fantasy in the United States. In Beverly Lyon Clark’s book *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children’s Literature in America* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 128, she points out that James Kirk Paulding wrote a fantasy novel *A Christmas Gift from Fairyland* in 1838. This volume did not have the level of mainstream popularity attained by Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Additionally, it was an early piece of American fiction, and retained many of the European fairy tale themes. Baum’s work remains, in that sense, the first full-length American fantasy novel. Mark I. West has also edited a collected volume of American children’s literature pre-dating Oz entitled *Before Oz: Juvenile Fantasy Stories from Nineteenth Century America*

often read what they found of interest to them from the shelves of their parents' libraries. While children of the nineteenth century did have a number of books written and published specifically for them, the line between literature for children and literature for adults was thinly drawn. Books that were written for the consumption of American youth, such as Adelaide O'Keefe's *Original Poems Calculated to Improve the Mind of the Youth and Allure It to Virtue* (circa 1808), Isaac Watts' *Divine and Moral Songs for Children* (1866), T.H. Gallaudet's *Child's Book of the Soul* (1836), Lydia Sigourney's *The Boys Book* (1839), and Sarah (daughter of Samuel) Coleridge's *Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children* (1834), tended to be overtly educational, heavily moral in tone, and often explicitly religious.³ Even arithmetic and spelling textbooks in school contained examples designed for the moral education of their readers.⁴

By rejecting this moralizing literature for children, Baum spearheaded a shift in the function of children's literature in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. By saying that children were seeking pure entertainment from their stories, Baum opened a debate between what parents had argued that children should read and what children themselves wanted to read — a response to the increasing power of the market economy.⁵ Baum was not, however, shunning the idea of teaching children through the books they were reading. In fact, his works

(Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1989). All of these works were short stories, and some of them did provide inspiration to Baum. None of the collected pieces, however, came from a novel length volume, and, again, none of them were considered iconic—then or now.

³ Cornelia Meigs, *A Critical History of Children's Literature: A Survey of Children's Books in English from Earliest Times to the Present* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953), 152-164; B. Edward McClellan, *Moral Education in America: Schools and the Shaping of Character from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 21.

⁴ McClellan, 25.

⁵ Deborah C. Thacker and Jean Webb, *Introducing Children's Literature: From Romanticism to Post-Modernism* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 15.

very often contained cleverly hidden lessons. Nonetheless, their primary function was not propaedeutic; their primary function was to be enjoyed by children.

This chapter examines trends toward moralizing in early children's literature. It does so in an effort to explore the position of the works of L. Frank Baum within their context in the history of children's literature. By delineating Baum's many carefully constructed links between his works and both fairy tales and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), it argues that Baum's works remained inherently educational, all the while proclaiming themselves — perhaps manipulatively — to be pure entertainment for children. Later chapters will discuss what the *Oz* books taught children across a variety of subjects, and how parents, librarians, and others responded to those lessons. This chapter, however, seeks to characterize the *Oz* books as surreptitiously educational. By contrasting themselves with the bulk of children's books which were explicitly moral or educational tales, the *Oz* books were capable of gathering a large audience of children who came to the books for entertainment, but, as a result, exposed themselves to unanticipated lessons.

The Origin of Children's Literature as a Genre

John Newberry, the first publisher interested in works especially for children, began his career in 1744. He died in 1767 having laid the groundwork for what would become the genre of children's literature.⁶ However, for another century, children's literature remained, by and large, a form not easily distinguished from adult literature. In the eighteenth century, parents generally appraised the appropriateness of a book for a child by whether or not it would enhance the moral

⁶ Sylvia W. Patterson. *Rousseau's Emile and Early Children's Literature* (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1971), 7. This is not meant to imply that Newberry was the first publisher ever to publish a book intended specifically for children. The book most often cited as the first publication for children is Comenius's *Orbus Pictus* (circa 1657). It was a sort of illustrated dictionary for children that provided a picture and a definition for an accompanying word. Interestingly, from its inception, the occupation of creating literature for children was seen as primarily an educational one. For more information on *Orbus Pictus*, see Perry Nodelman, *Words About Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 2-4, 18-20.

upbringing of their child. Very little consideration was given to whether the child would enjoy such reading. Most often, parents expected children to read books that explicitly taught morals or contained lessons parents thought children ought to learn.

For instance, in his philosophical treatise *Emile* (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that the only book to which children ought to have access was Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). He felt that children's capacity to reason was limited, and they might misunderstand even simple stories, such as Fontaine's *Fables* (1668-94).⁷ By exploring the idea that children's mental faculties fundamentally differed from those of adults, Rousseau encouraged a mode of thinking that led to the development of literature written specifically to be read by a child. Ironically, a man who felt that children ought not be given access to books, because of their potential to corrupt the minds of children, created a view of the child that inspired many of the first generation of writers of children's literature.⁸

Conceptions of childhood in the early days of the American republic differed heavily by region and social class. Evangelical New Englanders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries tended to view children as selfish, violent, and dangerous — not the innocents described by Rousseau. More moderate families throughout the country, even those in New England, held no such assumptions regarding the violent nature of childhood, but neither did they believe in a permissiveness they felt could undermine the development of good character. Genteel families differed and tended to view their children with an overt adoration from infancy to adulthood that allowed more indulgence of their children's whims.⁹ In any event, few Americans shared

⁷ *Fables Choisies Mises en Vers*, 12 vols., 1668-94; see Book III of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emilius; or, a Treatise of Education*.

⁸ Patterson, 7-40.

⁹ Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and Self in Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 27, 156, 267-269.

Rousseau's view of childhood. Hence, children's literature that provided anything other than explicit moral lessons was much slower to develop in the United States than in England or Europe.

Despite his reservations about allowing children access to literature, Rousseau liked *Robinson Crusoe* because it presented an example of a self-reliant man who was capable of surviving in any situation. Indeed, books like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) have been popular among children from the time of their publication to the present on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁰ This was true even though neither of these books was intended for an audience of children. Instead, they were tales filled with colorful characters, exotic locales, and adventure. They stood out to children looking in adult libraries for books that would hold their interest, and they were likely written without a readership of children in mind.¹¹ In the nineteenth century, children's versions of these books began to be published. The books also served as the model for other books seeking to capitalize on their popularity by exploiting their major themes. Books like Johann Wyss' *Swiss Family Robinson* (1813) and Friedrich Campe's *The Young Robinson* (1779-80) closely followed the model established by *Robinson Crusoe*.¹² At a time when few books were written specifically for a young audience, it made financial sense for publishers to issue children's versions that mimicked such adult works as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Robinson Crusoe*.¹³

¹⁰ Meigs, 50-57.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

¹² It is important to note that *Swiss Family Robinson* represented the kind of moralizing children's literature discussed earlier. Throughout the book, many of the events in the narrative are followed by commentary from Robinson Senior — who explains to his family and the audience what lesson could be learned from the preceding episode. While *Robinson Crusoe* (being intended for an adult audience) lacked this sort of didacticism, *Swiss Family Robinson* (being intended for children) relied upon it. Jack Zipes, "Preface," in *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature: The Traditions in English*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2005), xviii.

¹³ Meigs, 7.

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, few Americans distinguished between literature for children and literature for adults. Almost every major nineteenth century author in the United States wrote for children as well as adults. Mark Twain's novels *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) are now considered to be children's literature. When they were first published, no such claim was made. Likewise, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1867) and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) are, to a lesser extent, now considered children's literature. Through much of the nineteenth century, that distinction simply was not made. Occasionally, a debate would arise about whether a given text was suitable for children (novelist Henry James argued that the works of Robert Louis Stevenson were inappropriate for young boys and ought to be considered solely adult literature), but these debates were relatively rare. The most important literary journals of the day, such as *Atlantic Monthly*, routinely published stories for which the intended audience was children, and they assumed that adults would enjoy the works as well. Many Americans simply took it as given that novels, including those by authors like Herman Melville — which now lie entirely within the province of adult literature — were not just for adults. Children would sit and listen as the family read such books together. For the most part, the line between juvenile and adult literature was invisible.¹⁴

While the lessons taught in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island* could be found at the level of sub-text, most books that children read taught their moral lessons explicitly. With its first American publication in 1775, Aesop's *Fables* was available to children in the United States at a time when little other fantastic literature was. Its influence was dwarfed, however, by that of *Pilgrim's Progress*, a volume that could be found in the homes of huge numbers of Americans.

¹⁴ Clark, 36-63.

First published in the United States in 1641, the book appeared on the continent well before that and was frequently one of the few personal possessions families brought to the New World.¹⁵

Pilgrim's Progress became a perennial favorite among children in the United States. In fact, from the seventeenth century until the Civil War, *Pilgrim's Progress* ranked with the Bible as the most widely read book among Americans — for both adults and children.¹⁶ Many children read *Pilgrim's Progress* alongside their parents, and the Christian allegory proved an attractive text for parents wishing to give their children a solid moral grounding.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, certain authors tried to carve out a children's literature genre, separate from that of adults. Romanticism, with its emphasis on the innocence of childhood, became “a key point of reference for the birth of children's literature.”¹⁷ Works such as William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1789-1794) characterized the child as pure and uncorrupted, and, as such, the desire of many Romantics was to preserve the inherent innocence of the child and nurture the child's imagination.¹⁸ Likewise, Ralph Waldo Emerson

¹⁵ In the early stages of children's literature most adults hesitated to accept fantasy fiction. Fables were frequently condemned as mere fanciful stories and were only accepted as allegorical stories concerned with good and evil with great reluctance. While Aesop's *Fables* was a widely read volume in the United States, its failure to achieve the same level of readership as *Pilgrim's Progress* can be attributed, in part, to prejudices against the fable as a literary form. Meigs, 121-132.

¹⁶ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1982), 102-103.

¹⁷ Thacker and Webb, 41.

¹⁸ William Reese argues that a large variety of Romantics influenced the rise of child-centered educational ideas in the nineteenth century United States, but the Romantics who mattered most on this side of the Atlantic (at least in terms of the concept of childhood and education) were those who specifically wrote about education, such as Pestalozzi and Froebel. In terms of impact on the development of children's literature, however, literary Romantics, such as William Blake had a far greater impact. Again, cultural differences between the United States, England, and Continental Europe impacted the type of children's literature that developed and the rate at which it developed. In general, changes in children's literature as a genre occurred first in England and moved slowly into the United States. As mentioned before, beliefs about the uncorrupted nature of childhood were not widely or uniformly shared by most early nineteenth century Americans, and this inhibited the development of a distinct literature for children. Nevertheless, the evolution of children's literature that occurred in England was in no small part influenced by literary Romanticism and, in turn, directly impacted the type of children's literature that would develop in the United States. William J. Reese, “The Origins of Progressive Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 41 (Spring 2001): 8.

believed that children's ability to see through fresh and innocent eyes would allow them to answer his Transcendental call for nonconformity in response to America's industrialization. Romantic feelings about the uncorrupted nature of the child represented a shift in thinking about the nature of childhood. For the Romantics, there was a purpose to writing literature for children that was markedly different from the intentions of most adult literature. It gave children's literature a *raison d'être*: to foster imagination while maintaining the child's visionary innocence.¹⁹

In the meantime, however, books like Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781) and *Lessons for Children* (1780); Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent's Assistant* (1796), *Moral Tales* (1800), and *Early Lessons* (1801); and Hannah More's series of *Sacred Dramas* (1815-1829) dotted the early children's literature landscape and provided parents with books to teach religious lessons to their children.²⁰ The Romantics and Transcendentalists played an important role in shaping the form and function of children's literature at a time when the genre was not distinctive.²¹ While foundational, theirs was not the sole influence on the development of children's literature as a genre. The rationalist mode of thought represented the dominant educational philosophy in the early nineteenth century and encouraged an almost catechistic approach to the writing of literature for children. While Romantics were working toward the creation of a genre of children's literature that would develop the powers of

¹⁹ Thacker and Webb., 14-55.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 22. See also Patterson, 10-57, 145.

²¹ Children's literature may have developed in England much more quickly than in the United States, but their development was not mutually exclusive. Even late into the nineteenth century, American children were relying on books written by English authors to satisfy their reading needs. Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, for instance, were widely read by children on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus, while Romantics, in particular, had little impact on American notions of childhood, they undoubtedly had a large impact on the development of American children's literature. For instance, the works of Carroll impacted the works of many American authors for children, not the least of whom was L. Frank Baum.

imagination and preserve innate innocence, rationalists were perpetuating a brand of children's literature that provided specific moral instruction for its readership. The struggle between these two opposing schools of thought established a tension in the function of American children's literature that lasted well into the twentieth century. By casting aside the moral lesson in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum attempted to relieve this tension, but he did so in a way that, while pleasing to children, many educators at the turn of the twentieth century did not accept.

The fairy tale also proved an important form of juvenile fantasy throughout the nineteenth century. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected the traditional stories of their native Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century. Charles Perrault did the same for France. Hans Christian Andersen composed tales for his native Denmark.²² Initially transmitted from adult storyteller to adult storyteller as a means of entertaining both children and adults, these tales, too, were not intended exclusively for children. Often, they incorporated many of the moral values of the societies in which they were told — and were used as a way to transmit these values to the young and reinforce them in adults. For instance, the stepsisters of Cinderella were ultimately punished for their cruelty — uplifting the values of kindness to the audience of the tale. When the fairy tales moved from the oral tradition to the literary one, they were changed, often quite drastically, from the ways they were told by the storytellers.²³ For the most part, however, they

²² The Grimm brothers heavily influenced Hans Christian Andersen. Andersen's stories differed significantly from those in either the Grimms' *Household Tales* or Perrault's *Tales of Mother Goose*. Instead of writing down tales passed down in the oral tradition, Andersen, by and large, wrote his own tales—modeling them after the folktales transcribed by the Grimm brothers. Only twelve of Andersen's 156 tales are known adaptations of folktales.

²³ Because the tales were coming out of an oral tradition, it is impossible to gauge the degree to which the Grimms' collection differed from the tales that were told in oral German culture. In Grimms' "Rapunzel," for instance, the prince becomes overwhelmed with grief and jumps from the tower. In some oral tellings of the tale, the witch gouges out the prince's eyes and throws him off the tower. Because of the transient nature of oral culture, many of the changes the Grimms may have made to their other fairy tales may never be known. Examples like the one from "Rapunzel" have led many scholars to question the sources of Grimms' stories. Some have argued that the Grimms deliberately changed their tales to make them appeal to a higher-class (and literate) audience. Others have claimed that the Grimms' informants were largely middle-class and would not have known the tales as they were told among

retained their audience, comprised of both adults and children, into the twentieth century. They also continued to encapsulate the moral values they held before they entered the literary realm, and since they contained these morals, they continued to be used as a tool for teaching basic moral values.²⁴

L. Frank Baum and Moralizing in Children's Literature

By the late nineteenth century, the fairy tale had lost many of its proponents. Writers, critics, and parents increasingly viewed the tales as inappropriate to be told to children. Many feared that the stark violence and grotesqueries in the tales had a negative influence on children. This was particularly true in the United States, where the European origin of the fairy tales also left them with diminished status.²⁵ Famed children's writer Peter Parley, a pen name for Samuel Goodrich, wrote in his autobiography, *Recollections of a Lifetime* (1858), that he stood ““convinced that much of the vice and crime in the world are to be imputed in these atrocious books [violent fairy tales] put into the hands of children, and bringing down, with more or less efficiency, to their own debased moral standards.””²⁶ Tellers of fairy tales had a long history of

the German peasantry. Others have claimed that one of their important informants, Dorothea Viehmann, was a Huguenot of French descent, and she would not have known how the tales were told in Germany. Still others have argued that the act of writing the tales takes them out of the more fluid oral cultural community and makes previously dynamic tales static. In any event, there is a general scholarly consensus that Grimms' fairy tales substantially differ from the way they were told in nineteenth century German oral culture. See A.S. Byatt, “Introduction,” in *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, ed. Maria Tatar (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2004), xxxii-xxxv.

²⁴ Thacker and Webb, 17; Martin Gardner, “Preface” in *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), xi; Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1977), 10; T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-Modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 170; Richard Anderson, *Art in Primitive Societies* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979); Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

²⁵ Tales coming out of the oral tradition tend to be culturally bound. As such, the popularity of fairy tales was slow to develop outside of Europe. Literary fairy tales were not popular in England until the mid-nineteenth century, while their popularity had waxed much earlier in France and Italy. It was not until Hans Christian Andersen began writing his tales in 1835 that the popularity of fairy tale grew in England and America. Jack Zipes, *When Dreams Come True: Classical Fairy Tales and their Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 20-1, 111.

²⁶ Cited in Hearn, 5.

using their stories to teach the values of their respective cultures. However, like the dime novels that will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, in the antebellum United States fairy tales were commonly accused of creating a fascination with violence and other immoral behavior in the young. The Progressive educational movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought greater numbers of children into the school, gave them literacy, and left them searching for entertaining reading.²⁷ Progressives questioned the appropriateness of fairy tales for filling this role.

Although he was not a Progressive, Baum clearly shared many of these concerns. Again, he wrote in the introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: "... the time has come for a series of new '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." Though he acknowledged the educational power of the fairy tale (the fearsome moral), he questioned the methods used to teach that moral. Like the Romantics of the early nineteenth century, Baum argued that the author needed to protect the innocence of the child — and that using the fear of violent reprisal to teach had negative effects upon the child. It is unclear whether he felt that violent tales would create belligerence in the child or whether he merely thought fear ought not be used to teach children. Whatever he supposed the effect of violent stories on the young to be, his book "aspire[d] to being a modernized fairy tale, in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heart-aches and nightmares are left out."²⁸

However, by eliminating the violent and the grotesque from his tales, Baum also, either inadvertently or intentionally, attempted to eliminate the moral. Evildoers no longer received a

²⁷ Carl F. Kaestle, *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading Since 1880* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), xix.

²⁸ Baum, 4.

gruesome punishment for their transgressions. Baum banished not only the “fearsome” from his books, but he claimed to be abolishing the “moral” as well.

In England, Lewis Carroll had tried removing the moralizing from children’s literature, and with great success, less than half a century earlier with *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1864) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Carroll may have hidden mathematical and logic games in his two masterworks, but both were free from any of the sort of moralizing found in, for example, Aesop’s *Fables*. That is, neither of the books was written with an explicitly educational function. At that time, tales for children were frequently charged with the specific purpose of presenting a moral lesson. Carroll’s *Alice* books made no such pretense. The primary purpose for the child to read his books was not to acquire a moral or academic education. In *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Carroll even lampoons the tendency of children’s literature to cater to these educational ends. The Duchess claims that “everything’s got a moral, if you can only find it,” and goes on to exasperate Alice with her incessant moralizing.²⁹ Feeling that children often became frustrated or bored with their didactic books, Carroll endeavored to create stories that were free from this type of moral education. Baum certainly knew and greatly enjoyed the work of Carroll. Indeed, Baum envisioned himself as a sort of American Carroll, entitling his other book published in 1900, *A New Wonderland; being the first account ever printed of the Beautiful Valley and the wonderful adventures of its inhabitants*. Oz (and Baum’s lesser fairy-lands) represented attempts at creating an American version of Wonderland — and endeavored to create them equally free from teaching explicit morals.³⁰

²⁹ Lewis Carroll, *The Annotated Alice*, ed. Martin Gardner (New York: Wings Books, 1960), 119-123.

³⁰ Carroll was not alone in his mid-nineteenth century attempts at writing children’s tales without the moralizing agenda. Clark points out (p. 105) that Alcott’s *Little Women* “marked a departure from the previous moralizing in children’s literature.” Carroll’s work provides a better example, since, as I argued earlier—and as Clark argues in her book as well, *Little Women* was not initially received as a work of juvenile fiction. Moreover, since *Little Women* is far from a work of fantasy, it is also further removed from the tradition of using the fairy tale as a story for

Ironically, given Baum's explicit statement to the contrary in the introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, few scholars, writers, and young lovers of the *Oz* series of books, or even Baum himself came to see Baum's work as free from this type of moralizing. In reference to the moral lessons contained the Baum's first *Oz* book, scholar Neil Earle writes:

Baum's morally-toned fairy tale appeared simultaneously with the cultural and political wave that would reappear in various movements of the twentieth century. Hence, the emphasis by both Baum and his reviewers that literature—even children's literature and especially American children's literature—must be suffused with a serious didactic purpose.³¹

Baum expressed a belief that his books should be “only entertainment” for the children that read them, yet a belief that children's literature ought to be “suffused with a serious didactic purpose” is attributed to him. Certainly, Earle is not alone in this assessment of the work of Baum. Others have readily admitted the kinds of moral lessons they learned reading Baum's works. For instance, novelist William Lindsay Gresham once wrote: “As I read [*The Scarecrow of Oz* once again as an adult], I realized for the first time how powerfully the *Oz* chronicles had influenced my life, how many healthy and sturdy values I had gained from Baum.”³² It is quite clear that the readers of the *Oz* series found something that was, in fact, much more than “only entertainment.” The pages of the books may not have been “suffused with a serious didactic purpose”; nevertheless, at least some children were gleaned “healthy and sturdy” moral lessons from these same pages.

children. In any event, while Carroll may not have been the first to write stories for children primarily for the purpose of entertainment, he is the epitome of such a writer, and probably the most significant one to the future developments in the genre.

³¹ Neil Earle. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in American Popular Culture* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 48.

³² Cited in Rahn, 107.

Earle was also correct in his assertion that Baum's reviewers saw precisely such a didactic purpose in his work. *The New York Times*, in its review of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* on September 8, 1900, wrote: "The story has humor and here and there stray bits of philosophy that will be a moving power on the child's mind and will furnish fields of study and investigation for the future students and professors of psychology."³³ The review, at one point, even compared the work of Baum favorably to "the tales of Aesop and other fableists."³⁴ *Book News*, in October of 1900, reiterated the point: "It [*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*] is not lacking in philosophy and satire which will furnish amusement to the adult and cause the juvenile to think some new and healthy thoughts."³⁵ Prominent book reviewers saw Baum's book as precisely the type of pedagogical text that Baum insisted his work was replacing.

Baum's outright assertion that his book was "only entertainment" was not his only stated opinion regarding the educational quality of his works. It is clear that Baum's intention was not to set out to write fairy tales without redeeming morals to them. In *The Chicago Evening Post* on November 9, 1902, Baum wrote, "children are quick to discover and absorb [a moral], provided it is not tacked up like a warning on a signpost."³⁶ In fact, it may well be that Baum's assertion that his book was "only entertainment" was a strategic one. He "tacked up a signpost" at the beginning of his book telling the children that there was no moral to be found, when, in fact, there were a great number of them lying right below the surface. In the preface to *American Fairy Tales*, Baum revised his statement in the introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: "They [my works] are not too serious in purpose, but aim to amuse and entertain, yet I trust the

³³ Author unknown, "A New Book for Children," *New York Times*, 8 Sep. 1900, BR 12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Cited in Hearn, xlv.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

more thoughtful of my readers will find a wholesome lesson hidden beneath each extravagant notion and humorous incident.”³⁷ In as many words, Baum admitted that he intentionally hid moral lessons in his work — but marketed the books to children as pure entertainment out of a sense that children would be less likely to read and enjoy an overtly didactic book.

At the turn of the twentieth century, such thinking flew in the face of popular thought about what the nature of children’s literature ought to be. *Oz*’s first literary critic, Edward Wagenknecht, wrote in a 1962 follow-up to his 1929 book *Utopia Americana* that the predominant attitude toward writing children’s books in Baum’s era was to “just cram your pages with fact, not art ... and you can justify asking almost any price, because it is quite respectable to spend your money on education, but you’re going to think twice before you squander it on something somebody has ‘made up.’”³⁸ This was, perhaps, a cynical view of the nature of late-nineteenth century children’s literature. The publishers of children’s books at the time were not necessarily looking for artless books, but they were seeking books that would satisfy the desires of parents. By and large, parents wanted books that would supplement the moral education of their children.³⁹ They wanted books like the copies of Aesop’s *Fables* and

³⁷ L. Frank Baum, *American Fairy Tales* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 4. The edition, too, is an unabridged and unaltered reproduction of Baum’s 1901 book.

³⁸ Edward Wagenknecht, “Utopia Americana: A Generation Afterwords,” *The American Book Collector* 13 (December 1962): 12.

³⁹ One of the hallmarks of Modernism was the emancipation of the author from the burden of demonstrating moral truths, following moral convention, or providing didactic moralism. With the exception of controversial experimentalists who fought the traditional function of literature, authors were pressed to keep their works on solid moral grounding. David Sidorsky, “Modernism and Emancipation of Literature from Morality: Teleology and Vocation in Joyce, Ford, and Proust,” *New Literary History* 15 (Autumn 1983): 137-153. Some of this force was placed on publishers by educators who were encouraged to use books to teach morality alongside literacy. This dual function for teaching literature shaped school textbooks. Frequently, book publishers excerpted parts from longer works, making fundamental revisions and omitting all but the most morally sound portions. Sarah Elizabeth Bundy, “The Provision of Moral Education for Pupils in the Senior High School,” *The School Review* 34 (October 1926): 606-617; Ruth Windhover, “Literature in the Nineteenth Century,” *The English Journal* 68 (April 1979): 28-33. In Chapter 6, we see that some parents even questioned whether reading fiction was appropriate for children (for fear of an accretion of mistrust that might arise from hearing such “lies”). Victorian parents pressured publishers to produce and schools to teach only literature that would promote ethical behavior and character development.

Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* that formed the core of the literature they had read as children. Importantly, the book was marketed with these parental concerns in mind. In one review of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, parents read: "Little folks will go wild over it and older people will read it with pleasure since it will form a pleasing interlude with more serious fiction."⁴⁰ In other words, the *Oz* books were to be envisioned as an entertaining diversion between educational books. In Michael Hearn's estimation, Baum would have been satisfied with this type of marketing of his books, because it allowed him to write novels that were not designed to teach lessons: "Baum despised the overly didactic, so his tales are generally free of the cloying sentimentality and moralizing which lard the now forgotten, but once admired children's literature of the last [nineteenth] century."⁴¹ Billing his books as pure entertainment made Baum's work stand out against a backdrop of didactic literature, and it allowed Baum to write books that were somewhat revolutionary in their lack of overt moral message. In addition, it allowed him to do this without upsetting a long-held tradition that made most children's literature adopt an explicitly educational mode.

Dr. Ryland, a close friend of Baum, once wrote that "he [Baum] wasn't what you'd call a religious man ... He had a gospel of his own and he preached it through his books."⁴² Baum most certainly had an agenda behind his books that he meant "to preach," but he did so in a way that was not preachy. Even if Baum advertised his work to children as absurd fantasy written for the sheer joy of it, "originality (novelty) is not an end in itself, but a means to an end: providing a community with access to collective wisdom passed down in symbolic form from one generation

⁴⁰ Review in *The Bookseller and Latest Literature*, cited in Hearn, xlv.

⁴¹ Hearn, xlvii.

⁴² Hearn, xciv-xcv.

to the next.”⁴³ By its nature, fantasy cannot be devoid of a deeper message. Fantasy attempts to answer the fundamental questions of a people. Who are we? Where do we belong? Where have we come from? Where are we going? In this way, the fantasies created by a society reveal the existential crises experienced in the development of that society. Fantasy stories can only become mythic when most of the people are capable of learning about and making sense of their own cultural identity through their readings of the tale. Moreover, the immense popularity of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (and the ensuing books and films) indicates people found in them just such a message. This kind of success can be achieved “only when millions of people find their needs and desires are satisfied.”⁴⁴ Stories can only become classics when several generations find fulfillment in them. Certainly, Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is such a classic. The first book in Baum’s *Oz* series was one of the best-selling books of the twentieth century, and the 1939 film only increased the scope of the audience for Baum’s message. *The Wizard of Oz* has been seen more times, by more people, than any other film in history. It has been seen more than a billion times.⁴⁵ If fantasies help their audiences to answer their deeper existential questions, then the immense popularity of the story of Dorothy and her companions suggests the power of its educational message.

In 1900, when *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* first appeared, Americans were grappling with just such an existential quandary. The early nineteenth century had been typified by the frontier life. The predominant ethos of the country was that one is capable of making a life for oneself. By the late nineteenth century this attitude had changed. As explored in greater detail in the next

⁴³ Paul Nathanson, *Over the Rainbow: The Wizard of Oz as Secular Myth of America* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 81.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁵ Earle, 1; Gardner, “Preface,” xi

chapter, in the late nineteenth century United States, many Americans began to perceive that they did not have control over their own economic destinies.⁴⁶ Certainly, the *Oz* series bore the marks of early nineteenth century Romanticism in the sense that it contrasted two worlds, “one identified with rural peace and simplicity, the other with urban power and sophistication.”⁴⁷ On the other hand, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was unmistakably a product of the early twentieth century. The image of Kansas painted by the *Oz* books represented the newly closed American frontier. The economic success of Uncle Henry and Aunt Em was inhibited by the control of the bank over their land. *Oz*, then, represented the American frontier as it formerly existed — a land in which one could still become fulfilled by individual effort. The unexplored portions of the United States had become “escape valves for the poorest people.”⁴⁸ As Frederick Jackson Turner observed in his quintessential *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, if free land became unavailable, democracy would stagnate, and America’s identity as a country in which an ever advancing frontier made meritocracy possible would be lost.⁴⁹ Dorothy (followed by Aunt Em and Uncle Henry) was able to go to Oz, a largely unexplored land of plenty. Oz, therefore, became a continuation of the American Dream, democracy and economic independence made possible by an everlasting frontier. How the *Oz* books addressed the rapid social change will be examined in much further detail in the following chapter. Turner effectively argued the closing of the frontier significantly impacted American cultural attitudes.

⁴⁶ Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Rudolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 64; Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 44-75.

⁴⁷ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 19.

⁴⁸ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 65-66.

⁴⁹ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (New York: Ungar, 1967), 28.

As many pioneers, including Baum's own family, left the American West to seek economic opportunities elsewhere, his Oz provided them with an image of the America for which they had hoped; that is, he attempted to reestablish a cultural identity at a time when it was in flux. By influencing readers' development of cultural identity, the *Oz* books were implicitly educational.

Baum's works were, nevertheless, explicitly educational as well. Baum clarified his educational goals with his books a bit late in the series. In the introduction to *The Lost Princess of Oz* (1917), the eleventh book in the series, Baum mused: "A prominent educator tells me that fairy tales are of untold value in developing imagination in the young. I believe it."⁵⁰ Baum had the idea that by writing his stories in the form of the fairy tale he was, in some way, improving the minds of his readers. At least part of his aim in writing was educating children, and this was a far cry from the goal of pure entertainment stated in the introduction to the first book. He may have even been successful in achieving this newly stated goal. In his *New York Times Book Review* of the *Oz* books, Gore Vidal claimed that "those who read [the Oz books] are often made what they were not — imaginative, tolerant, alert to wonders, life."⁵¹ Vidal attributed some of his own success as a novelist to the imaginative powers the *Oz* books helped hone.

In *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim argued that fantasy literature does much more than promote imagination in its readers. He argued that the fairy tale is a form well suited for delivering a wide array of lessons to young children. They are foundational texts from which

⁵⁰ L. Frank Baum, *The Lost Princess of Oz* (New York, Ameron House, 1917), 13.

⁵¹ Gore Vidal, "On Rereading the Oz Books," *New York Times Book Review*, 13 Oct. 1977. Selections from this review were used as advertisement for a reprinting of the Oz books. On the inside cover of the Ballantine Books editions of the Oz series published in the early 1990 were reprinted this selection from Gore Vidal's review. Interestingly, this quote uplifts both aspects of the books discussed here. It bills the books as full of wonder and adventure, while still uplifting them as morally positive and, in a way, educational. The status of Baum's works as classics mean that these educational messages dissipated little over time, and that Gore Vidal was still discussing the educational power of Baum's work in the late 1970s indicate the perennial nature of the moral lessons in Baum's work. Vidal's article was reprinted in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz: Centennial Edition* (New York: Ibooks, 2001), 51-78.

children learn cultural values, problem solving skills, and the basis for moral behavior. For a receptive child, “more can be learned from them [fairy tales] about the inner problems of human beings, and of the right solutions to their predicaments in any society, than from any other type of story within the child’s conception.”⁵² Thus, Baum’s choice of the fairy tale as his medium becomes a powerful one in terms of educational efficacy. The tales are simple, easily understood by a child, and yet they hide profound messages. Baum himself maintained they have the ability to shape the imaginative powers of children. Bettelheim claims they have the ability to teach children complex social behaviors in an easily understood way. As a result, the seemingly simple tales disguised as amusing diversions to be read between more serious pieces of literature themselves performed a genuine educational function.

Pilgrim’s Progress and Oz

In 1897, Lewis Carroll penned his last written piece for children, an introduction to E.G. Wilcox’s book, *The Lost Plum Cake*. In it, he expressed a concern that young children were bored by going to church, and he feared they would grow up to have little interest in continuing to attend services. His solution to this problem was to allow children to bring books with them to read during the sermon. This way, children would look back fondly on going to church and would continue to do so in their adult years.⁵³

There is little evidence that Carroll envisioned a religious sub-text to any of his works. A highly devout deacon at Christ Church, Carroll even took umbrage when a friend suggested that *Pilgrim’s Progress* had inspired the ending of *Through the Looking Glass*. He considered such

⁵² Bruno Bettelheim, 221.

⁵³ Lewis Carroll, *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1994), 1158-1160.

an idea highly irreverent.⁵⁴ Although Baum did look upon Carroll as his literary hero, he did not possess the devout religious character of his idol and did not find the idea of using religious source material problematic. Two years after Carroll wrote his final work for children, L. Frank Baum began work on *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, his *Pilgrim's Progress* in “the comic mode.”⁵⁵ Ryland’s statement about Baum having a “gospel of his own” — that he preached through his work — leads one to believe that Baum did not view the *Pilgrim's Progress* sub-text to his *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as teaching an inherently religious message, despite the religious nature of the source for the allusion. Rather, he merely used *Pilgrim's Progress* as a means of bolstering his own secular message.

As mentioned in the previous section, Baum’s decision to use the form of the fairy tale was judicious. Authors in the United States, a country without its own native fairy tales, were left to create their own. Those authors who wrote fairy tales and other works of fantasy were engaging in work that was implicitly educational; they were creating tales that would impart important aspects of morality and culture to their young readers. By borrowing heavily from *Pilgrim's Progress* in theme, characterization, and even structure, however, Baum was channeling a text that he knew to occupy a space deep within the American consciousness, and he was creating a American fairy tale that would come to perform a function similar to that of native fairy tales in other countries – transmission of cultural identity.

The story of *Pilgrim's Progress* is that of Christian’s allegorical journey from the City of Destruction to the City of Zion. This is precisely the journey that Dorothy takes — from the site of destruction, the aftermath of the tornado, to the heaven-like “city on the hill,” the Emerald

⁵⁴ John Francis McDermott, “Introduction” in *The Russian Journal and Other Selections from the Works of Lewis Carroll*, ed. John Francis McDermott (Toronto: General Publishing Co., 1977), 15.

⁵⁵ Earle, vii.

City. Certainly, the narrative of *Pilgrim's Progress*, following the road to salvation toward a land of promise, resonated with many people in the nineteenth century United States. Both the waves of immigrants coming to the United States and the pioneer settlers migrating to the frontier could relate to Christian's journey. *Pilgrim's Progress* was a popular work in the nineteenth century United States in part because it reflected the American belief in the opportunity represented by the frontier. Likewise, Baum's works, by channeling those aspects of *Pilgrim's Progress*, tried to reestablish a faith in the opportunity represented by the frontier in a United States in which the frontier had closed. The cultural legacy of this pioneer spirit may also account for the huge popularity of Baum's work throughout the twentieth century and further demonstrates the implicitly educational qualities of Baum's most popular series (resulting from the inherent ability of fairy tales and other works of fantasy to reveal important elements of the culture that created them).

The parallels between *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and *Pilgrim's Progress* are quite numerous. Hearn enumerates many of them in his annotations to Baum's book. Some of them are explicitly religious in associations. He notes, for instance, a quote from *Pilgrim's Progress* that lauds the man who has religion while "in his rags" as well as when he is "in his silver slippers."⁵⁶ When she first arrives in Oz, Dorothy's house falls on the Wicked Witch of the West, and Dorothy receives the magical pair of silver slippers the witch leaves behind. After killing the Wicked Witch of the West, the Good Witch of the North comes and kisses Dorothy on the forehead and provides her with a mark of protection from the dangerous situations that will follow. In the same way, before beginning his pilgrimage, Christian has a mark set upon his

⁵⁶ Hearn, 39.

forehead to protect him.⁵⁷ This example, however, also echoes the story of Cain and Abel in the second chapter of Genesis. After Cain kills Abel, the Lord sets his mark upon Cain “lest anyone finding him should kill him.” After killing the Wicked Witch, the Good Witch sets her mark upon Dorothy for the same reason. Thus, in certain ways, scenes from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* are intimately tied to a Biblical, and hence religious (and educational), tradition by their close relationship to *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

At the same time, however, many of the references to *Pilgrim’s Progress* tend to be anecdotal and devoid of any religious connotation. The poppy fields in which Dorothy and her friends fall asleep strongly resemble the Enchanted Ground that will cause one to fall asleep forever that Christian encounters on his pilgrimage. Both Christian and Dorothy are attacked at some point on their journeys by a forest of live trees.⁵⁸ In *The Scarecrow of Oz* (1915), one of the later books in the series, Baum even made a pun in reference to Bunyan. The Scarecrow tells his companions that you find “bunions” on your feet, but you find “Bunyan’s” in a library.⁵⁹ The sheer number of references by Baum to Bunyan’s famous work ties *Pilgrim’s Progress* closely to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

The parallels between *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* extend well beyond both allusion and narrative structure. The two works are also quite similar on the level of characterization. Both Christian and Dorothy are static characters. Dorothy begins the tale “sensible, friendly, brave without being foolhardy, deeply attached to her friends and family, and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 50-1.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 141, 317.

⁵⁹ L. Frank Baum, *The Scarecrow of Oz* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1997), 50. *The Scarecrow of Oz* was the ninth book in the series and was originally published in 1915.

resolved in pursuing her goals.”⁶⁰ When she ends the tale, she is no different. The same is true of Christian. He arrives at Zion the diligent, faithful, uncorrupted pilgrim he was when he began the journey.⁶¹ Even Lewis Carroll’s Alice, who is often accused of being a static character, learns something in the course of her two books. Her first trip to Wonderland begins with her almost drowning in a pool of her own tears, while the end of the second book finds her the new queen of the chessboard. The hero tale is generally one in which someone badly in need of change goes on an adventure, during the course of which one learns that which one was lacking. In the case of both *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, however, we find two characters whose only discovery at the end of the journey is that they had the potential to complete the journey from the beginning.

That Baum was not religious allowed him to model his novel after a work often viewed as sacred. Baum, without the same level of religious compunction as his hero Carroll, borrowed from *Pilgrim’s Progress* unapologetically. Why, given his antipathy to organized religion, should Baum want to do so? Some of the motivation may have been familiarity. Many children had already read *Pilgrim’s Progress* and would have already known the work. Since *Pilgrim’s Progress* was already a well-established text in children’s literature, Baum would have known that the story model was an effective one for reaching children. This type of character on this type of journey is capable of capturing the imaginations of children.

⁶⁰ Rahn, 57.

⁶¹ This is not the pattern of most tales, particularly those intended for an audience of children. Bilbo Baggins from *The Hobbit*, for instance, begins the tale as a reclusive, insular, and unadventurous fellow. By the time the tale ends, he has developed friendships with dwarves, elves, and a wizard, having seen much of the world far from his home, and having defeated the evil dragon Smaug. The children in *Peter Pan*, likewise, begin the journey to Neverland with Peter that they might remain children forever. By the end of the tale, they have decided to return home and grow up.

More importantly, however, borrowing from *Pilgrim's Progress* positioned *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a text within the genre of utopian literature, instead of solely being a piece of children's fantasy. *Pilgrim's Progress's* place in the genre was already quite well-established — even to the extent that many Americans considered *Pilgrim's Progress* to be a model for their story in building a nation. For a man who “had a gospel of his own” and envisioned his written works as educational texts to preach that gospel, utopian literature, which had the potential to shape popular identity and beliefs, must have been an attractive one to Baum. On the cover of Baum's 1882 play (for adults), *The Maid of Arran*, he called the drama, “A Play to Ensnare All Hearts, and Leave an Impress of Beauty and Nobility within the Sordid Mind of Man.”⁶² Based on this subtitle, it seems Baum did conceive of his occupation as a writer as one in which he was to improve the minds and hearts of his readers — and, broadly, as an effort to improve society as a result. By equating his own Emerald City with Zion, Baum established Oz, his little fairyland, as a utopian space. He also established his text as a new one in the tradition of the utopian novel — affording him all of the public pedagogical opportunities inherent in the genre.

Baum positioned his books as pure entertainment in a genre dominated by tales with morals “tacked up like signposts.” As such, he was capable of attracting a large children's readership to his “gospel.” In 1897 Lewis Carroll was looking for wholesome ways for children to pass the time during church sermons that bored them. Two years later, across the Atlantic, L. Frank Baum was writing a book that would entertain children, while teaching them lessons to prevent their minds from becoming “sordid.”

⁶² Cited in Tom St. John, “Lyman Frank Baum: Looking Back to the Promised Land” in *Western Humanities Review* 36 (Winter 1982): 349.

CHAPTER 3
ESCAPE AND RECONSTRUCTION:
OZ AND THE FUNCTION OF THE UTOPIAN NOVEL

The utopian novel is an implicitly educational subgenre. E.P. Thompson, in his discussion on William Morris's utopian novel *News from Nowhere* (1891), once wrote that the presentation of a conception of utopia is the "education of desire." This education of desire is not, however, "the same as 'a moral education' towards a given end: it is, rather, to open a way to aspiration...to an uninterrupted integration of our values and also to its own self-interrogation."¹ The type of education provided by utopian novels is distinct from that of other literary genres; they are educational without being didactic. Writing about Baum's *Oz* books, Edward Wagenknecht penned, "We grow to resemble our dreams."² Misery is the impetus for art. Why create an imaginary world if you are satisfied with the actual one?³ Utopian novels, by concentrating on what constitutes a perfect place, "open the way to aspiration." Subtextually, they encourage their audiences to contemplate questions of political and social philosophy. However, they do so by causing their audiences to evaluate what they find dissatisfying about their own lives. By presenting readers with an appealing vision, utopian novels demonstrate what may constitute a more satisfying situation. A genre develops to occupy a specific niche in a cultural environment. Utopian novels exist as a means of evaluating the inadequacies of the present socio-political situation. They help their readers make sense of new problems, discover new solutions, and effect changes in their desire.⁴

¹ Cited in Philip E. Wegner, *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 180.

² Edward Wagenknecht, *Utopia Americana* (Seattle: University of Washington Book Store, 1929), 30.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ Wegner, 31.

On the subject of utopia, William Morris once wrote, “the need for utopia stands in common usage for the ultimate in human folly or human hope — vain dreams of perfection in a Never-Never Land or rational efforts to remake man’s environment and his institutions and even his own erring nature, so as to enrich the possibilities of the common life.”⁵ According to this view, humans have an inner need to imagine perfect worlds. This point was echoed by Anatole France: “Without the utopians of other times, men would still live in caves, miserable, and naked... Utopia is the principle of all progress.”⁶ France makes the link between utopian visions and social change explicit; conceptions of utopia provide the benchmark against which human success is measured. The common critique that utopian visions are idealistic and “only exist on paper,” then, is rendered obsolete. Architects’ plans for houses, too, only exist on paper. A utopian novel, in theory, serves as a blueprint for building a better society.⁷

Even so, “educating desire” is but a small portion of the educational potential of the utopian novel. The domain of narrative utopias extends beyond. By presenting the reader with a fantasy world and encouraging the reader to consider how a perfect society might operate, the pedagogical practices of the utopian novel enable us to inhabit, make sense of, orient ourselves within, and act through any particular space — a process Philip Wegner terms “cognitive mapping.”⁸ By arguing that utopian novels “educate desire,” scholars like Thompson and Wagenknecht posit that utopian novels are agents of social change; they foster transformations in the philosophical beliefs of their readers, and they educate their readers on how to create a better world. Equally important, by endowing their readers with a greater capacity to create “cognitive

⁵ Cited in Lewis Mumford, *The Story of Utopias* (New York: The Viking Press, 1922), 1.

⁶ Cited in Wagenknecht, 15.

⁷ Mumford, 25.

⁸ Wegner, 15.

maps,” they provide people with the capacity to make sense of their own place in the world. For this reason, utopian narratives tend to be written in transitional ages — when a new social order is developing. In a certain sense every age is a transitional one, poised between the past and the future, but, as Gerald Gutek argues, many changes occur without “seriously disturbing or modifying the bases of social life.”⁹ Baum’s era, the age of the utopian novel in the United States (for the purposes of this chapter extending from the publication of Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* in 1881 to the rise of the dystopian novel following World War II), was not one of normal change. Rather, it was a time of profound transition when the reading public found “cognitive maps” increasingly necessary.¹⁰ Wagenknecht and Thompson claim that utopian novels are partly responsible for these social changes (by picturing a future different from the present). Wegner, by contrast, argues that utopian novels provide new ways for the public to view the social changes that are occurring, so they are responsible for providing people with the psychological tools to adjust to new social conditions.

These two interpretations form the foundation for an interpretation of a dual educational purpose for the utopian novel. Despite their more fantastic elements, there is a “reality” to utopian communities: “they have material, pedagogical, and ultimately political effects, shaping the way people understand and, as a consequence, act in their worlds.”¹¹ This is particularly true of children’s literature. Adults, more set in their ways, are less impressionable than children. Children’s literature plays a strong role in developing a child’s worldview, while the worldview of the adult is more static. Wegner, by arguing (within the world of adult books) that utopian novels are implicitly pedagogical, postulated that these books have a way of shaping our beliefs

⁹ Gerald L. Gutek, *George S. Counts and American Civilization* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹¹ Wegner, 3.

about a rapidly changing world. This chapter explains how the *Oz* series of books helped children to cope with the trauma of modern living, shaped their belief systems, and taught them to live in the twentieth century. Mindful of the ideas of Thompson and Wagenknecht, the chapter also seeks to demonstrate that *Oz* (like other narrative utopias) offered children a vision of how to reinvent the communities they inhabited — stirring controversy that made them an obvious target for zealous librarians.

H.G. Wells explained the educational power of the utopian novel clearly in the introduction to his own *A Modern Utopia*: “I rejected from the outset the form of the argumentative essay, the form of which appeals most readily to what is called the ‘serious’ reader...”¹² Wells makes a vivid case for the educational potential of the utopian novel. He has an educational purpose in mind in writing his book; he is attempting to influence the political thinking of his readers. While he rejects the form of the essay because it limits his audience, he does intend for his novel to function as an argumentative essay. The impact of the argumentative essay, Wells believed, is measured: only the most educated (and those, perhaps, with the smallest need for education in political philosophy) will read his work. Instead, Wells turned to the utopian novel, presented people with his view of an ideal society, and attempted to expose the deficiencies he perceived with the society in which he was writing.

Wells, it seems, agreed with the notion that the utopian novel had the power to “educate desire.” He wanted his book to provide the leisure reader with an argumentative essay disguised as a book of wonder. He sought to influence their worldview via a fanciful narrative. Like Wells, Baum was quick to admit the educational power of the fantasy story. In *The Master Key: An Electrical Fairy Tale* he wrote: “Here is a fairy tale founded upon the wonders of

¹² H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), xxxi. This was originally published in 1905.

electricity...yet, when my readers shall become men and women my story may not seem to their children like a fairy tale at all.” Baum’s attitude about the way his work functions seems to embody both the principle that utopian novels “educate desire” and that they provide “cognitive maps” for their readers. Here, Baum asserted that there is magic in modern technology and that he is using his own fantasy works in a way that would usher in a new era in which those developments he is discussing would occur. The reasons Baum gave for writing fantastic literature are two-fold. First, he indicated a belief that the world would grow to resemble his fairy tale. Also, Baum’s idea that these things will not seem like magic to the readers’ children indicates that, in part, this book was meant to ease the transition into the coming technological era.¹³ The twentieth century would grow to resemble a nineteenth century fantasy; late nineteenth and early twentieth century developments like electric lights, phonographs, telephones, airplanes, and skyscrapers created new domestic and work lives for people. People turned to fantasy utopias to ascertain the meaning and implications of these products of the imagination to their lives.

Theorists have long tried to divide the utopian novels into two groups, based on their educational role. The escape utopia is a fantasy providing the audience with a release from the difficulties of everyday life. The reconstructive utopia seeks to change the external world.¹⁴ In one sense, such a distinction is useful. As discussed in Chapter 2, Baum claimed he was not writing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as an instructional text. This distinguished it from the bulk of other children’s literature written and published in the United States prior to the twentieth century. In that sense, one would be inclined to categorize the *Oz* books as utopian novels of the

¹³ Selma G. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole: Adventures and Misadventures in the Realm of Children’s Literature* (New York: Antheneum, 1971), 99.

¹⁴ Morris, 15.

first variety. To do this, however, would ignore Baum's assertion in the introduction to *The Master Key* that the world would become increasingly like his fantasy. Bearing this in mind, it seems to make more sense to approach Baum's utopias as reconstructive ones. Given the clearly dual function of the *Oz* books, education and entertainment, neither categorization is completely satisfactory. Instead, it is useful to see all utopian novels as both escapist and reconstructive — and viewing both as educational functions of the text. Wells readily admits that he intended for his work to have a greater political impact by couching it in terms of an escapist fantasy. The same is true for Baum. Utopian novels function by drawing the reader into the narrative with a vision of a better life, educate their desire, and enable the readers to find a satisfying place in their own lives (escape utopia). The result of this escape is to help them create a “cognitive map” to provide them with a template for effecting meaningful change in society (reconstructive utopia).

Fred Erisman in his 1968 article made a bold claim about L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: “Indeed, though one cannot say with certainty, it is possible that Baum, by suggesting to the children of the early twentieth century what might be achieved, helped to preserve American idealism through the reality of a depression and two world wars. If so, his success is not a small one.”¹⁵ Throughout this dissertation the emphasis is on the negative reception by librarians to the seemingly radical political positions that Baum's *Oz* series seemed to embody. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, nonetheless, became a central part of American cultural mythology. Throughout the history of the *Oz* books, librarians and critics have sought to label them as subversive. There is a certain irony, then, that a series that was perennially accused of perverting mainstream values would become an almost universally loved embodiment of

¹⁵ Fred Erisman, “L. Frank Baum and the Progressive Dilemma,” *American Quarterly*, 20:3 (Fall 1968): 623.

distinctly American values.¹⁶ This dissertation seeks to demonstrate that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the ensuing books occupied a unique position at the nexus of a variety of social, economic, and literary changes immediately following the turn of the twentieth century. This chapter argues that Baum's *Oz* books "educated the desire" of early twentieth century American children and provided them with a "cognitive map" for understanding the rapid changes that were occurring around them. The universal themes in Baum's books (e.g. the value of intelligence, compassion, courage, and a sense of home) allowed the books to maintain their relevance to successive generations of Americans. As the cultural climate changed, however, so did the interpretations of the pedagogical intentions of Baum's works.

Hope and Fear: The Social Climate of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Waldo Frank expressed his belief that modern life had failed to give meaning and satisfaction to the lives of individuals: "We are all the sworn foes of capitalism, not because we knew it would not work, but we judged it, even in success, to be lethal to the human spirit."¹⁷ In 1850, the United States population was 85% rural, 15% urban. This changed very little over the next decade. In 1860, 83% of Americans were rural. As industrialization took control, the number of people moving to the cities increased drastically. By 1900, only two out of every three Americans still lived in the country. In 1940, less than one in four people lived on a farm.¹⁸ Between 1888 and 1892, half of the population of Kansas filtered out of the state in

¹⁶ In particular, see Chapter 6 in this dissertation concerning Dorothy Dodd and the censorship of the *Oz* books in Florida. If *New Masses* saw the books as sympathetic to the communist cause, it seems odd that Baum's work would be so universally known and loved among even Red Scare era Americans.

¹⁷ Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 3-4.

¹⁸ Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 343; Thomas J. Schlereth, "Country Stores, County Fairs, and Mail-Order Catalogues: Consumption in Rural America," in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 339.

search of new opportunities.¹⁹ Legions of Americans were leaving their family farms and heading to the cities and their promise of wealth.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, many Americans who moved to the city to seek a better life were disappointed by what they found. As L. Frank Baum's son once wrote, “A disquieting gulf was growing between the new rich and the new poor; the cities knew the problem of slums, and the farmers felt an unaccustomed financial stress.”²⁰ By the 1890s, the density of the slum population in Manhattan was twice that of London. In 1904, 1% of U.S. companies controlled 40% of industrial production.²¹ The early nineteenth century was typified by the frontier life—the predominant ethos being that one is capable of making a life for oneself. By the late nineteenth century this attitude had changed. Instead, corporate life dominated the new American life — economic well-being was not dependent upon oneself.²² This was a dramatic cultural shift. As the middle class was being crowded out by monopolies, labor unions, and farm co-ops, individuals experienced diminished economic opportunities. Depression, panic, and labor disputes became commonplace.²³ Economic incorporation wrenched American

¹⁹ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), 13.

²⁰ Cited in Lanes, 100.

²¹ Neil Earle, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in American Popular Culture* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 57.

²² Blake, 64.

²³ Robert W. Downs, *Books that Changed America* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 100-1. It is important to note that for Bellamy, the quest for utopia was strictly defined as a question of building the ideal state, not the ideal man. This deviates from most of the major utopian works—including those of Plato and More—and the goals of the Progressives who succeeded Bellamy. For example, according to Bellamy the greatest number of people are incapable of knowing the truth; utopia, therefore, is not democratic. Meanwhile John Dewey emphasized the role of the school in building an effective democracy.

society from the moorings of familiar values and this process proceeded by contradiction and conflict.²⁴

On the one hand, collectivism became increasingly necessary for the lower classes. Low wages required a banding together; individualism became practically impossible. The labor union (a response to the growing financial rift between rich and poor) preferred mutualism to individualism.²⁵ According to Everhand, a character in the Jack London utopian novel *Iron Heel* (1908), “The sun of the small capitalist is setting and will never rise again. Nor is it in your power to make it stand still... This is the first fiat of evolution... combination is stronger than competition.”²⁶ Economic changes forced people to come together in ways that were previously unknown.

On the other hand, as Warren Susman argues in *Culture as History*, there was a shift away from moral concerns of “character” in the nineteenth century to emphases on “personality” in the twentieth century.²⁷ Even as people began to be more economically dependent upon each other, the idea of the importance of the individual did not wane. Moral character is a measure of the quality of one’s interactions with other people, while placing importance on a person’s personality emphasizes his or her individuality. In part, the shift from “character” to “personality” may have been a response to the dictates of scientific management, which advocated that the strengths of the individual be assessed to optimize productive capacity. The same economic changes that precipitated a de-emphasis on the importance of the individual also

²⁴ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in a Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 7.

²⁵ McGerr, 6.

²⁶ Wegner, 135.

²⁷ Simon Bronner, “Introduction,” in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Good in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 4.

contributed to the twentieth century concentration on personality.²⁸ In the words of V.W. Brooks, “One cannot have personality, one cannot have the expressions of personality so long as the end of society is an impersonal end like the accumulation of money.”²⁹ Economic conditions led people to put their own individual desires behind those of the group, but this sublimation of personal aspirations occurred without a corresponding decrease in the cultural importance placed on individual personality.

Looking Backward and the Revival of Utopia

Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (1881) was the single most influential utopian novel of the nineteenth century. John Dewey, Charles Beard, and Edwin Weeks judged the book to be the second most important book of the century (after Karl Marx’s *Capital*). *Looking Backward* was the second work of American fiction with sales surpassing one million.³⁰ The post-script of *Looking Backward* read:

“*Looking Backward* although in form a fanciful romance, is intended in all seriousness, as a forecast, in accordance with the principle of evolution, of the next stage in industrial and social development of humanity, especially in their country; and no part of it is believed by the author to be better supported by the indications of probability than the implied prediction that the dawn of a new era is already near at hand, and that the full day will swiftly follow.”³¹

This selection from Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* shows some remarkable resemblances to both the introductions to Wells’ *A Modern Utopia* and L. Frank Baum’s *A Master Key*. Bellamy, like Wells, clearly emphasizes the reconstructive nature of his work, while acknowledging that it

²⁸ The Progressive thinkers carefully negotiated these diverging cultural trends. John Dewey argued that self-realization was made possible by participation in a community. Utopia, then, must not be an individualistic land — but, rather, it is a land in which people receive personal fulfillment from their interactions with other people. In terms of this discussion, one’s own unique personality is learned by carving out one’s personal niche in a collective group.

²⁹ Cited in Blake, 76.

³⁰ Wegner, 2, 62-4.

³¹ Cited in Downs, 102.

bears some of the hallmarks of the escapist utopia, “fanciful romance.” Bellamy does not, however, see his work as particularly educational. His utopian novel is meant to be a prediction about what the future may hold, not necessarily a plan for how to arrive at this more perfect world. The next step in human development is one that is “in accordance with the principle of evolution.” In other words, the technological and economic changes of the late nineteenth century, Bellamy felt, were part of a natural progression of mankind to a higher plane of existence.³² His book, unlike those of Wells and Baum, was not intended to teach people how to create a better world. Rather, it was to inform people about the abundance and leisure that would result from enormous economic and social changes. In *Looking Backward*, happiness is linked to leisure and consumption.³³

Looking Backward is a utopian vision founded on the principle that increased mechanization and production would inevitably produce an increasingly perfect society. Although it would not come to full fruition for another half century after his death, Bellamy prophesied the actualization of a consumer society as a result of what would come to be known as Taylorism or Fordism.³⁴ “In your day,” he wrote, “riches debauched one class with idleness of mind and body, while poverty sapped the vitality of the masses with overwork, bad food, and pestilent homes.”³⁵ As industrialization in the United States was beginning to gather

³² Social Darwinism is the idea that utopia will be realized only after nature’s grand evolutionary plan is realized. Although Darwin was not an advocate for Social Darwinism, the rise of the idea of Darwin in the latter half of the nineteenth century spurred the development of a larger number of utopian conceptions. In the case of Bellamy, the application of the ideas of Darwin to the development of a conception of a perfect society is made explicit. Harold V. Rhodes, *Utopia in American Political Thought* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1967), 87.

³³ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in a Glided Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 50.

³⁴ Wegner, 81-2.

³⁵ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 48.

momentum, Bellamy represented a belief that these changes would inevitably bring about a better social order for the greatest number of people. Bellamy saw a crisis of domesticity and dissatisfaction among the greater number of people with the current situation. Bellamy believed that his proto-Taylorist theories had the potential to create surplus goods, food, and an easy lifestyle for all, and he provided his readers with this hopeful view that the future would bring them leisure and prosperity. He was committed to the idea that (only) modern life has the potential for being fully satisfying for all members of society, and he seemed fully convinced that it would be.³⁶

Michael McGerr characterizes Bellamy's work in a substantially different way from most scholars. McGerr uses the large gap that Bellamy noted between the upper and lower classes as evidence that Bellamy was dissatisfied with modern life. That Bellamy builds his utopian conception around the principle that the production of surplus goods made possible by mechanization will ease class conflict by creating a leisure class to which all people belonged indicates his whole-hearted belief in the unbounded potential of modern life. Whether Bellamy believed that the ideas of mechanization were being misapplied or whether he felt that (in 1881) the United States was simply at the very beginning of a process with an obvious outcome could be debated, but he certainly believed that the modern era would be a marked improvement from the era that preceded it. This is a point Bellamy readily admitted in the post-script to his book, when he described the point at which he was writing his book as the "dawn" of a "full day."

In Bellamy's conception, the society in which he was writing did not conform to God's purpose. First, it promoted social disorder. Second, it was inefficient. Order and efficiency were necessitated by mechanization, Bellamy taught. Auguste Comte, in his *General View of*

³⁶ McGerr, 48-55.

Positivism (1856), chronicled the possibility of human progress. The definition of “utopian spirit” as extrapolated from Comte is “the feeling that society is capable of improvement.”³⁷ In a way, this broad definition represents a modern way of conceiving utopia. The type of utopia that authors discussed in the modern era changed markedly in light of Darwin’s ideas. Prior to Darwin, utopias were static and locked into perfection. By contrast, modern utopias go through “a long ascent of changes,” each more hopeful than the last.³⁸ “The utopian spirit,” then, becomes a process of creating societal improvements incrementally.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, mechanization represented the source of the new “utopian spirit.” Increased productivity and the resultant large surpluses of goods created in the economic sector inspired reforms in governmental and political structures. Political thought became “increasingly concerned with problems relating to organizational means than questions of ends.”³⁹ The Progressive spirit turned to reforms of bureaucratic structures in order to change the character of American culture. Progressivism offered the promise of utopianism. Progressives wanted to use the state to regulate the economy, but they wanted to do so in order to transform individual Americans. There were high hopes that the coming social order would create a new and better society. Ultimately, mechanization would lead to efficient social engineering that would re-create the country (not solely the economy).⁴⁰

Progressive educators’ trust in the potential of societal reforms to improve the quality of life of their students was long lasting. Even as late as 1932, George Counts wrote in *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?*: “The age is pregnant with possibilities. There lies within

³⁷ Rhodes, 11.

³⁸ Wells, 5.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ McGerr, xiv.

our grasp the most humane, the most beautiful, the most majestic civilization ever fashioned by any people.”⁴¹ Even the title of Counts’s book embodies the utopian spirit of the era.

Progressivism is, again, founded upon a unique brand of utopian thinking put into practice. The quote itself, by focusing on the idea of “possibilities” being “within our grasp” emphasizes the incremental nature of the advance toward utopia. For Counts, it is clear that it is the province of the schools to build this new, more perfect, social order.

Looking Backward spawned a political movement Bellamy christened Nationalism. For Bellamy, there was no greater hindrance to the formation of a strong national body than the variety of differing levels of social refinement among its people. As such, education, according to Bellamy, ought to eliminate these distinctions — by raising the social refinement of the lower classes. Progressives, picking up on this idea, sought a reordering of society to increase the influence of middle class values over the lower and upper class individual.⁴² The impact of Bellamy’s novel on political thinking among reformers in the closing decades of the nineteenth century demonstrates several phenomena. Although Bellamy’s vision of a society without class distinctions never came to pass, the impact his book made on reformers demonstrates the power of the utopian novel to shape the political philosophy (and, hence, reshape the governmental, educational, and cultural landscapes).

However, Bellamy’s political impact also makes evident the relationship between the cultural environment and the utopian novel. At the cusp of immense economic and technological changes, Bellamy’s novel examined an interpretation of the possible implications of those

⁴¹ Cited in Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 188-9.

⁴² For example, the librarians discussed in the chapter on series books chose a culture (typified by “high art”) and sought to remake library patrons into people who would leave their “popular culture” texts behind and become enculturated into a higher social class.

changes — and what the changes might mean to the readers of his book. In modern political thought, most people see the future as a replication of the present, sometimes better, usually worse.⁴³ “Politics,” according to Russell Jacoby, “dissolves into scandals or, at best, policy, ways to tinker with the ship of state. No one even pretends to believe in a different future.”⁴⁴ In part, political disenchantment may account for the relative dearth of utopias produced in recent memory. The belief that the future will resemble a bleaker version of the present stifles utopian longings. The creation of a utopian novel requires an impetus, and the positive reception of such a vision is predicated on a cultural belief that the future might be better than the present.

Looking Backward found its impetus in mechanization and industrialization, and it fostered a belief that the years following the publication of the book were bound to be better than those preceding it. Most modern Westerners have readily accepted the principle that technological improvement will inevitably create a more perfect society.⁴⁵ For a time, many people believed in Bellamy’s vision and the power of industrialization to create a better society. That is, Bellamy’s work held the educational power to ease the transition of his readers into the modern era.

Looking Forward: Utopian Novels after Bellamy

The 1881 publication of *Looking Backward* precipitated a flood of utopian novels. Of the sixty-eight utopian novels published in the United States between 1865 and 1915, thirty-five of them were released between 1888 and 1895.⁴⁶ Many of these were written in direct response to the work of Bellamy. In any event, *Looking Backward* does not represent the sole type of

⁴³ Russell Jacoby, *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), xii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁴⁵ Arthur Lewis, “Utopia, Technology, and the Evolution of Society,” *Journal of General Education* 37 (Fall 1985): 163.

⁴⁶ LaFeber, 15.

utopian thinking of the era. For example, Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column: A Story of the 20th Century* (1890) stood in stark contrast to Bellamy's outlook for the future. Unlike Bellamy, Donnelly did not believe that industrialization had the potential for social good. Donnelly looked to America's past as a more perfect time of more equal distribution of wealth distribution and greater democratic participation. For Donnelly, the mechanization and standardization typifying modernity only had the potential to exacerbate the existing social problems that Bellamy hoped would be alleviated by them.⁴⁷

The Progressives advocated educational reforms modeled after the structural changes in industrial production. In part, they felt that modeling school structure after Taylorist factories would increase the access of lower classes to education, reduce class conflict, eliminate vice and crime, and promote economic development. In this sense, Progressive utopian thinking mirrored that of Bellamy. For Donnelly and other like-minded writers, universal education was not a panacea. Universal education could have great benefits, but “education will not stop corruption or misgovernment. A man may be able to read and write and yet be a fool or a knave.”⁴⁸ Donnelly felt schooling, in and of itself, was hardly a detriment, but the Progressives' insistence on the power of universal education to cure society's ills was misguided. Mechanization creates simple labor — intentionally making it require less education to perform or operate machines. As such, it could be argued, education and industrialization are antithetical. While mechanization makes universal education easier to achieve, it also makes it less necessary.⁴⁹ The type of schooling made possible by the new bureaucratic structures was not the type of education that would bring about utopia. According to Donnelly, government, education,

⁴⁷ Rhodes, 45.

⁴⁸ Cited in Rhodes, 56.

⁴⁹ Robert M. Hutchins, *The University of Utopia* (Chicago: University Press, 1953), 4-5.

religion, and trade unions would not create a perfect society. They tend to support the status quo — not threaten it.⁵⁰ Donnelly’s utopian ideas were founded on a repudiation of modern culture and epitomized the position of an early anti-modernist.

Beginning around World War I and continuing through the mid-twentieth century, utopian novelists became largely committed to anti-modernism. A variety of other utopian novelists echoed Donnelly’s suspicion of mechanization and standardization. Samuel Butler in *Erewhon, or, Over the Range* (1910) advocated the position that science, technology, innovation, and material progress would lead to disorder, chaos, and injustice.⁵¹ The residents of Erewhon had outlawed machines because a learned professor had written a book claiming that machines would someday supplant mankind.⁵² Dismissing Bellamy’s Nationalist movement, Austin Tappan Wright wrote, “In an ideal world there would be no national questions at all.”⁵³ In *Islandia* (1942), he expressed a fear of Taylorism and eschewed “progress.” “Why progress?” he asked, “Why not enjoy what one has? Men have never exhausted present pleasures.”⁵⁴ Dorna (one of the Islandians) is dismayed by the idea of modern machinery. First, electricity means having to look at ugly wires. Second, why would one want more money than one needs?⁵⁵ C.S. Lewis, in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952), one of the books in his Narnia series, likewise dismisses progress: ““We call it *going bad* in Narnia.””⁵⁶ When confronted with the prospect of

⁵⁰ Ibid, 57-8.

⁵¹ Rhodes, 59.

⁵² Samuel Butler, *Erewhon, or, Over the Range* (London: A.C. Fifield, 1913), 87.

⁵³ Austin Tappan Wright, *Islandia* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942), 529.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 76.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 165.

⁵⁶ Cited in John Goldthwaite, *The Natural History of Make-Believe: A Guide to the Principal Works of Britain, Europe, and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 230.

“roads and big cities and schools and offices,” the Narnian response was an unequivocal, “But we don’t want all those things.”⁵⁷ The century following the publication of Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* saw the realization of many of his predictions, but a retreat from the hope that they would create a better life.

As a result, utopian novels became increasingly absent from the literary landscape as the twentieth century progressed; they had been replaced by dystopian novels. As the hope in the potential of the drastic social and economic changes at the turn of the century began to diminish, the number of dystopian novels written began to increase and the number of utopian novels waned. Mechanization and order had become the fundamental premises of a nightmarish world. In George Orwell’s *1984* (1949), Big Brother had the power to brainwash the populace. In Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1931) mandatory drugging ensured the standardization of humanity, while in Zamiatin’s *We* (1924) lobotomies did.⁵⁸

Fear and disillusionment replaced the promise of lives of leisure and wealth present in Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*. In Washington State, a utopian community founded on Bellamy’s principles named Equality (after another Bellamy utopian novel) opened. It housed 300 people in 1898, 120 in 1900, and 38 in 1903.⁵⁹ People were waking from their nineteenth century utopian dreams to the stark reality of the twentieth century. There is, thus, a bifurcation between nineteenth century utopian novels and twentieth century imaginary spaces. Books like *Brave New World* and *1984* “show that quantitative changes introduced as a result of modernization — efficiency, increased productivity, electrification, the shifting of space as a consequence of new

⁵⁷ C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: Harper Collins, 1956), 38.

⁵⁸ Wegner, 186-95; Jacoby, 155-6.

⁵⁹ Timothy Miller, *The Quest for Utopia in the Twentieth Century, 1900-1960* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 33-4.

transportation technologies — do not necessarily end in a qualitative bettering of human existence.”⁶⁰ Utopian novels (like the works of Bellamy and Donnelly) were pedagogical tools for teaching people to adjust to a shifting age. Orwell (on the other hand) was envisioning the logical conclusion to the changes that had already taken place. People had already adjusted to the modern world; Orwell and the other dystopian novelists were trying to stave off further changes. The visions of these novelists were put on paper on the heels of World War I, the Great Depression, and the rise of the totalitarian regimes of Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin – times when the failed promise of modernity was most obvious.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz as Cognitive Map

If George Counts’s educational ideas were utopian in tone, his was not the brand of utopianism established by either Bellamy or Donnelly. While it is true that Counts turned away from the “scientific movement in education,” a movement that exhibited Bellamy’s style of utopian thinking, his educational ideas were not antimodernist.⁶¹ The theme of Counts’s *Secondary Education and Industrialism* was that the Industrial Revolution was the “great watershed between two radically different kinds of civilization.”⁶² Industrial society and its material inventiveness were a cultural reality. Counts believed that, properly educated, children could grow to build a new social order that could harness the power of industrialization for social good: “The growth of science and technology has carried us into an age where ignorance must be replaced by knowledge, competition with cooperation, . . .and private capitalism by some sort of socialized economy.”⁶³ In Counts’s estimation, the social changes that had occurred in

⁶⁰ Wegner, 195.

⁶¹ Gutek, 17.

⁶² Cited in Gutek, 11.

⁶³ From *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?*, cited in Gutek, 21.

American society took place faster than people's moral and intellectual sense had adapted. Counts, who grew up in the Kansas described in Baum's books, believed that "in the old agrarian society there was a place for the child" that had yet to be found in the new industrial civilization.⁶⁴ The quest of the Scarecrow to replace his ignorance with knowledge, the recognition of the group of travelers that success meant cooperation, and the socialist undertones of the economic system of Oz demonstrate a similarity between Baum's utopia and the educational ideas of Counts. Counts's new social order echoed the values that constituted Baum's vision of Oz. Both affirmed the values embodied in "the historic American cultural heritage" while recognizing the unassailable power of an industrial and technological civilization.⁶⁵

L. Frank Baum constructed his utopian land of Oz, "a quite deliberate effort to solve on paper at least, if not in fact, a number of acutely American conflicts. [Baum's] Oz is a cultural treasure-house, an historical watershed containing some of the painful, dislocated trends and conflicts which preoccupied his fellow citizens."⁶⁶ In 1900 (the year *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was published), one-third of Americans were city dwellers, but a great number of them could still remember country life. The tension between Dorothy's desire to return to Kansas and her desire to seek the prosperity of the Emerald City represented the dilemma of a substantial portion of the American populace at the turn of the century. The story of a group of outlandish travelers (Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, Cowardly Lion) who must journey from the fields of the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5. While Baum never explicitly tells the reader Dorothy's age, given her size in the books' illustrations and her mode of speech, scholars place her age at between five and ten years old. Having been born in 1889, Counts would have been approximately Dorothy's age and living in Kansas at the time of the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁶ Tom St. John, "Lyman Frank Baum and the Progressive Dilemma," *American Quarterly*, 26 (Winter 1982): 349.

West through the wild, uninhabited forest, and to seek satisfaction in the urban lands of the East was a familiar one.⁶⁷

The financial woes of Uncle Henry were equally familiar. Uncle Henry was on the brink of financial disaster. He owed money to the bank. He lost his house in a cyclone. His health was poor, and so were growing conditions in Kansas: “[The threat of repossession of his house] worried Uncle Henry a great deal, for without the farm he would have no way to make a living. He was a good man, and he worked in the fields as hard as he could, and Auntie Em did all the housework with Dorothy’s help.”⁶⁸ The financial fears of the Gale family were those of many Midwestern American families (especially during the economically difficult 1890s leading up to the 1900 publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*).⁶⁹

Children were especially susceptible to the economic hardship of the late nineteenth century. With such staggering levels of poverty in both the city and the country, children may have been searching for a fanciful escape from difficult lives. Dorothy was a heroine like them (a girl who was about to lose her home and family farm). The *Oz* books were also marketed to these lower class children. As discussed in Chapter 4, their status as series books (an outgrowth of the dime novel) made them attractive to poorer children — who had less disposable income for books and tended to read dime novels because of their low prices. The *Oz* books were not the sturdy, well-constructed books of the major Eastern publishing houses. Rather, they were cheaply made books for the child of a family with a modest income.

⁶⁷ Michael O. Riley, *Oz and Beyond: The Fantasy World of L. Frank Baum* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 57.

⁶⁸ L. Frank Baum, *The Emerald City of Oz* (New York: William and Morrow Co., 1993), 22.

⁶⁹ Trachtenberg, 21.

Baum's Oz was an appealing counterpoint to Kansas. Baum's description of his land was idyllic: "There is no country so beautiful as the land of Oz. There are no people so happy and contented and prosperous as the Oz people. They have all they desire; they love and admire their beautiful girl Ruler, Ozma of Oz, and they mix work and play so justly that both are delightful and satisfying and no-one has any reason to complain."⁷⁰ The depressions of the 1890s left many Americans in difficult financial situations. Laborers' wages dropped drastically in the 1890s, and one in six workers made no wages at all. Market panics and street riots were commonplace.⁷¹ Oz, with its communal sharing of food, elimination of money and poverty, little punishment, and an absence of greed, is a pastoral utopia that presented the reader with a vision of utopia, so that he or she might have their deepest wishes fulfilled and their fears alleviated by the narrative.⁷² In this respect, Baum's *Oz* books reflect the pedagogical intentions of the escapist utopia. The reader is presented with a perfect world to give him or her the strength to live in this imperfect one. Hence, the deeply imperfect Kansas is presented as home — and Dorothy's quest is to return from the perfect land.

The land of Oz, even in its perfection, exhibits this same tension. Traditionally, paradise is either the city (Jerusalem, City on the Hill, etc.) or the garden (Eden, etc.). Oz presents both of these representations of utopia. The Emerald City is the New Jerusalem, the City on the Hill. However, the environs of the Emerald City are also vast, unexplored, and undisturbed wildernesses.⁷³ The *Oz* books borrow from a rich tradition of literary utopias, but Oz is

⁷⁰ L. Frank Baum, *The Magic of Oz* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 35. (originally 1919)

⁷¹ LaFeber, 173.

⁷² Andrew Karp, "Utopian Tensions in L. Frank Baum's *Oz*," *Utopian Studies* 9:2 (Summer 1998): 103.

⁷³ Paul Nathanson, *Over the Rainbow: The Wizard of Oz as Secular Myth of America* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991), 183. Early Americans depicted their environs alternately as Edenic garden and hideous wilderness. Henry Nash Smith argued that early Americans saw themselves creating a society in the image of a garden out of an

conflicted in what it considers the perfect world: the unfallen world of Eden or sacred city of Jerusalem. These two types of utopia represent two different types of thinking. The proponents of the New Jerusalem argued that human progress could create a more perfect (or at least more morally exemplary) world. This type of thinking had taken on a new character and had undergone heavy revision as a result of the contributions of Darwinism and the economic principles that enabled mass production. Progressivism sought to create a more perfect society by remaking the individual. In particular, Progressives thought that practices that led to increased economic production made human progress inevitable. By uplifting the Emerald City (and its potential to help people realize unfulfilled dreams), Baum's Oz is a modernist utopia.

Creators of Edenic ideal spaces envision a world perfect and unpolluted by the actions of mankind. Oz is caught in the middle of these two competing traditions (as were Americans who were deciding whether to stay on the family farm or move to the city or trying to decide whether to stay in the East or move to the frontier to seek their fortunes). If the Emerald City, with its glitter and surface allure, is “a dream of money shared by rich and poor alike” representing an idealization of turn-of-the-century Chicago,⁷⁴ that dream is undermined by the Edenic elements of the work (the fact that in Oz there is no money and most of the land is unexplored wilderness). Dorothy's desire to reach the Emerald City is not a dream of money. In fact, her journey (and the journey of her companions) is one of personal betterment. Dorothy searches only for a way to return to Kansas. Her pursuit of self-improvement is ultimately rewarded when she and her

untamed wilderness, and this has created a tendency in Americans to idealize rural ways. In these respects, Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* bears more than a passing resemblance to longstanding idealizations of America — the City on the Hill (the Emerald City) surrounded by idyllic pastures and threatening wilderness. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 6-7, 42-3, 143.

⁷⁴ Eugene Rochberg-Halton, “Life, Literature, and Sociology in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago, in “*Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 312.

more reluctant aunt and uncle assume an opulent lifestyle in the later books. Even so, Dorothy never seeks, in any book in the series, treasure or financial reward. Dorothy achieves economic benefit by maintaining a traditional sense of morality and having a willingness to move away from the family farm in the hinterlands. Importantly, Dorothy's financial gain has no impact on her personality or sense of self.⁷⁵ Baum wrote the first book in Chicago (in search of the financial security unavailable on the frontier), but he did not whole-heartedly resign himself to the dream of money. In fact, his book is, in part, a repudiation of putting economic individuality over a sense of community. It lifts the rural lifestyle (despite its economic hardships) above city life. There is, therefore a tension in the utopian-ness of the book. Oz may be a utopia, but Dorothy spends the entire first book trying to get out of it — because she still embodies the nineteenth century communal spirit and fights the twentieth century economic individualism. In the ensuing books and as the twentieth century progressed, Dorothy and her family were forced to move to Oz to make ends meet, but they were only rewarded because they still possessed a nineteenth century outlook and sense of morality.

Ultimately, the lesson of the *Oz* books may be that self-aggrandizement at the expense of others is the root of all evil. Most of the books in the *Oz* series are about cooperative action overcoming fear and danger.⁷⁶ This is especially evident in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, in which each of the travelers uses his or her unique strengths in order to benefit the entire group. One might be tempted to see, therefore, a stronger philosophical relationship between Baum and

⁷⁵ As Joel D. Chaston argues in "If I Ever Go Looking for My Heart's Desire: 'Home' in Baum's 'Oz' Books," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 18 (1994): 209-210 this is one of the ways that the MGM film version and Baum's books differ. While *The Wizard of Oz* film centers around Dorothy's desire to return home, in all but the first of the Oz books, Dorothy is content to stay in Oz. Dorothy, Aunt Em, and Uncle Henry all eventually reject Kansas and move to the Emerald City permanently. Of course, this also illustrates the way the books responded to changing demographic conditions; as more and more people found their home in the American city, the utopian novel needed to place less emphasis on the rural homeland.

⁷⁶ Karp, 116-118.

Bellamy, given the latter's de-emphasis of the role of the individual in furthering the common good. This is especially true, because we know that Baum had given the work of Bellamy serious consideration. He parodied *Looking Backward* in a regular column in the newspaper he owned and operated in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Unlike Bellamy, however, Baum made the strange personalities of each of his characters the focal point of his narrative. The Cowardly Lion, in *The Lost Princess of Oz*, spoke out against the type of de-personalization many people were feeling as a result of rapid urbanization: "To be individual, to be different from others, is the only way to be distinguished from the common herd."⁷⁷ Baum's affection for individual expression is readily apparent from even a cursory reading of his books. The stories are filled with outlandish, ridiculous, and highly unusual characters, and there is virtually no discussion of the average Oz dweller.⁷⁸ In this way, Baum's utopianism reflected the contradictions of the era in which it was created. It lauded the power of collective effort, but the collective was comprised of unique personalities. The cognitive map created by Baum's *Oz* books directed readers. How can a society valuing individuality still have the social cohesion necessary for a utopia? The answer that Baum provided was a simple one. Oz's denizens are loving and compassionate individuals who do not work to harm others. In a world where banding together was becoming increasingly necessary for laborers' economic survival and the culture was simultaneously placing more importance on individual personality, Baum's books provided readers a simple resolution to the seeming contradiction. E.A. Ross in *Sin and Society* (1907)

⁷⁷ Ibid., 104-6.

⁷⁸ In part, this could be explained by the *Oz* series' close relationship to the dime novel — a literary genre in which the fantastic exploits of colorful characters were exploited as a means of increasing circulation.

argued that new conditions require a new morality. In the case of Baum, new conditions required a retreat to old morality.⁷⁹

Technology and Magic in Utopia

Through most of their history, the people of the United States readily turned to technological improvement as the path to better social conditions.⁸⁰ Technological advancement threatened to displace the reconstructionist function of utopian literature (the creation of utopian longings in their audiences) as the major vehicle for social change. As more people came to doubt that these social changes would lead to an improved quality of life, some began to be suspicious of new technology. Meanwhile, some utopian writers refused to accept the position that new technology inevitably lessened the quality of life of the people. H.G. Wells was not entirely wedded to this portion of the antimodernist perspective: “to count every man who makes things with his thumbs an artist, and every man who uses machinery as a brute is merely a passing phase of human stupidity.”⁸¹ Wells still believed that modernization was the key to a happy life, and that the people who wished to go back to a time before mechanized production did not understand the wonders of modern life. By the end of World War I, the war that exposed the potential of mechanization to destroy human life, Wells’ viewpoint became decreasingly common. It was replaced by the sentiment expressed by Ernst Bloch in his 1923 book *The Spirit of Utopia*: “the machine has this misery and this pervasive destruction of imagination on its conscience.”⁸² In part, this was a lesson of the World War I years. In the estimation of many writers and theorists, including educational thinkers like George Counts, specific cultural

⁷⁹ Erisman, 616.

⁸⁰ Lewis, 163.

⁸¹ Wells, 111.

⁸² Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, trans. Anthony A. Nassar (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 2.

changes (which often entailed a retreat to earlier codes of morality and technology) were needed as a defense against the encroachment of the industrial state.⁸³

Fantasy writers had a difficult time competing with the wonders of modern life. Edith Nesbit explored the problem fantasy writers in the era were having in the words of the character Jimmy in her children's fantasy *The Enchanted Castle* (1907): "I think magic went out when people began to have steam engines, ... and newspapers, and telephones, and wireless telegraphing."⁸⁴ This was a concern reiterated by Baum himself in his introduction to *The Magic of Oz*: "Curiously enough, in the events which have taken place in our 'great outside world,' we may find incidents so marvelous and inspiring that I cannot hope to equal them with stories of the land of Oz."⁸⁵ While Baum is, in part, alluding to the First World War when discussing the "events which have taken place in our 'great outside world,'" but Baum did discuss elsewhere the difficulty of being a fantasy writer in the modern age. "Modern discoveries," he wrote, "have outstripped the imagination of the old writers of fairy tales."⁸⁶ Fantasy was in a difficult position in a world of technological magic.

Baum, however, discovered a way out of this quandary. He became the "Edison of narrative fantasy."⁸⁷ Baum did not shy away from the technological discoveries of his day. Instead, he incorporated them into his tales, mixing magic and technology in ways that had not

⁸³ Blake, 190.

⁸⁴ Cited in Alison Lurie, *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children's Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1990), 116.

⁸⁵ Baum, *The Magic of Oz*, ix.

⁸⁶ Michael Patrick Hearn, "L. Frank Baum," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 22: American Writers for Children, 1900-1960*, ed. John Cech (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1983), 26.

⁸⁷ Goldthwaite, 211.

been tried before.⁸⁸ Part of this was accomplished by equating science with magic. In *Tik-Tok of Oz*, Baum wrote, “you were all so used to it all [the new technology] that you didn’t realize it was magic.”⁸⁹ Mostly, though, Baum imbued his tales with the fantastic by incorporating new technology into his narratives. The Wizard was able to leave Oz in the first book via hot air balloon. In *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, a phonograph was accidentally brought to life. At the end of *The Emerald City of Oz*, Glinda the Good Witch, in order to maintain the perfection of Oz given the threat of people arriving there by aircraft, cast a magic spell making Oz invisible to the rest of the world.⁹⁰ In order to continue the series, Baum claimed that he was able to hear new tales from the land of Oz by wireless telegraph. Baum’s books constantly incorporated the latest technology into their storylines. By comparison, then, Baum was able to inject more magic into his world than could be found in the technology of ours. However, this was also a way for children to grow familiar and accustomed with the technological magic that surrounded them.

Despite the wonders of modern technology, Baum recognized that technology would not be able to single-handedly improve the general quality of life for the average person. In *The Enchanted Island of Yew*, Baum made known his conflicted feelings about modern life:

“In the old days, when the world was young, there were no automobiles nor flying machines to make one wonder; nor were there railway trains, nor telephones, nor mechanical inventions of any sort to keep people keyed up to a high pitch of excitement. Men and women lived simply and quietly. They were Nature’s children and breathed fresh air into their lungs instead of smoke and coal gas.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Riley, 9.

⁸⁹ Ann E. Prentice, “Have You Been to See the Wizard: Oz Revisited,” *Top of the News* 21 (November 1970): 39.

⁹⁰ It is a common trope in utopian novels to sequester them from the outside world. H.G. Wells’ *Modern Utopia* exists on its own planet to keep it away from the influence of less perfect societies. In James Hilton’s *Lost Horizon* (1933), Shangri-La is separated from the outside world by a snowy wasteland. Even in the first *Oz* book, Oz is bordered on all sides by Deadly Desert that kills anyone who tries to cross it.

⁹¹ Cited in Riley, 87.

This quote expresses the ambivalence of Baum's fantasy. Baum held up the Emerald City as a magical and wonderful place capable of granting wishes that would go unfulfilled otherwise. He actively worked to include the wonders of modern technology into his fantasy. He had a profound fascination with new technology in his personal life, and he put his own works on film because of his fascination with the newly developed moving picture. For all of these indications of Baum's modernism, he was certainly not wholeheartedly enthusiastic about modern life. He had a difficult time in the modern world. His newspaper went bankrupt, and he was forced to move to the city. His utopia is one that included the wondrous magic of modern technology, while it decried the misuses of standardization and monopolization he found in the modern world. He explicitly discussed these in *The Sea Fairies*:

“‘Why ev’rybody knows that octopuses are jus’ as wicked an’ decietful,’ she [Trot, the heroine of the novel] said, ‘Up on earth, where I live, they call Stannerd Oil Company and octopus, an’ the Coal Trust and octopus, an’ — ’
‘Stop, stop!’ cried the monster, in a pleading voice. ‘Do you mean to tell me that the earth people, whom I have always respected, compare me to Standard Oil Company?...Oh, what a disgrace!...It is unjust! It is cruel and unjust!’ sobbed the creature mournfully. ‘Just because we have several long arms, and take whatever we can reach, they accuse us of being like — like — oh, I cannot say it! It is too shameful — too humiliating.’”⁹²

While modern technology had the potential to create a better life for people, it often failed to do so. Baum may still have believed in the potential of changes in economic production to create a leisurely life of half work and half play for all people, but he did not believe that society had organized itself justly. His Oz represented a land of plenty in which all people shared in the riches of the land.

Oz occupies a transitional position in the development of the utopian novel genre. Oz was able to “remain a pastoral utopia while enjoying the benefits of a highly developed technology

⁹² Cited in Harold E. Miner, “America in Oz,” *Baum Bugle* 20 (Winter 1976): 7.

[provided by the magic of Glinda, Ozma, and the Wizard].”⁹³ The *Oz* books exhibit the conflicted feelings of many people in the era in which they were written. The books are not sure whether they are modernist or antimodernist. They are, in this sense, the quintessential example of a book designed to reassure people in a time of great social shifts — educating them to live in a world they do not fully understand. The first scholar to discuss Baum’s works as utopian novels summed up their educational function in this way: “He [Baum] taught American children to look for the element of wonder in the life around them, to realize that even smoke and machinery may be transformed into fairy lore if only we have sufficient energy and vision to their significance.”⁹⁴ The *Oz* books served as a way for acclimating children into the modern world, one that might be scary or incomprehensible without this introduction.

Conclusion

In the United States, antimodernism revitalized familiar values and eased the transition from classical to corporate liberalism. This easing is itself a form of education.⁹⁵ To ease the transition is to teach someone to live in a world different from his or her own. Baum allowed his readers an opportunity to envision a different world (and taught them the rules for occupying such a space—individualism, compassion, generosity, a sense of home, and courage). In so doing, Baum was teaching his readers a system of values that would encourage them to live in the modern world (by teaching them to find wonder in the world around them) without losing what was good about the pre-modern world (traditional values and a sense of home).

⁹³ Suzanne Rahn, *The Wizard of Oz: Shaping an Imaginary World* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 37.

⁹⁴ Wagenknecht, 29.

⁹⁵ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 301.

Emile Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* wrote that “the ideal society is not outside of the real society; it is a part of it...”⁹⁶ That is, the utopian vision is always an extension of the existing social and cultural situation. The author of the utopian novel generally looks to resolve perceived problems with the existing social order by envisioning a different (and better) world. Baum’s books provide an excellent example of this tendency. The *Oz* books are transitional texts — linking the optimism of the 1880s, encapsulated by *Looking Backward* with its hope for the potential of life in the modern world, to the dystopian visions of writers like Orwell or Huxley. Baum is not fully antimodernist, although he does uplift the rural and simple life. Baum is not fully modernist, but he does celebrate the magic of technological advancement. In short, Baum was writing in a time of massive social upheaval, and, like many of his readers, he was experiencing the ache of modernity. As the King of Gilgad said in *Rinkitink in Oz*, “The beauty of life is sudden changes. No-one knows what is going to happen next, and so we are constantly being surprised and entertained. The many ups and downs should not discourage us, for if we are down, we know that a change is coming and we will go up again; while those who are up are almost certain to go down.”⁹⁷ This is the reassuring function that utopian novels written in dynamic times are supposed to serve. Baum’s books do not ignore this cultural stress. In their confrontation of troubling issues, they teach their audiences to resolve them — by clinging to traditional moral attitudes and outlooks and the promise of economic and technological advancement.

⁹⁶ Cited in Evelyn Geller, *Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, 1876-1939: A Study in Cultural Change* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 1.

⁹⁷ L. Frank Baum, *Rinkitink in Oz* (New York: Dover Publications, 1993), 304. (originally 1916)

CHAPTER 4
SERIAL KILLERS: LIBRARIANS, SERIES BOOKS, AND OZ CENSORSHIP, 1876-1930

In *Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries: 1876-1936*, Evelyn Gebler outlines three classical dilemmas regarding library censorship. She calls the first of these the populist-elitist dilemma. The tastes of professional librarians often differ significantly from the popular taste — with many people seeking bestsellers of dubious literary value. Librarians often consider not including a book in a library collection because, despite the feelings of the population the library is serving, they believe the book does not merit a place on the library's shelves. The second classical censorship situation Gebler posits is the neutrality-advocacy concern. In this scenario, the librarian serves as the guardian of a library collection. Often advocacy groups wish to shape a library's collection to impose their views upon the community by removing books containing antagonistic perspectives. The librarian attempts to combat these censorship attempts by taking a neutral position — by choosing books presenting a variety of viewpoints on a given subject. The final censorship dilemma outlined by Gebler is the freedom-censorship dilemma. Librarians may refuse to carry a book they believe threatens the moral and social order of the country.¹

While the *Oz* books have experienced each of these forms of censorship throughout their history, during the first few years after their publication librarians generally dismissed the books as lowering the reading tastes of the public. This discrimination was not primarily based on the content of the *Oz* series; instead, it was because they formed a series. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, librarians routinely banned series books from public library collections across the United States. This was, in no small part, due to the negative sentiments librarians

¹ Evelyn Gebler, *Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, 1876-1939* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), xix.

projected onto them based on their impression of their direct predecessors, dime novels. The Progressive mission of the library, providing people of all social classes with the sort of reading material librarians believed would lead to upward social mobility, was solidifying in the decades leading up to the turn of the twentieth century, and this educational undertaking was threatened by the accumulation of cheaply produced, inexpensively purchased books of the period. While Progressive schools, in their efforts to instill individuals with a middle class mentality, gave increasing numbers of people the ability to read,² libraries saw themselves as institutions formed to direct that reading toward higher ends — the development of a literary taste for high art. This goal set librarians at odds with dime novels and series books. The *Oz* series was not spared from the negative assessments of series books. Furthermore, the prejudice it experienced did not substantially differ from the other series books published in the period, even though its content may have been less objectionable than the bulk of other cheap, fantastic literature. In other words, for the first few decades of the twentieth century, censorship of the *Oz* books followed a distinctly populist-elitist model, and the freedom-censorship debate over the series would not begin until later in the twentieth century.

The Developing Mission of the Public Library

In 1876 General John Eaton (then the nation's Commissioner of Education) conducted a survey that found 3,647 public libraries containing at least 300 volumes in the United States. Ten years later, in his revisions to the list he counted 5,338 libraries. The number of public libraries in the United States had grown by nearly fifty percent. The state that led the library movement (in terms of numbers of books in circulation) was Massachusetts with its 3,560,085 volumes housed in 569 libraries. The state with the most public libraries (but fewer books in

² Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), xiv.

circulation) was New York with 780.³ The library movement grew tremendously in the early 1880s, as state legislatures began to encourage towns to develop public libraries by taxation and more wealthy benefactors began to provide funds for the development of libraries for the public.⁴

The relative importance of the public library as an educational institution in the United States significantly increased in the late nineteenth century. Librarians began to identify themselves as significant contributors to the rapidly burgeoning American educational system. While the common school had made great strides in establishing itself as the predominant form of schooling in the United States, the movement to institute public libraries lagged behind. By the late nineteenth century, however, some educators were prepared to say, “Now after the school and the daily newspaper comes the library in educative power. These three institutions are the great secular means which our people have to prepare themselves for their singular destiny.”⁵ Some educational leaders even labeled the library (when compared to the school) as the greater educational institution. “We consider a person educated,” wrote William T. Harris, Commissioner of Education from 1889 to 1906, “when he is qualified to add to his own experience the experience of his fellow-men.”⁶ Given this definition of education, librarians were justified in thinking of the library as the most important educational site. After all, Harris claimed in his article for the American Library Association’s (ALA’s) *Library Journal* that “the school gives the preliminary preparation for education, and the library gives the means by which

³ W. T. Harris, “The Function of the Library and the School in Education,” *Library Journal*, 35 (December 1890): 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵ *Ibid.* Given period librarians’ hesitance to recognize the educational qualities of the works of Baum, it is ironic that the newspaper is listed here as one of the three pillars of American public education. After all, Baum published his own newspaper in South Dakota. As a newspaperman, Baum was producing educational writing; it is less clear why so many librarians, then, assumed that his writing for children was not.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

the individual completes and accomplishes his education.”⁷ While the schools increasingly provided students with literacy, the responsibility of seeing that students used their literacy toward educational ends was given to the public library. Some Progressive librarians argued that the school prepared the child for the real and lifelong education that would take place at the library.

Harris was hardly alone in this assertion, and, throughout the Progressive Era, library promoters used the claim that libraries provided lifelong education to encourage funding and improve the status of libraries. Edith Lathrop, a specialist in rural education working for the U.S. Bureau of Education, promoted the library as the second important institution of public education in the U.S.: “Many are unaware of the degree to which the school and the library supplement each other. They are the two institutions by which public education is effected. Since the library, to a greater degree than the school is an institution in which intellectual progress may be continued throughout life, the school should make certain that every child has instruction and practice in the use of libraries and books.”⁸ At least some educators felt that the mission of the public school dovetailed with that of the library. Attempts to create a symbiotic relationship between the school and the library were part of the Progressive reformation of American public education: “It is only recently that emphasis has been placed on the library as an adjunct of the elementary school. This has been brought about by modern educational developments — changes in curricula, better-trained teachers, individual instruction, and the almost general acceptance of the Dewey philosophy, which holds that school is life, not preparation for life.”⁹

⁷ Ibid. It is obvious from this quote that Harris saw the library as exclusively an educational institution. This is hardly the only way to view the public library. Many, if not most, people use the library for access to plentiful, free, entertaining literature.

⁸ Edith Lathrop, “The Library and the Modern School,” *Normal Instructor and Primary Plans*, November 1930, 64.

⁹ Ibid.

By encouraging teachers to develop lessons in library use for their students, librarians were trying to integrate their educational institution into the daily life of the population. One librarian made the distinction that the job of the teacher was to teach how to read and the job of the librarian was to teach what to read. “A passive attitude on the part of librarians and library authorities,” he wrote, “is no longer possible if libraries are to be a factor in national progress.”¹⁰ In this way, some educators felt the library would effect meaningful change in the lives of its patrons. In particular, they held a high hope that libraries would direct patrons to classic fiction (that would presumably lead to a more highly developed sense of humanity) and non-fiction (which would have pragmatic application in their lives).

As will be discussed in greater detail in the following section, in the nineteenth century, American public libraries were sluggish in creating spaces hospitable to youth. By the early twentieth century, however, libraries had, by and large, taken up the mission of educating the young, in no small part because the increasing numbers of literate children demanded it.¹¹ In particular, librarians wished to use their library collections to improve the cultural lives of American society’s poorest members. In discussing the libraries responsibility toward the poor, librarian Ethel Underhill wrote, “The public library has to deal with all classes and conditions of children, but primarily with the children of the poor, and it must be one of the agents, which by providing wholesome mental furnishings, will counteract the coarsening effect of promiscuous living in crowded tenements, the narrow range of ideas which life in the city creates and the

¹⁰ Henry Farr, “Library Work with Children,” *Library Journal*, 36 (April 1911): 169.

¹¹ Library service, to both children and adults, increased drastically over the period. In part, this was due to the philanthropic contributions of Andrew Carnegie, increasing funding for these institutions across the country. Additionally, state legislatures were also beginning to provide more funding, envisioning the institutions as “people’s colleges” in which citizens of all walks of life could pursue self-improvement and education. Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 445-449.

criminal tendencies of certain classes.”¹² Hence, the development of public library service to children was one effort of Progressive era reformers to achieve its goals.¹³

Children Unwelcome

By World War I public libraries in the United States generally provided special service programs for children, but in the nineteenth century libraries were generally unwelcoming places for children. It was not until the 1890s that children’s librarians began to be hired in substantial numbers. Hesitant throughout the nineteenth century to allow children in public library collections, librarians began to ease their restrictions as the literacy rate for children increased. Between 1900 and 1909, school enrollment for five to nineteen year olds grew from 50.5% to 59.2% nationwide, per capita expenditures climbed from \$14 to \$24, and the length of the average school year rose from 144.3 to 155.3 days.¹⁴ Increased educational opportunities provided Progressive schools and larger amounts of free time granted by child labor laws made it impossible for libraries to continue exclusionary practices. The Boston Public Library, for instance, opened a new building in 1895. So many children came to the grand opening of the building that the librarians found themselves in the embarrassing situation of being unable to provide them with anything to read. Within two months, more than 2,000 books for children were housed in the library in a room on the second floor set aside for the young.¹⁵ As increasing numbers of children demanded service, libraries were less able to maintain themselves as exclusively adult institutions. Around this same time, literary criticism of children’s books

¹² Ethel P. Underhill, “Crumbs of Comfort to the Children’s Librarian,” *Library Journal*, 35, (April 1910): 155.

¹³ Nancy Tillman Romalov, “Children’s Series Books and the Rhetoric of Guidance: A Historical Overview,” in *Rediscovering Nancy Drew*, eds. Caroline Stewart and Nancy Tillman Romalov, 113.

¹⁴ McGerr, 110.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Nesbitt, “A Rightful Heritage: 1890-1920,” in *A Critical History of Children’s Literature*, ed. Cornelia Meigs et al (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953), 418.

began to appear in important publications, and college courses regarding children's literature began to be offered. In the early twentieth century adults were beginning to give children's literature attention and respect.¹⁶

For the first few decades after the formation of the ALA in 1876, however, librarians often disregarded children as potential patrons. In the words of one early twentieth century librarian, "In the early days of the library movement it was not recognized that provision for children was desirable. In some libraries juvenile books and periodicals were provided, but as a rule, children were either excluded altogether or admitted under conditions that did not allow their using the library to any great extent."¹⁷ To be perfectly fair, as evidenced by the level of discussion in *Library Journal*, a lot of writing, time, and energy were devoted in the early days of the ALA to improving the library for the sake of children, but throughout the nineteenth century the public library remained an unfriendly institution to them.

Many librarians freely admitted that their libraries were not accommodating to the reading needs of children. In Mary Sargent's 1889 report on library work for children, C.H. Burbank, librarian for the Lowell City Library in Massachusetts, reported, "few books are purchased [by my library] suitable for the youngest viewers."¹⁸ Some librarians simply saw little need to provide services for children. Often, instead of being encouraged to use their local libraries, children were ignored or pushed out.

Additionally, many librarians had strict policies with respect to the age level of library users. For example, J.N. Larned, librarian in Buffalo, NY, explained in the same 1889 report

¹⁶ Mark I. West, "Not to Be Circulated: The Response of Children's Librarians to Dime Novels and Series Books," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 10 (Fall 1985): 137.

¹⁷ Farr, 166.

¹⁸ Mary Sargent, "Reading for the Young," *Library Journal* 14 (May-June 1889): 229.

that he only allowed students with teacher recommendations to check out library books. This was a policy also endorsed by R.N. Tuttle of Hornelsville, New York, who only allowed a student to access a volume if he provided a note from his teacher granting permission for the child to examine that specific title. In 1890, the Boston Public Library proudly announced that it had become more inclusive of children by opening the circulation of books to anyone over the age of twelve.¹⁹ In many places, twelve year olds were still barred from their local library. Frank Hill of Newark, NJ, for example, felt that he was making a bold attempt to reach the youth of his community by allowing children under fourteen to use the library's collection with his permission and guidance.²⁰ Worcester Public Library, led by Samuel Swett Green, granted library cards only to those people who had reached the age of fifteen.²¹ Commonly, young people simply had to wait until the age of majority to be able to use the local library.

One reason for the stringent controls on children's access to public library collections was fear of the negative influence of too much reading. Reading large numbers of books caused, in the minds of librarians like Mary Bean, a slough of vices in children, including "inattention, want of application, distaste for study, and unretentive memories."²² For their own protection, children were, thus, kept away from "the evil of unlimited supply" of books.²³ Even if children grew used to reading works of high culture, the habit of over-reading might lead them to choose to read whatever was available to them and could eventually undermine the development of what librarians felt was a healthy reading habit. As a result, librarians disparaged too much reading of

¹⁹ Minerva A. Sanders, "Report on Reading for the Young," *Library Journal* 15 (December 1890): 59-60.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

²² M.A. Bean, "The Evil of Unlimited Freedom in the Use of Juvenile Fiction," *Library Journal* 4 (September-October 1879): 342.

²³ *Ibid.*

any variety. Allowing children unrestricted use of public libraries, Bean and her compatriots felt, undermined the educational goals of the library by allowing the formation of bad study habits and stifling the development of the mind. Minerva Sanders worried about the same phenomenon with respect to free access of youth to libraries. “When such a danger [excessive reading by the young] presents itself,” she wrote, “we make a limit of two books a week.”²⁴ The act of reading was considered dangerous if performed to an unhealthy degree. It was especially perilous, however, if it threatened to undermine the quality of the reading.

One turn of the century article claimed bookishness was the gravest danger with regard to reading and the young: “Too much reading is perhaps the most important thing to check. Reading with some young people becomes a habit pure and simple, and they do not in the least care what they read.”²⁵ Being granted the opportunity to read freely, some felt, failed to equip children with the tools for discerning quality literature. Most blameworthy among these books were “light literature,” and the remedy for an over-reading child was to “lessen the quantity and improve the quality.”²⁶ As the ALA moved into the twentieth century, the reluctant attitude regarding the admission of children into public libraries began to dissipate. The conception of their mission toward children changed. The new mission statement became: “The public library is duty bound to provide every child in the community with the chance to know and love the best books.”²⁷ In the nineteenth century, some librarians had been hesitant to allow children access to library shelves because having unlimited access to books might cause children to choose reading

²⁴ Sanders, 59. Sanders, unlike Bean, believed that inordinate amount of reading by children was a product of the novelty of the public library. Being unavailable in most places in the United States only a generation before, having the ability to use free public libraries caused people to over-use library collections. As the novelty wore off, she argued, children in danger of over-reading would gradually return to reading “safer” amounts.

²⁵ H.V. Weisse, “Reading for the Young,” *The Living Age*, 20 July 1901, 185.

²⁶ Bean, 342-3.

²⁷ Grace Thompson, “On the Selection of Books for Children,” *Library Journal* 35 (October 1907): 428.

material injudiciously. In the twentieth century, as libraries began to cater increasingly to the reading needs of children the impetus to keep them away from books that were less than “the best” meant having careful selection practices that prevented “light” literature from ever reaching library stacks.

As discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, L. Frank Baum was deliberately writing “light” literature. Baum’s own claim was that he was writing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as “pure entertainment” for children. In Baum’s words, it was a book intended to be without direct pedagogical intentions and was often recognized as such. One review even recommended the book be used only as an “interlude with more serious fiction.”²⁸ During the same period Baum’s *Oz* books were being written, librarians were working toward developing libraries they thought would be suitable places to invite children. In doing so, they were attempting to create institutions in which the *Oz* books (and other works of “light” literature) would find no refuge.

Purveyors of Fine Culture

Mrs. C.G. Hancock, a librarian in Sacramento, CA, embodied the Progressive ethos of remaking the individual to improve American society with her policy for aiding library patrons in their book selection: “Whenever anyone asks for help, I always try to give them something a little better than they have been in the habit of reading.”²⁹ This strategy of directing public library users toward books librarians felt were “better” was common to many librarians throughout the era. In New Haven, CT, W.K. Stetson, spoke on behalf of his library: “We try to get them [library patrons] to take out ‘improving’ books when they ask for ‘something.’”³⁰ “Improving” books were not always (or even generally) judged on the basis of their educational

²⁸ Review in *The Bookseller and Latest Literature*, cited in Hearn, xlv.

²⁹ Sargent, 227.

³⁰ Ibid.

properties or their ability to instruct directly. Instead, a book was deemed “improving” if librarians felt the book was high literary art. In developing a list designed for the improvement of a library patron, “only books that have literary merit ... are chosen.”³¹ In other words, the compilers of library lists evaluate books based on the assessment of literary value placed on them by the librarian or critic compiling the list. As a result, an adult who entered a library may have had a distinct idea about the type of book he or she wished to read and failed to find this book because the librarian decided the volume lacked literary merit. Many librarians sought to change the reading tastes of library patrons by shelving only books appreciated by librarians. The librarians often wanted their tastes to supplant those of the library user — and library collections frequently failed to match the literary tastes of the reader.³²

In some cases, librarians saw the direction of library users toward high literary art as their main function. For one school librarian, the primary objective of all teachers of literature should have been to instill in their students “the ability and disposition to appreciate good literature” and the “ability to discriminate in the selection of reading material.”³³ Hence, desire to curb over-reading in the young and steering children toward works librarians judged to have “literary merit” were complementary missions. Importantly, Townsend and many other Progressive educators were attempting to form a canon of children’s literature, and they were doing so by trying to develop reading preferences in the young that reflected their own. The literary tastes of

³¹ Edith A. Lathrop, “Selecting Books for a School Library,” *Normal Instructor and Primary Plans*, December 1930, 59.

³² The Progressive mission of librarians has left a powerful legacy that has outlasted the ALA policy that books of “low” literary art have no place in the public library. Librarians and readers alike now overwhelmingly believe that reading classic literature is a beneficial experience for the reader. The “improving” quality of classic literature has been enthroned: “Usually, if reading group members dislike aspects of a classic, they will none the less defend the novel; if they dislike the entire book, they will assume personal inadequacy rather than call its value — and the broader heritage of value — into question.” Elizabeth Long, “Reading Groups and the Postmodern Crisis of Cultural Authority,” *Cultural Studies* 1 (Spring 1987): 314.

³³ W.B. Townsend, “Teaching Literature,” *The Instructor*, November 1933, 46.

the teacher constituted the cornerstone of literary pedagogy. The preferences of the children, particularly if they tended to “low” art (which, as we will see, was extended to include the *Oz* books), were supposed to go unheeded.

Extolling the benefits of classic literature and high literary art was common throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Children’s librarians gained a sense of purpose by adhering to the policy of directing the young to works that were of higher “literary merit” than their usual fare: “The aim of work with children in the libraries is primarily to inculcate and foster the habit of reading good books as a pleasurable experience.”³⁴ What constituted “good” books, however, was very narrowly defined. As will be discussed in the following section, some librarians were hesitant to include any works of fiction in the library, but those that advocated the place of fiction on library shelves generally only wanted to include “the best products of the imagination and fancy of all men of all time.”³⁵ Well-crafted fiction, it was argued, could give deep comprehension to the reader of the inner workings of the mind and soul of man, and “Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe are the great leaders of this sacred army of men who have made and are making this revelation of human life.”³⁶ *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the tales of the Grimm brothers, and the works of Shakespeare were considered ideal for developing a healthy reading habit in children.³⁷ If a child was given any option regarding his own reading material, some librarians argued, it ought to be solely among these books: “[A young reader] may prefer *Robinson Crusoe* to *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and if he does he should be

³⁴ Caroline Burnite, “The Standard of Selection of Children’s Books,” *Library Journal* 36 (April 1911): 162.

³⁵ John Cotton Dana, “Public Libraries as Censors,” *The Bookman* 44 (1919): 150.

³⁶ Harris, 30.

³⁷ Clara Whitehill Hunt, “The Children’s Library a Moral Force,” *Library Journal* 31 (1906): 101.

allowed to read it.”³⁸ If his tastes tended toward newer literature, books with a less established literary tradition, or especially works of current popularity, however, his choice ought to be restricted — regardless of what the literary merit of those works might be.

Librarians’ insistence upon classic literature for its “improving” quality and its ability to encourage desirable reading habits in the young reflected their views about the purpose of reading. Books can be used for a variety of aims and to fulfill myriad needs. Limiting the selection of reading matter of children to the “sacred army of men” exposed two far-reaching motivations. First, it tried to redefine for library patrons the function of reading. Librarians directed patrons toward books intended for self-improvement even or especially when they came into the library in search of free entertainment. By encouraging people to read books they might not have previously sought, librarians were also inducing people to change what they believed constituted the purpose of reading. Second, by constructing a list of the books that helped achieve this goal, librarians were trying to form a canon that would develop in library patrons a sense of what the proper use of literature ought to be. “Literary merit,” then, became defined by the literary tastes of librarians. Librarians were “agents of the cultured class,” and their advocacy of a free public library system was inspired by a desire for equality of educational opportunity and to encourage social mobility.³⁹ They held “an essentially untenable intellectual position,” hoping to keep the traditional view of quality literature while trying to get mass tastes

³⁸ Walter Taylor Field, “The Problem of Children’s Books,” *The Dial*, 1 Aug. 1899, 68. See Chapter 2 for a more in depth discussion of the role of these two books in the history of children’s literature. Children were encouraged to read *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe* before children’s literature had begun to develop. By 1899, these two works had become part of the heritage of reading of the young in America. As such, Field’s comment that children should be allowed to select between the two most long-standing works of literature recommended for children in the United States was meant as an advocacy for limiting the reading options of American youth.

³⁹ Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Libraries and American Society, 1876-1920* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 14.

to follow their own.⁴⁰ Books came to be considered works of “high” art and were valued because they served the desires of librarians and not those of the people visiting the library. Patrons were implicitly taught that the reasons they had for using library collections were inappropriate, secondary, or, as we shall see, destructive.⁴¹ In the end, this made it difficult for books written for “pure entertainment” of the young, like those of L. Frank Baum, to justify their inclusion in public libraries — even as huge numbers of people purchased, read, and enjoyed the books.

The Question of Fiction

From the inception of the ALA, the idea of including fiction in public libraries was a controversial one. Using public funds to buy works of fiction was not uniformly supported, with some dissenters doubting that “furnishing any sort of amusement and relaxation ... is a proper function of the government.”⁴² As librarians were trying to carve out their niche in the educational landscape in the United States, the inclusion of fiction in public libraries threatened to transform the library into an institution used for mass entertainment. In general, librarians opposed to the idea of the public using the library for its own entertainment sought to limit the purchase of works of fiction solely to those books of scholarly, but not popular, interest.⁴³ Usually, this meant that librarians of this persuasion believed fiction on library shelves ought to be limited to classic literature.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 15-19.

⁴¹ Ann Haugland, “The Crack in the Old Canon: Culture and Commerce in Children’s Books,” *Lion and Unicorn* 18 (1994): 54.

⁴² Charles Francis Adams, “Fiction in the Public Libraries and Educational Catalogues,” *Library Journal* 4 (September-October 1879): 330.

⁴³ For example, while *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is a work of fiction, few people read the work for personal entertainment. Such a work of fiction could be justified for inclusion in the public library because people reading the book would generally be doing so for educational purposes.

In children's libraries, the debate over the appropriateness of fiction had deeper educational implications. Even if youth reading had been confined to the classics, some librarians and critics still felt that the reading of fiction could negatively impact the development of cognition and moral sense. Whether works of fiction had any place in the hands of children remained a debatable question: "All families are interested in [the] topic ... 'Should there be anything in child literature which is not or cannot be true?'"⁴⁴ Reading fiction to children could lead to an "accretion of mistrust"⁴⁵ in the young that could undermine the authority of parents and stunt children's ability to learn from their non-fictional reading. One constantly had to worry about the "baneful influence of those desultory and careless mental habits engendered in pupils by this ... consumption of story-books."⁴⁶

Those parents, librarians, and critics on the other side of the issue believed that one had to avoid "stifling the infant imagination"⁴⁷ by allowing children access to some carefully chosen, fantastic literature. One essayist bemoaned that an unimaginative ten year-old girl she met had not been exposed to fairy tales at a younger age.⁴⁸ Reading exclusively science and history would create a person who knew a great deal of information on a variety of subjects, but this person would be devoid of humanity. However, reading solely literature and excluding non-fiction would leave a person uneducated. The goal, however, was not to settle on reading literature. Instead, "fiction is the bait by which we create a love of reading, and it should lead

⁴⁴ E.S.M. "Reading for Children," *Harper's Weekly*, 14 April 1894, 358.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 359.

⁴⁶ Bean, 342.

⁴⁷ Kate Douglas Wiggin, "What Shall the Children Read?" *Cosmopolitan*, August 1889, 359.

⁴⁸ Wiggin, 359.

out to other reading, especially in the line of science and history and philosophy.”⁴⁹ In general, these competing sentiments — that reading fiction impeded the intellectual development of youth and that reading fiction created a well-rounded person who appreciated the joys of acquiring knowledge from books — had Progressive era librarians advocating that works of fiction with “literary merit” needed to be balanced with matter-of-fact works of non-fiction.

The warnings to limit the reading of fictional works by children were often stern: “The parent must not think that any story which will amuse a child is useful. The individual taste has not at this period of development become pronounced; the child will accept anything.”⁵⁰ This statement reveals certain assumptions about the nature of childhood. The child’s judgment, for instance, is assumed to be poor; a child must be taught what good literature is. This assumption about judgment and literary merit, it seems, posited that the quality of a piece of literature was not implicit in the text, but it lay in cultural reception of the literature. A person would not recognize a piece of literature as being better than another piece of literature, unless he or she was told by someone with authority on the subject. Therefore, an internal conflict existed about what fiction, if any, to include in library collections — a conflict that was resolved by arguing that librarians were trained professionals whose literary taste exceeded that of their patrons. Thus, the librarian’s responsibility was to improve the reading habits of the patrons. In contrast, librarians were not to assess which types of books their patrons appreciated and build a collection that reflected those tastes. That is, the librarians’ educational mission was to develop the individual literary preferences of people using their collections. Librarians sought to alter public taste to match their collections, not alter their collections to match public taste.

⁴⁹ Harris, 31.

⁵⁰ Field, 68.

Often, though, the literary taste that librarians were trying to create was an appetite for non-fiction. Reading fiction was, one school librarian believed, merely “the first step in the acquisition of the reading habit.”⁵¹ Getting patrons to read fiction was generally not, in itself, a guiding goal of librarians. Instead, it was a tool to be used in guiding people to more worthwhile reading pursuits. In fact, some librarians measured the success of their library program by the extent to which they could decrease the reading of fiction by youth. K.A. Linderfelt, a librarian in Milwaukee, WI, reported in 1890 that he had made strides in achieving his goal of “an elevation of public taste” as evidenced by “a decrease in the circulation of fiction from 59 percent to 46 percent.”⁵² This sentiment was repeated by Myra F. Southworth, librarian of Brockton, MA, who took expressed qualms with librarians providing children with works of fiction: “Some of my boys have read nearly everything in the L. on birds, insects, mechanics, and electricity. New books, except fiction, are placed uncovered on book shelves [sic] accessible to the public. I encourage the children to examine and make selections from these, and many a book of biography, travel, and natural history is taken in preference to the story book which they would otherwise select.”⁵³ In her library, children were not given free access to works of fiction. They were, instead, steered toward works of non-fiction, which many librarians saw as implicitly higher quality reading material for children and as more supportive in achieving their educational objectives.⁵⁴

⁵¹ George E. Hardy, “The School Library a Factor in Education,” *Library Journal* 14 (August 1889): 346.

⁵² Sanders, 61.

⁵³ Sanders, 60.

⁵⁴ It is possible that the fervor librarians exhibited in keeping children away from fiction also impacted the approaches librarians took toward adult reading. Mrs. O.B. Jaquith, librarian in Woodstock, VT, in the 1890s, bemoaned that the parents in her community enjoyed reading fiction, and she felt it made her job of preventing children from reading stories and steering them toward non-fiction more difficult. Sanders, 62.

Many librarians pursued the goal of directing children toward non-fiction with considerable zeal. Henry Utley, a librarian from Detroit, MI,⁵⁵ reported the same intentions with respect to the reading of fiction by children: “You will observe that the ‘Good Books’ [a list of recommended books] which I published last October contained no fiction. My purpose was to turn their attention away from fiction.” Utley, however, expressed regret for this policy, saying that it would have been better to provide children with the names of quality works of fiction (even if he did not want children to read fiction) than for them to receive no guidance toward quality literature and end up reading works of lesser quality.⁵⁶

The Reviled Dime Novel

Although commercialization of the children’s book industry will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter, it is important to the ensuing discussion on dime novels to mention that most librarians, literary critics, and teachers did not welcome some of the fundamental changes within the publishing industry. Mass production drastically increased the volume of published works. It also changed the types of works that were being published. Mechanical production necessitated changes in the production of literature. Formulas developed as a response. Books needed to be written quickly, and standardization of product was an effective method of meeting the increased demand for reading materials. The dime novel was a logical development for publishers of cheap reading material. Dime novels enabled writers to reuse characters, develop name recognition, and use a template for completing their books on strict deadlines.⁵⁷ “Only one

⁵⁵ Detroit became a focal point in Cold War efforts to remove the *Oz* books from library shelves, and this battle is discussed in greater detail in the sixth chapter of this dissertation.

⁵⁶ Sanders, 60.

⁵⁷ There has been a great deal of discussion regarding the relationship between mechanization and the mass production of literature. For an excellent discussion about the cultural impact of the development of formula literature see John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

generation ago,” a turn-of-the-century librarian wrote, “the number of published books was small; men did not face publication unless they felt they had to say that which had to be said; publishers were more essentially scholars and gentlemen, less fundamentally tradesmen.”⁵⁸ The era of mass production, after all, had made it so “there are published every day more books of the merest ‘pass-time’ order than any one could read, though he had no other occupation and the books required no thought in the reading, which in truth many of them do not.”⁵⁹ The status of the published work and the author had diminished in the minds of librarians, and, just as they lauded the time-tested novel of “literary merit,” they almost uniformly denounced the modern novel — and loathed the dime novel.

To nineteenth and early twentieth century librarians the potential danger in reading dime novels extended far beyond the mere lowering of one’s reading habits. Dime novels were deemed responsible for many social ills, vice, and crime. Without the development of a high literary sense, the literacy provided to the young by the schools could “prove injurious rather than beneficial.”⁶⁰ A circa 1930 report of the Massachusetts Advisory Council on Crime Prevention examined the leisure activities of 14,000 youth living in forty cities and found that children in towns with reading circles using a state recommended list of children’s books “read better books and fewer pernicious magazines than children living in towns where such courses are not promoted.”⁶¹ This was of interest to the Council on Crime Prevention because of a long-standing belief among librarians that poor reading habits led to lives of crime for the young: “We see the result of worthless books in acute form in the lunatic asylum and the police court; the

⁵⁸ Weisse, 181.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Edith A. Lathrop, “The Library and the Modern School,” *Normal Instructor and Primary Plans*, 64.

⁶¹ Cited in Lathrop, 64.

feeble intellect, unhinged by the morbid introspections of the problem novel, or the feeble character, thrown off its moral balance by the criminal heroics of the penny novelette.”⁶² The people who were fighting the battles over access to dime novels by the young were serious in their criticisms. They believed that they were combating the perceived decline in the moral character of society — and that dime novels were, at least in part, responsible for many of society’s ills.

Civic responsibility became the goal of moral education for Progressives, and as the approaches to moral education diverged, librarians, by and large, clung to the values contained in works of traditional literature for children. B. Edward McClellan argues that Progressives divided into two groups over the subject of moral education. Some felt that “shoring up” traditional nineteenth century approaches to moral education would provide the young with time-tested values that would serve them well in the modern world (an attitude, as discussed in Chapter 2, that was shared by Baum). Others, following the lead of John Dewey, believed in the creation of a new moral education that reflected the social climate would provide students with the character to lead productive lives. Librarians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century belonged predominantly to the first camp.⁶³

In his 1883 book *Traps for the Young*, Anthony Comstock, critic of the dime novel in the 1870s and 1880s, wrote in great detail about the dangers of that genre:

Light literature is, then, a devil trap to captivate the child by perverting taste and fancy. It turns aside from the pursuit of useful knowledge and prevents the full development in man or woman of the wonderful possibilities locked up in the child! Again, these stories breed vulgarity, profanity, loose ideas of life, impurity of thought and deed. They render the imagination unclean, destroy domestic peace, desolate homes, cheapen women’s virtue, and make foul-mouthed bullies, cheats, vagabonds, thieves, desperadoes, and libertines.

⁶² Weisse, 164.

⁶³ B. Edward McClellan, *Moral Education in America: Schools and the Shaping of Character from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Teacher’s College Press, 1999), 48-58.

They disparage honest toil, and make real life a drudge and a burden ... Your child is in danger of having his pure mind cursed for life.⁶⁴

Graphic warnings like Comstock's were not isolated. In their Progressive mission to use public education as a means to remake the individual, librarians sought to negate the influence of the cheap and readily available dime novel. Fears that the only reading material children could access was something so sensational or mediocre led adults to construct a place where children could get guidance in their reading. In this way, the dime novel served as an impetus for establishing public library service to children.⁶⁵

Outright censorship of dime novels was routinely advocated. "All of these books contain frequently a sympathetic attitude toward crime and immorality. The danger of suppression by the US government does much undoubtedly to eliminate the more flagrant of these qualities; however, it is by no means controlled," wrote one librarian.⁶⁶ Another proposed that book burnings be instituted to reduce the number of dime novels in circulation: "It would be a measure fraught with much worldly wisdom for those having charge of libraries ... to consign [dime novels and their ilk] to the funeral pyre."⁶⁷ Dime novels found no place in American public library collections, but some librarians desired to keep them out of the hands of the American public generally.

Obviously, librarians considered the reading of dime novels a moral issue. One librarian quoted a Catholic bishop as saying, "It is nearly an axiom that people will be no better than the

⁶⁴ Cited in Ken Donelson, "Censorship and Early Adolescent Literature: Stratemeyer, Mathiews, and Comstock," *Dime Novel Roundup*, December 1978, 121.

⁶⁵ Nancy Tillman Romalov, "Children's Series Books and the Rhetoric of Guidance: A Historical Overview" in *Rediscovering Nancy Drew*, eds. Caroline Stewart and Nancy Tillman Romalov, 114.

⁶⁶ Burnite, 164.

⁶⁷ Hardy, 346.

books they read.”⁶⁸ He also quoted a Professor Johonnot on the same subject: ““Nothing is more fatal to intellectual and moral growth than devotion to low and sensational literary works. Like the growth of a fungus, the taste for sensational literature absorbs the vital forces and destroys all that is noble in life.””⁶⁹ Echoing these opinions, another librarian wrote, “There is a choice in books as well as in friends, and the mind sinks or rises to the level of its habitual society.”⁷⁰ Reading dime novels, it was repeatedly argued, was not merely a way for an average person to pass a leisure hour. Rather, dime novels dragged down the moral character of their readers, and, therefore, were blights on society and enemies of the Progressive librarian mission of improving public literary tastes through redirections away from “light” literature.

As some librarians had qualms with including works of fiction in library collections, dime novels found even less hospitality from librarians: “Of course the greatest demand has been for stories; but, as for years we have been selecting the best and weeding out the unsatisfactory, it is quite safe to let them browse at will.”⁷¹ Here, again, we see the benefits of censorship extolled. Keeping works of quality literature (“selecting the best”) on library shelves was not solely a matter of expressing a desire to raise the literary tastes of young library patrons. More importantly, the mental and moral safety of the children was at stake. As other librarians expressed concerns that reading the wrong sorts of books would land a young reader in the asylum or in prison, censorship became more than a mere matter of providing moral education to individual library patrons. It also improved the quality of society by reducing crime and vice and protecting the mental health of the population.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 344.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Sargent, 226.

⁷¹ Sanders, 60.

One library program in Brooklyn, New York, in the first decade of the twentieth century reached out to troubled local youth and tried to reduce gang activity by directing the young away from their usual reading material and toward classics of “literary merit.” In an account of her efforts with these young men, librarian Ethel Underhill wrote, “In a neighborhood notable for a gang of young toughs from one of our worst cities a home library was placed. The gang already had a flourishing circulating library of ‘Young Wild Wests’ and ‘Pluck in lucks’ [two dime novel series].”⁷² Underhill claimed she was able to win the trust of the gang and introduce members to quality literature (via the Robin Hood stories) and, thus, got them to give up their juvenile delinquencies.⁷³ Underhill then expressed pride in the small moral strides children coming to her library made through the reading of books: “When the tales of ‘King Arthur’ ..., the ‘Iliad,’ and the ‘Odyssey’ fill the mind of Joe Ginsburg, sweater operator; when Esther Lichtenstein, worker on ladies’ hats, reads Dickens and Scott, we know that without their realizing it they are getting the ideals of chivalry, courtesy, and courage that are fitting them to be wholesome units of society.”⁷⁴ Ethel Underhill was the epitome of the Progressive librarian with respect to dime novels — espousing a belief that educators could improve the moral character of their students by simply replacing their usual low-art reading fare with works of fine literary art.

⁷² Underhill, 155.

⁷³ One of the children, she related, approached Robin Hood with distaste, but recognized the story when the librarian began to read it. ‘Oh, chee, gimme it! I saw it in the movin’ picture show and it’s a peach!’ he exclaimed. I argue in the commercialization chapter that film had a special educational power that was distinctly different from that of the printed word. Nowhere is that phenomenon more evident than in the preceding anecdote. Underhill, 156. Moving pictures enabled access for a mass audience to narratives that would have been otherwise outside of their cultural domains. One of the theories regarding the demise of the dime novel (which will be discussed later in this chapter) is that movie began to occupy their niche in the world of entertainment. For the purposes of this dissertation, it means that films began to occupy a similar educational function (which may explain why later cultural critics critiqued film often as harshly as these librarians critiqued dime novels).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

Critics often dismiss popular novels as “trash, junk, or escapism.”⁷⁵ In the estimation of scholar Elizabeth Hardwick, “mass produced entertainments” are “items of capitalist market seduction.”⁷⁶ For this reason, the dime novel censorship was not independent of the commercialism censorship the *Oz* books also experienced. Librarians also reviled dime novels because they represented the commercialization of literature, which meant that the book no longer held the sacred quality it once supposedly had. The perceived defilement of the book was particularly true of literature for children with its strong roots in religion — books written primarily to teach religious and moral lessons.⁷⁷ Mass production of literature was, in itself, morally problematic to late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century librarians.

The Transition from Dime Novels to Books in Series

The dime novel era was roughly from 1860 to 1915 — having mostly come to a close by the First World War. The twilight of the dime novel, however, was the dawn of the series book. The line was thinly drawn between dime novels and series books. Most definitions of series books, including the most common one (three or more books featuring the same character or set of characters and/or parallel titles) would also include a great number of dime novels. That series book authors recycled numerous plot lines, characters, conventions, and situations from dime novels made the series book the “legitimate heir” to the legacy of the dime novel.⁷⁸ One of the legacies series books inherited was the ire of the nation’s librarians.

Dime novels represented to librarians the extreme case of “low” literature. At the turn of the twentieth century, as the era of the dime novel began to wane and series books began to

⁷⁵ Haugland, 48.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Caroline Burnite, “The Beginnings of Literature for Children,” *Library Journal* 31 (1906): 107-111.

⁷⁸ Randolph J. Cox, “Our Relations: How Dime Novels Became Series Books,” *Dime Novel Roundup*, April 1990, 18-24.

develop, the series book also inherited the librarians' disdain. "We claim for the children's library the possibility, the duty of being a moral force in the community," librarian Clara Hunt wrote in 1906.⁷⁹ The children's library was not merely an educational institution, but a site for moral education. As such, Hunt balked at literature whose only value was entertainment; instead, librarians should be "insistent enough that our children shall find no book on the shelves of which the highest we can say for it is that it is of no particular harm."⁸⁰ She continued, however, to specify the types of books to which she was referring when she expressed dislike for books "of no particular harm." She was addressing the more respectable cousins of the dime novels: "We all admit enough of belief in [the moral function of the library] to eliminate from our libraries the class of books usually designated by the color of their covers and their price mark — one dime. But we sometimes neglect to take into account the insidious mischief which the steady reading of mediocre books we are accustomed to calling 'harmless' is doing our boys and girls." That children enjoyed the books and read "volume after volume and series after series" was of no importance.⁸¹ For Hunt (and many other librarians), mediocrity, as evidenced by a book's price and the color of its cover, was synonymous with series book.

The language used to discuss cheap literature had changed slightly; instead of discussing the criminal influences of detective stories and westerns, a more tempered critique was common. In Hunt's estimation librarians were failing to recommend quality literature. "Instead of constant emphasis on the best old stand-bys, titles which perhaps may not be classified as utter trash, yet which are hopelessly mediocre — pot-boilers dashed off by uninspired writers"⁸² were finding

⁷⁹ Hunt, 100.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 101.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 98.

their way onto some library shelves. The “utter trash” of dime novels had given way to the “hopelessly mediocre” series book. The reference was clearly extended to include the *Oz* books. Without doubt, the books were “dashed off” in a series that averaged one book per year, but the *Oz* series was only one of several that Baum wrote under his own name and pen names. Even if the books were deemed “of no particular harm” and if children liked them, there was still little incentive for librarians to include the books in their collections.

Edward Stratemeyer was an influential figure in the development of series books for children. Around 1906, he realized that he was unable to write the number of books in his various series that the public demanded (“The Rover Boys” being his most famous). He hired impoverished writers and provided them with outlines for stories. They then returned completed manuscripts to him, which he edited and published. He then took credit (and money) for them. This became known as the “Stratemeyer Syndicate” or “Stratemeyer’s Fiction Factory.” The Syndicate was responsible for propagating various famous series — including *Nancy Drew*, the *Hardy Boys*, and *Tom Swift*.⁸³ While Baum’s *Oz* series had begun several years before the opening of the “Stratemeyer Syndicate,” it was the books of the “Fiction Factory” that established the archetype of the series book.⁸⁴

Importantly, at around the turn of the twentieth century, the popularity of dime novel began to diminish substantially. In part, this was because of the development of pulp fiction magazines.⁸⁵ The pulps were read almost exclusively by adults, while children and adults alike

⁸³ *Tom Swift* was another series banned in Florida libraries during the Cold War.

⁸⁴ Dennis Duffy, “Tom Swift and his Electronic Assembly Line,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 104 (Summer 1997): 260-74.

⁸⁵ Cox argues that the dime novel was killed, in part, by the motion picture — which also provided cheap entertainment (but had an additional “visual immediacy”). While other writers of cheap literature were in danger of succumbing to the rise of the motion picture industry, Baum was astute enough to try to bring his books to life on the big screen. Thus, he could cash in on the profits of film and ensure a life for his books. This is discussed in much greater detail in the following chapter. Putting stories on the silver screen does, as Cox argues, change the

perused dime novels. Pulp magazines contained the graphic violence of the dime novels, and the series books tended to shy away from these sorts of depictions. Pulp magazines, like the dime novels that preceded them, generally had paper covers and were sold on newsstands. Series books, on the other hand, usually had cloth bindings and were sold by booksellers.⁸⁶ Because pulps were marketed to adults, children's librarians ignored them, and the fight against dime novels fizzled. Nevertheless, series books (because they were marketed specifically to children) bore the brunt of the remainder of librarians' animosity.⁸⁷

“Light” literature, which *Oz* most assuredly was (recall Baum's writing that children wanted “pure entertainment from their wonder-tales”), suffered blame for being educationally detrimental to children. While a great deal of cheap literature followed the pattern laid out by detective tales and western sagas of gore and violence, even the literature that did not was in no way seen as harmless. Many librarians considered “lightness” nearly as egregious a sin as immoral content. These same librarians, as we have seen, charged classic literature with teaching the insights about human nature in all its complexity. While fiction reading may have found some small place in American public libraries, the “weak and shallow” author had no place there; “such a writer is immoral” because the value of literature is its ability to teach about the intricacies of human nature — and to fail in this capacity is a moral deficiency (regardless of what the book purports to teach).⁸⁸ The implications of this attitude are profound. Even if the content of the series books lacked violence and graphic incidents or other questionable content,

way they are received. The “visual immediacy” puts the audience closer to the story, because they are no longer in an imaginary world, but in a visual one. This, in turn, affects the educational power of the text. Cox, 20-21.

⁸⁶ Cox, 19.

⁸⁷ West, 138.

⁸⁸ Harris, 31.

their mere status as series books made librarians quick to dismiss them as unworthy of a place in the library.

The Serials

The function of this chapter until this point has been to delineate the source of librarian prejudices against series books. Those in charge of forming public library collections disliked series books generally, and the *Oz* books were, therefore, hardly the only series books to experience blistering attacks by librarians and educators. It would have been astounding had librarians in Baum's lifetime accepted the books into their collections. Baum's *Oz* series was, however, an early example of the series book (the first *Oz* book was published in 1900, and the Stratemeyer Syndicate did not begin its work until 1906), and it arrived at a time before the metamorphosis from dime novels to series books had been completed. While later attempts to censor the *Oz* books would be directed at specific contexts surrounding them (e.g. commercialism) or certain textual content of the series (e.g. utopianism and communism), this chapter illuminates a very different form of censorship of the books. Any series book had to justify its own inclusion in the library — and *Oz*'s battle was little different and only slightly more difficult than that of any of the other major series books of the era. At various points in their history, the *Oz* books were victims of all three of the types of censorship outlined by Gebler. In efforts to protect the population from their blatant commercialism and perceived communist subtext, librarians used tactics squarely located in the neutrality-advocacy and freedom-censorship models of censorship. That is, they tried to mold collections that excluded viewpoints they felt were dangerous and tried to use their collections to maintain the existing social order. In the first few decades of the twentieth century, however, the major librarian objection to the series followed the pattern of the populist-elitist censorship dilemma. They

wanted to use library collections to uplift public reading tastes. Their opposition was based not on the content of the books, but rather on the genre to which they belonged.

In part, children's libraries were sites of implicit censorship. The creation of a children's library meant selecting books for a specific purpose — for reading by children. This, in itself, added a level of censorship to a children's library not found in general library collections; there was a distinct set of books that could be included in adult collections that would not have been deemed appropriate for a children's library. In the words of one librarian, "If you admit there are good and bad books, just as there are good and bad people, you must admit that if you have a children's room at all it is to call attention to the good books and ignore the bad ones."⁸⁹ Part of the role of the children's librarian is to determine a set of books proper for reading by children. Because they are selecting books for a specific subset of the population, this necessarily implies that children's librarians need be more selective of the volumes they choose to include than librarians choosing books for a general audience.

As some reviewers argued that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* should be used as only an interlude between the types of educational and classic books children ought to be reading, other librarians and critics found this a weak reason to include the books in a public library collection. "There are many ... books which steal away a child's time and leave nothing in return. *These are books in series mostly,*" wrote one librarian on this matter.⁹⁰ While a fairly common objection to this type of thinking may have been that series books accustom a child to spending leisure time reading and that this would someday translate into the reading of more desirable

⁸⁹ Thompson, 427.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

literature,⁹¹ more librarians at the beginning of the twentieth century disagreed with this sentiment. As one example of a series that experienced a difficult time in the nation's libraries before the *Oz* series, Horatio Alger's books were summarily dismissed in this capacity: "It is in this way that the famous Alger books sin against the children. There are people who uphold the Alger books as creating a reading habit in children. In genuine experience they only create an Alger reading habit."⁹² Books in series gave children a vast supply of books directed at their reading comprehension levels, and many librarians felt the "evil of unlimited supply" would taint the child's literary sense.

Librarians and critics readily accepted that series books developed a reading habit. In fact, this same group frequently accused series books of developing a drug-like addiction to reading. "It is so very easy," librarian Charles Adams warned in an 1877 article, "and so very pleasant too, to read only books which lead to nothing, light and interesting and exciting books, and the more exciting the better, that it is almost as difficult to wean ourself [sic] from it as from the habit of chewing tobacco to excess, or of smoking the whole time, or of depending for stimulus on tea or coffee or spirits."⁹³ In 1879, Adams reiterated this sentiment: "Now, that insipid or sensational fiction amuses I freely admit, but that it educates or leads to anything beyond itself, either in this world or the next, I utterly deny. On the contrary, it simply and certainly emasculates and destroys the intelligent reading power. It is to that, what an excessive use of

⁹¹ For a few of the scant examples of this, see S.S. Green, "Sensational Fiction in Public Libraries," *Library Journal* 4 (September-October, 1879): 348-9, and the comments of C.H. Garland, a librarian in Dover, NH, who included the *Oliver Optic* series in his collection (Sanders, 61) and F.M. Crunden, a librarian in St. Louis, MO, who included the works of Horatio Alger (Sargent, 232). It is important to note that all three of these librarians felt that including one or two series in a public library might prevent the young from reading works of even "lower" literature (i.e. dime novels), and none believed that the reading of series books was, in itself, a worthwhile pursuit.

⁹² Thompson, 427. Dorothy Dodd removed the works of Horatio Alger alongside the *Oz* books from Florida public libraries in the 1950s. See Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion.

⁹³ Charles F. Adams, "The Public Library and the Public Schools," *American Library Journal*, 31 August 1877, 438.

tobacco, tea, coffee, or any other stimulant is to the nervous system.”⁹⁴ Adams was not alone in the comparison of drug use to the reading of series books. In 1889, another librarian wrote that children craved series books “as the drunkard craves liquor.”⁹⁵ A 1908 study told of a ten year old with a dime novel fascination who held up a man and stole three dollars from him to satisfy his reading addiction.⁹⁶ If reading series books did develop a reading habit in the young, many librarians felt this practice was to the detriment of the acquisition of a healthy literary taste. Certainly, this sort of reading was not seen as fostering the educational goals of the library.

In particular, the reading of series books upset the narrowly defined function of literature as educator of the intricacies of human nature. As one critic wrote, “Even such works as [the Capt. Kettle series], however, should find no place in the education of growing minds, if only because *there is no time for it*. It teaches nothing of the progress of humanity on its ascent from bestiality to divinity.”⁹⁷ Detractors felt that series books were unhealthy diversions from more important educational pursuits. The assumption was that it was the role of the educator to steer children away from these books and toward books that were seen as worth their time. The books that were seen as worthwhile reading material were works that did not deal in the lurid, violent, and outlandish.

The criticisms of series books followed the philosophy of school librarian George Hardy: “There are moments when one feels that a jeremiad is the only proper form of composition, or

⁹⁴ Adams, “Fiction in the Public Libraries and Educational Catalogues,” 334.

⁹⁵ Hardy, 345.

⁹⁶ Thomas Travis, *The Young Malefactor: A Study in Juvenile Delinquency: Its Cause and Treatment*, cited in Larry E. Sullivan, “Introduction” in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, eds. Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia Cushman Schurman (New York: Haworth Press, 1996), 1.

⁹⁷ Weisse, 180, emphasis his.

pessimism the only avenue for escape.”⁹⁸ One such jeremiad charged, “Our tiny little ones begin too often on cheap and tawdry stories in one or two syllables, where pictures in primary colors try their best to atone for lack of matter.”⁹⁹ Then they enter on a prolonged series of children’s books, some of them written by people who have neither the intelligence nor the literary skill to write for a more critical audience.”¹⁰⁰ Series books were described as “an overwhelming flood of trash” that prevented a child from developing a “sweet association with musty covers and time-worn pages.”¹⁰¹ The desire to have children read works of classic literature was the predominant sentiment, and this left series books with huge hurdles to overcome when it came to acceptance on the shelf in a public library.

These criticisms were diplomatic when compared to the writings of some opponents of serials. Franklin K. Mathiews, Chief Scout Librarian of the Boy Scouts of America, lodged the most vociferous protests. Writing of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, he organized the Library Commission of the Boy Scouts of America in order to “meet the grave peril” of “the boys’ taste ... being constantly vitiated and exploited by the mass of cheap juvenile literature.”¹⁰² In a November 18, 1914 article in *Outlook*, Mathiews wrote his most scathing indictment of serials:

The fact is ... the harm done [by series books] is incalculable. I wish I could label each one of these books: ‘Explosives! Guaranteed to Blow Your Boy’s Brains Out!’ ... The result is that, as some boys read such books, their imaginations are literally ‘blown out,’ and they go through life as terribly crippled as though by some explosion they had lost a hand or foot. For not only will the boy be greatly handicapped in business, but the whole

⁹⁸ Hardy, 343.

⁹⁹ While this article was written before the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, that book featured just such primary color illustrations. The color varied depending upon the location described in the chapter. Chapters that took place in the Emerald City featured green illustrations. The land of the Munchkins was shown in blue, and the Winkies’ home was depicted in yellow.

¹⁰⁰ Wiggin, 360.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Quoted in Donelson, 119.

world of art in its every form almost is closed to him. Why are there so few men readers of the really good books, or even of the passing novels, sometimes of real worth? Largely, I think, because the imagination of so many men and boys received such brutal treatment at the hands of these authors and publishers who give no concern as to what they write or publish as long as it returns constantly the expected financial gain.

The reading of series books, like the dime novels that preceded them, was blamed for a great number of societal ills and personal vices. Unemployment and lack of artistic sense, Mathews believed, were among the inadequacies that could develop in boys who read books in series. This, in turn, may lead to an increase in crime, substance abuse, violent activities, and the like.¹⁰³

Some librarians treated keeping children away from series books in the early twentieth century nearly as seriously as librarians treated preventing access to dime novels in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. These same librarians made explicit that they were choosing not to make a distinction between series books and dime novels; instead, they were against dime novels in all their “protean forms,” which included any book containing “grossly improbable and sensational incidents ... described in vulgar English, plentifully besprinkled with ... slangy expressions.”¹⁰⁴ Not making a distinction between dime novels and series books encouraged librarians to adopt a policy toward series books that mirrored the position they had long held toward dime novels, and series books inherited prejudices librarians held against dime novels.

Reading these books threatened to undermine a child’s entire education. As discussed earlier in this chapter, librarians were beginning to see their jobs as complementary to the mission of the public schools. They felt they needed to do everything in their power to banish

¹⁰³ While none of the primary documents cited in this chapter addressed the increased leisure time young people were experiencing by the late nineteenth century, in part as a result of stricter child labor laws, this may be an important part of this discussion. Librarians may have seen a correlation between rising crime rates, increased leisure time for the young, and the proliferation of series books. More research needs to be done to examine the relationship between the rise in readership of dime novel and series books and the larger amounts of free time afforded by American youth.

¹⁰⁴ Hardy, 343.

“worthless, sordid, sensational, trashy, and harmful [series] books,” which were “*the* [emphasis hers] menace to good reading.”¹⁰⁵ These books caused “wasted hours, a perverted reading taste, a false sense of reality, and a direct loss in education.”¹⁰⁶ H.M. Utley, a librarian in Detroit, made the link between series books and loss of education more specific: “Surely the greatest good in mere intellectual education that we can do for the large majority, is in the cultivation of a taste for good reading.... A love of good reading comes not from precept but from practice. May we not hope to educate a class of readers for the Public Library, whose taste will look a little higher than the ephemeral fiction of the day?”¹⁰⁷ Librarians saw the intellectual effects of reading serials as direct and clear. “Ephemeral” fiction weakened a child’s choice in reading matter — which impacted his or her intellectual growth in every area.

Conclusion: *Oz* as Series Book

An editorial in *Library Journal* in 1905 asked, “Shall librarians resist the flood [of series books] and stand for a better, purer literature and art for children, or shall they meet the demands of the people by gratifying low and lowering taste?”¹⁰⁸ In 1905, series books were a new development, and librarians were fighting to keep children away from them. An ALA study in 1926, *The Winnetka Graded Book List*, surveyed 36,000 children across the country and found that their reading was dominated by series.¹⁰⁹ It became increasingly clear to librarians over the first two decades of the twentieth century that they were failing in the mission of keeping series books away from the young. The books librarians saw as poorly written, sensational wastes of

¹⁰⁵ Esther Green Bierbaum, “Bad Books in Series: Nancy Drew in the Public Library,” *Lion and Unicorn*, 18 (Spring 1994): 94.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Sargent, 231.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Romalov, 114.

¹⁰⁹ Romalov, 118.

time had become standard reading fare for the nation's children. Librarians and educators sought to be cultural gatekeepers and worked diligently to have series books cast as the antithesis of good literature. In a sense, librarians disliked all series books for reasons similar to the commercialization of children's literature for which *Oz* served as a figurehead. Series books were commercial books, "mass-market commodities whose popularity threaten[ed] good literature."¹¹⁰

The *Oz* books were among the series singled out for being offending books for children.¹¹¹ Some of the animosity regarding the *Oz* books can be traced to its more extraordinary elements. One librarian asked the question, "What child needs to read to happy childhood or fairyland?"¹¹² For some librarians around the turn of the twentieth century, this question seemed a rhetorical one. Cheap, fantastic literature was faulted for leading to vice, crime, and poor reading habits. This attitude, however, was an extension of the arguments librarians used to deride dime novels. The vivid descriptions of violence and crime in detective dime novels were frequently accused of creating aggressive, delusional youth. Likewise, fantasy series books were deemed responsible for polluting the minds of the young: "[The young reader] lives, or rather dreams, poor child, in a world of unrealities, peopled only by monsters and ridiculous creations."¹¹³ The *Oz* books, thus, were the victims of beliefs late-nineteenth-and early twentieth century librarians held regarding the detrimental effects of outlandish series novels on the developing minds, reading habits, and

¹¹⁰ Haugland, 51.

¹¹¹ Bierbaum, 95.

¹¹² Thompson, 427.

¹¹³ Hardy, 344.

morality of youth. “There are,” after all, “graver contagions than those communicated by bacteria and microbes . . . the reference is not made here to obscene literature.”¹¹⁴

It may have been that children had a devotion to “low and flashy literature.”¹¹⁵ This is the hallmark of the series book. By creating loveable characters in the first book of the series, authors of series books used the devotion of the children to the characters to sell future volumes of the series. Baum in many ways considered himself a victim of this devotion. Wanting to end the *Oz* series, he was continually inundated with letters from fans asking him to write further installments. The outlandish characters and locales kept children returning to the books. In this respect, early twentieth century librarians’ adversarial position to the *Oz* series as being addictive to children was not, perhaps, wholly without merit.

The assumption, however, that series books were responsible for exposing children to “the evil influences of ugly, morbid, and sensational conceptions”¹¹⁶ was misapplied to the *Oz* series. In the introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum claimed that he was trying to eliminate these aspects from his book and even claimed that the classic fairy tales advocated by librarians contained these pernicious influences. It was not the case that Baum was writing amoral literature. As was discussed at length in the second chapter, his works contained important lessons regarding home, courage, compassion, thoughtful consideration, and the nature of friendship. The major objection of the librarians to the works of Baum was, in one sense, moral. They assumed that low art was not capable of teaching moral values because it implicitly failed at capturing the complexity of human nature; they felt simple narratives could not fully explore complex moral issues. Regardless of the moral lessons contained in the *Oz* books, librarians

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 343.

¹¹⁶ Weisse, 184.

objected to them because they inherited long-standing prejudices against dime novels and were rejected because of their status as series books. The *Oz* books went on to become some of the best-selling books of the twentieth century, and they have certainly become classics. The books do give the sort of deep insight into human nature (e.g. the importance of developing courage, compassion for others, and the practical intelligence) that librarians assumed was impossible for cheap, fantastic literature in series. The genre to which the books belonged made them anathema to librarians, who routinely ignored their content.

CHAPTER 5
FROM THE SCHOOL TO THE DEPARTMENT STORE:
BAUM AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Librarians, forming collections of books for the communities they serve, have historically played an important role in the types of reading materials readily accessible to citizens. In forming public collections, librarians purchase large numbers of books. Additionally, by making these books available to the public, their profession has historically seen part of its role as shaping the reading tastes of the masses. Transforming public taste, in turn, purports to affect the book purchasing habits of many Americans.¹ Often this has meant that market forces have had to be responsive to the aesthetic tastes of the nation's librarians, and it has meant that librarians have had a proportionally large part in shaping the literary landscape. This phenomenon has been particularly noteworthy with respect to children's literature. Generally, the success of a children's book depends much more highly on sales to libraries and schools than does a book written for adults. Publishers and editors of children's books, therefore, have had to be more concerned with the perceptions of librarians than have their counterparts in the business of publishing books for adults.²

¹ As I argue in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, library service expanded greatly in late-nineteenth century America. Progressive Era librarians, in particular, were charged with guiding increasing numbers of library patrons toward librarian notions of enriching literature. Chapter 4 argues that this position (with respect to dime novels, series books, and other sensational fiction) was untenable, and the low price, availability, and enthralling narratives drew large audiences despite librarian attempts to dissuade their readership. Even so, with such a large number of volumes being purchased by the nation's libraries, a recommendation by the ALA has had a large impact on book sales. Conferences like the 1918 series of meetings of the American Book Sellers' Association, the Booksellers' League of New York, the Women's National Book Association, and the New York Public Library (some of which took place in the Children's Reading Room) were commonplace. Publishers have traditionally taken the opinions of librarians very seriously. See Frances Clarke Sayers, *Anne Carroll Moore* (New York: Atheneum Books, 1972), 146.

² Selma G. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole: Adventures and Misadventures in the Realm of Children's Literature* (New York: Atheneum Books, 1971), 149-153.

From the 1920s through the 1950s, the “authoritative voice in the world of children’s books”³ belonged to Anne Carroll Moore. Because of her efforts as the Superintendent of Work with Children for the New York Public Library, her position as chair of the Children’s Services Section of the American Library Association, her annual lists of recommended children’s books from 1918 to 1941, and her regular columns in *Bookman* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, Moore wielded considerable power in determining the financial success of newly published children’s books for most of the first half of the twentieth century. Publishers, editors, other librarians, book store proprietors, and parents all sought her advice regarding the types of children’s books to publish, stock, and purchase. Moore’s standards were very exacting. She expressed strong disapproval for the works of Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd (the author and illustrator of the seminal bedtime story *Goodnight Moon*). She advised E.B. White not to publish his first children’s book, *Stuart Little*, lest it should become “an embarrassment” to him.⁴ While both of these books went on to become great successes despite Moore’s harsh critiques, she was instrumental in making some books classics and making sure others were forgotten. Moore was one of the first reviewers of children’s books, and her regular column in *The Bookman* between 1918 and 1924 had a significant impact on other librarians’ decisions to add certain books to their collections. Moore’s close and lifelong friendship with Beatrix Potter led her to purchase copies of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* and send them to patrons of libraries considering purchasing the books for their collection. Moore

³ Beverly Lyon Clark, *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children’s Literature in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 70.

⁴ Clark, 70-2.

actively worked to fill library collections with books she felt were excellent literature for children.⁵

Moore never held the works of L. Frank Baum in high esteem. As early as 1902 (two years after the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and before the second book in the series was published), she had harsh words to say about Baum's books. While working for the Pratt Institute Free Library, she wrote in her *A List of Books Recommended for a Children's Library* for the Iowa Library Commission: "Most of the popular picture books of the time are unworthy of a place in the hands of children... Such books as Denslow's *Mother Goose* (1901) [Denslow illustrated Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*] and Baum's *Father Goose*...should be banished from the sight of impressionable young children."⁶ It was hardly surprising, therefore, that in 1933 Moore decided to remove the entire *Oz* series from the shelves of the Central Children's Reading Room of the New York Public Library. Moore refused to give a reason for their removal, but her distaste for Baum's work likely stemmed from their status as low art (as discussed in the last chapter) and their role in commercializing children's literature. She was so well respected and influential that many children's librarians across the country followed her lead.⁷

The *Oz* books remained missing from the shelves of the New York Public Library for nearly three decades (not being reintroduced until the mid-1960s). This slight upon the works of Baum remained a sensitive subject among his devotees from the 1930s through the postwar period (after which most libraries that had removed the books began to include them in their

⁵ Sayers, 211-212, 220.

⁶ Michael Patrick Hearn, "Toto, I've a Feeling We're Not in Kansas City Anymore...or Detroit...or Washington, D.C.!" *The Horn Book Magazine*, Jan-Feb 2001, 18-9.

⁷ Suzanne Rahn, *The Wizard of Oz: Shaping an Imaginary World* (New York, Twayne Publishers, 1998), 15.

collections again). One such advocate for Baum's work, Ruth Plumly Thompson (the successor to Baum as author of the *Oz* books), met Anne Carroll Moore at the Duane Hotel in New York City on August 10, 1955. Ironically, this encounter happened at a party thrown by General Foods in honor of a radio version of Baum's *Oz* stories that was being sponsored by Jell-O. The awkward meeting of the two women quickly became a rather ugly scene.⁸

Thompson wrote of the incident in an article for the *Baum Bugle*. She described a room filled with publishers, booksellers, reviewers, and librarians. Each was "bemused by the flow of orange juice and gin," and each "under a rush of hollow praise, managed to insert some subtle barb" against the works of Baum.⁹ One of the worst offenders at the gathering was the "grim old lady...in charge of the New York Public Library's juvenile department."¹⁰ Thompson, seeing the opportunity to confront Moore over her refusal to keep any of the *Oz* books (either hers or Baum's), demanded to know the reasoning behind Moore's decision. According to Thompson, Moore "protested in horror...[and] melted away, as if enveloped in a cloak of invisibility."¹¹

While Moore remained cryptic about her stance, other librarians and critics were hardly loath to give their reasons for disliking the works of Baum. The source for the antipathy seems to be that:

The Wizard of Oz was too popular with children. Presentable copies could never be kept on the shelves because they were worn out by eager hands. *The Wizard of Oz* won itself a bad reputation because it became a musical comedy and a movie and because it was

⁸ Hearn, "Toto..." 24.

⁹ Ruth Plumly Thompson, "Librarians, Editors, Critics and Oz," *Baum Bugle*, 28 (Autumn 1984): 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

followed by a shoddy series of books, mostly written by hack writers who took over the original author's idea and extended it to impossible lengths.¹²

Clearly, many librarians were repelled by the commercial nature of the works of Baum. The endless toys, films, comic strips, and other product tie-ins had increased the popularity of the books, but they simultaneously hurt their reputation among those responsible for deciding which books would be stocked in the public libraries. John Steinbeck summed up the case by uplifting the printed word over the new commercial culture in a 1951 editorial entitled "One Man's Opinion": "And it is wonderful today with all [sic] competition of records, of radio, of television, of motion pictures, the book has kept its precious character. A book is somehow sacred."¹³ As discussed in Chapter 2, librarians and critics believed children's literature ought to develop the moral character of its readers. Children's literature had attained a sacred character, and, even decades after his death, Baum's attempts to promote his books with toys, stage plays, and a series of silent films were seen by many authors, librarians, and critics as degrading, not only to Baum's own books, but to children's literature in general.

Librarians and other educators viewed themselves as cultural gatekeepers in the world of children's books. They saw commercial, mass marketed books as the opposite of good literature. The mass market had turned the book into a commodity, and the popularity of these books (bolstered by films, toys, and the like) threatened the books they felt the public should read.¹⁴ Libraries were sites at which people could be directed toward the literature deemed worthy by librarians (whose educational goals dove-tailed with those of Progressive school reformers). By

¹² Carol Rylie Brink, *South Dakota Library Bulletin* (April-June 1948), cited in Michael Patrick Hearn, "Introduction," in *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), lxxxvii-iii.

¹³ John Steinbeck, "Reprint of 'One Man's Opinion,'" Series 900000, Box M73-16 #2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, FL.

¹⁴ Ann Haugland, "The Crack in the Old Canon: Culture and Commerce in Children's Books," *Lion and Unicorn*, 18 (Spring 1994): 51.

turning the book into a commodity, commercialization encouraged the public to purchase books and, hence, circumvent the library. Library collections were generally carefully chosen to increase the intellectual capacity of their patrons; libraries were, above all, institutions for the education of the public. The market had no such loyalty to providing educational reading materials, and it was free to supply books written purely for entertainment — as Baum’s books (at least nominally) claimed to be.

Although such commercialization of children’s literature was rare during the period when Baum was writing his books for children, it is commonplace now. Even so, many critics still level the same sorts of critiques early twentieth century librarians did against Baum. John Goldthwaite writes that “Baum was essentially a pulp writer who drew at need from every passing fashion, sometimes to the benefit of the story and sometimes not.”¹⁵ As an early writer of series books with a keen interest in the latest fads (such as the silent cinema), Baum’s books came with a stigma attached. As a recent volume written to aid teachers in selecting books for elementary students states, the first book in Baum’s series “might well have sufficed.”¹⁶ Baum’s status as a writer of series books, at times, continues to plague his work — and many critics still judge the quality of his now classic books against his reputation as a purveyor of “low” art.

In many ways, these criticisms are hardly unfair. Baum’s books were hastily written and poorly edited. His publishers expected his work would be of fairly low quality. One of Baum’s contracts (for a non-*Oz* series, written under a penname) read, “Baum shall deliver...a book for

¹⁵ John Goldthwaite, *The Natural History of Make-Believe: A Guide to the Principle Works of Britain, England, and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 212.

¹⁶ Charlotte S. Huck, Susan Hepler, and Janet Hickman, *Children’s Literature in the Elementary School, 5th Edition* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1989), 141.

young girls on the style of Louisa M. Alcott stories, but not so good.”¹⁷ Baum’s employers expected him to provide books to them quickly, and they were largely unconcerned that lack of time might lead to a lower quality product. Regardless of the literary worth of the work that Baum produced, his publishers held him to a very low standard.

Just as his publishers expected books of little literary value, librarians and critics (such as Anne Carroll Moore) derided Baum’s books for this deficiency. Baum may not have been aiming for quality, but he was certainly aiming for popularity at a time when “popularity and quality were increasingly seen [by librarians and critics] as divergent.”¹⁸ By marketing his books using a variety of different media (by increasing the scope of the impact of his work by entering the toy, movie, and theatre markets), Baum was alienating himself from critics and librarians. All the while, children were reading the *Oz* books in large numbers. Baum’s *Oz* was formulating a commercial character for children’s culture that had been relatively unknown before and was changing the way that children were experiencing their literature. This phenomenon had the strange effect of magnifying the educational power of Baum’s work by adding to the size of his audience and the number of ways his message was delivered. As Baum’s books changed the commercial character of children’s literature, early- to mid-twentieth century librarians worked to offset commercialism’s increasing influence over the minds of American youth.

The Web of *Oz*’s Intertext

The 1939 MGM film version of *The Wizard of Oz* achieved such popularity that Baum’s tale of Dorothy’s journey to the land of Oz was introduced to a wider and more varied audience

¹⁷ Angelica Shirley Carpenter and Jean Shirley, *L. Frank Baum: Royal Historian of Oz* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1992), 80.

¹⁸ Clark, 136.

than the books had attained. The iconic film version was, however, not the first translation of the work to film. Baum's writings, in fact, had a long tradition on both the stage and the screen over the decades preceding MGM's production. However, the relationships among Baum's books, the stage musicals, the silent film versions, and the early *Oz* toys and games were quite convoluted. The books inspired the stage musicals (which in turn inspired future books). Characters and events from the books were changed for the stage productions to appeal to a more adult audience. Occasionally, new characters would be introduced in the stage productions — and these characters would reappear in future books in the *Oz* series. The silent *Oz* films included story lines from both the stage and the books (including some of Baum's non-*Oz* books). Baum wrote books as a way of promoting the stage musicals and used the films for advertising the books and toys. He created a mutually reinforcing web of written and visual texts — each strand of which was used to support the other strands. In so doing, Baum was able to increase the scope of his audience, tell his stories (and send the underlying messages of these tales) across a variety of media, and, thus, increase the cultural power of his utopian vision by reshaping the world of marketing.¹⁹

While Baum was a pioneer in the world of advertising and commercialization of children's literature, it would be unfair to characterize him as primarily profit-driven. Baum represented the entrepreneurial spirit of early twentieth century America. He had a deep fascination with the new technology of the era,²⁰ and he used these technologies to provide children with increased access to his tales. Baum spent his life oscillating between great fortune and bankruptcy, and he

¹⁹ Neil Earle, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in American Popular Culture* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 80-1.

²⁰ This is an idea explored in greater depth in the first chapter of this dissertation.

was always willing to risk his financial well-being on a new method of disseminating his tales to the children who loved his work.

As a young man, L. Frank Baum spent several years working as an actor, and he had a great fondness for stage productions. Looking for a way to capitalize further on the financial success of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum's affection for live theater led him to translate his book into a stage musical.²¹ The Broadway musical, buoyed by the popularity of the book, became a huge hit with audiences as well.²² Baum was finding such a success with his stage production, in fact, that it garnered much of his creative attention. By the end of 1902, it was clear to Baum that adaptation of his books for the stage could be a highly lucrative endeavor. However, in order for him to continue to produce fresh musicals set in the land of Oz, he would be required to write more books for source material for these productions. The theatrical version of *The Wizard of Oz* was, in actuality, "largely responsible" for Baum continuing the *Oz* series.²³ While the public had been clamoring for another *Oz* book almost immediately after the 1900 publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum had not been enthusiastic about writing a sequel. The 1904 publication of *The Marvelous Land of Oz* was not a result of audience pressure for a new book. Rather, it was a book written out of necessity; Baum needed more material for a second stage production and felt that a second book would be a good promotional tool for his

²¹ Carpenter and Shirley, 96. Baum had a great affection for show business and stage acting. In fact, Baum cast himself in his production of *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*, because it provided him with an opportunity to return to his theatrical roots.

²² Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 287; L. Frank Baum, *The Road to Oz* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1991), 263. *The Road to Oz* was originally published in 1909. This citation refers to an unsigned afterward to the book that appeared in William and Morrow's 1991 edition.

²³ Michael O. Riley, *Oz and Beyond: The Fantasy World of L. Frank Baum* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 18.

first stage production — which had become a traveling show and was met with enthusiastic audiences around the country.²⁴

The phenomenal success of the traveling stage musical (in conjunction with the immense popularity of Baum's first *Oz* book) ensured the second *Oz* book would be profitable. After *The Marvelous Land of Oz* became a huge seller as well, it was clear to Baum's publishers that a series of *Oz* books would be financially rewarding. They signed Baum to a contract to deliver six more *Oz* books. Not only were the stage plays integral to the financial success of the books, but it is entirely possible that without the success of the stage plays, the *Oz* series would never have been written.²⁵

Aspects of the stage interpretations of the *Oz* books bled into Baum's written work. Certainly, critics were aware of the strange intersection between the stage and the written page that Baum was utilizing. One review of *The Marvelous Land of Oz* written for the *Cleveland Leader* stated ““Gen. Jinjur [a young girl who led a coup against the Emerald City in the second book] and her soldiers are only shapely chorus girls. The observant reader can see their tights and their ogling glances even in the pages of the book.””²⁶ Stylistically, it seems the stage versions of the films were affecting the way the books were being written — in no small part because the book was meant to serve as a template for future stage productions.

²⁴ Riley, 93; Michael Patrick Hearn, “Introduction,” lxi.

²⁵ Michael Patrick Hearn, “Introduction,” in *The Little Wizard Stories of Oz*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: Schocken Books, 1985). This book was originally published in 1914. The book features the characters from the *Oz* series, but, like Lewis Carroll's *Nursery Alice*, is written for a younger audience. While not technically an installment of the *Oz* series, it does provide a good example for some of the breadth in audience that Baum was endeavoring to reach by increasing the scope of the commercialization of the *Oz* books. While the stage production enlisted many new adult fans for his work, *The Little Wizard Stories* attempted to do the same thing for children who were too young to appreciate *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The introduction cited here first appears in the 1985 edition of the book.

²⁶ Riley, 108.

These periodic stage productions continued throughout Baum's life. The intersection of stage and page became even more complicated. The stage premiere of "The Tik-Tok Man of Oz" preceded the 1914 publication of the eighth book in the series, *Tik-Tok of Oz*.²⁷ However, *Tik-Tok of Oz* was not a retelling of the story of the stage play; it was a different narrative featuring the same characters. In order to avoid confusion, Baum wrote a clarifying introduction to his book:

There is a play called 'The Tik-Tok Man of Oz' but it is not like this story of 'Tik-Tok of Oz,' although some of the adventures recorded in this book, as well as several other Oz books, are included in the play. Those who have read the other Oz books will find in this story a lot of strange characters and adventures that they have never heard of before.²⁸

As this passage indicates, Baum was aware of the complexity of the interplay between his stage plays and his books — which he must have felt was becoming confusing to his audience. He acknowledged recycling some of the story lines from stage to book and vice versa. Baum was also using the introduction of the book to advertise the traveling stage play. He publicized his other *Oz* books, while assuring those who appreciated his tales that there was something new to be obtained by reading *Tik-Tok*. The web of *Oz*'s intertext had become huge and rather confusing by 1914. However, by this point the stage plays and the series of books were mutually supporting and promoting. A quarter century before Judy Garland's Dorothy would become a part of the national consciousness, the visual text and the written text had both already become integral parts of the way many people experienced Baum's *Oz*.

²⁷ Carpenter and Shirley, 103. The stage play, "The Tik-Tok Man of Oz," premiered in 1913.

²⁸ L. Frank Baum, *Tik-Tok of Oz* (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1914). *Tik-Tok of Oz* was the eighth installment of the *Oz* series. The character of Tik-Tok is noteworthy because he was a mechanical man who ran by clockwork and required periodic winding. He is generally considered literature's first robot — a figure that would go on to become a staple of the science fiction genre. For more discussion of the relationship between the *Oz* books and the science fiction genre, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the popularity of film in the United States reached unprecedented heights. In 1913, a writer for an American magazine dubbed the motion picture the “new universal language” and the “art democratic.”²⁹ For Baum, a man with a vivid vision of utopia and a penchant for marketing, the medium of film would provide a new and exciting way for audiences to experience his stories. Accessible to people of all ages and levels of literacy, film held the promise of introducing a much wider audience to Baum’s world of fantasy. It would also provide an immediate, direct visual experience of the narratives.

As a prelude to making his books into feature films, Baum organized a mixed-media traveling show he called *Fairylogue and Radio-Plays*. The show featured a combination of actors and photographic slides. The show was meant to be largely promotional. In the lobby after the show, children would have the opportunity to meet the actors playing their favorite character, get autographs, and purchase toys, dolls, and books.³⁰ In one sense, this show was a transitional text; it was neither film nor stage show, but it contained elements of both. Though this show ended up being unsuccessful (at least compared to the great successes of the stage musicals), it was not so financially draining as to prevent Baum from continuing with his plans to make a series of *Oz* films.

Baum’s gambit on making a series of *Oz* films seemed a highly logical one. Both the series of books and the stage musicals were well received by the public. Moreover, the fairy tale film was an extremely popular genre during the silent film era. The fairy tale films tended to be short and heavy on special effects — and the public was anxious to see familiar tales retold in the

²⁹ Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 331.

³⁰ Carpenter and Shirley, 96-7.

new medium.³¹ In Baum's new venture, the potential for profit was great. In 1912, he moved his family to a new estate in Southern California, Ozcot, started his own film company, and began producing films based on his books.

Though the life of his film company was short (lasting only from 1913 to 1915), Baum produced four films based on his written works: *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Magic Cloak of Oz*,³² *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, and *His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz*. They were moderately popular, but, due to large production costs, failed to make substantial profits. In the infancy of the medium, audiences were not accustomed to the idea of a children's film — and many found the movies to be childish. Distribution of these new “children's films” was constantly a problem — which severely limited the number of people who were able to see them. *The Wizard of Oz* was fairly well received, but *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* tanked, *The Magic Cloak of Oz* was untouchable, and *His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz* also failed to turn a profit. Although the demand for fairy tale films (aiming to please a more adult taste) remained quite high, Baum's film production company ended up going out of business in 1915.³³ Due to the lack of success of the silent films, MGM kept a close eye on its production of *The Wizard of Oz*. It nearly shut down production at one point for fear that the film being produced was “just for kids” and would meet the same fate as the earlier *Oz* film ventures.³⁴

³¹ Mark Evan Swartz, *Oz Before the Rainbow: L. Frank Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz on Stage and Screen to 1939* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 249.

³² Interestingly, the source material for *The Magic Cloak of Oz* was not one of the *Oz* books. Instead, Baum took the story to another of his books, *Queen Zixi of Ix*, and changed the setting to Oz. Of all of Baum's books, *Queen Zixi of Ix*, had the most positive critical response. Nevertheless, the decision to translate the book to film was an odd one. The public response to the book was never up to the standard set by his *Oz* books (much to the consternation of Baum — who numbered it among his best works). It is unsurprising, therefore, that the film also failed to meet with financial success.

³³ Swartz, 211, 288; Hearn, “Introduction,” in *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, lxxviii.

³⁴ Clark, 147.

Baum may have failed where MGM succeeded — in making a children’s film that would resonate with adults. However, reinterpretations of Baum’s work across a variety of media before 1939 were common (and, like Baum’s own stage adaptations, were largely well received by the public). In the late 1920s, Ellen van Volkenberg made a name for herself performing a marionette version of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. NBC broadcast *The Wizard of Oz* as a radio program three times per week from September 25, 1933 to March 23, 1934. The first animated version of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was produced by Film Laboratories of Canada in 1933.³⁵ Also in the 1930s, Baum’s *Oz* characters could be found in a comic-page serial known as *Queer Visitors from the Marvelous Land of Oz*.³⁶ Even if Baum’s films were a financial drain, *Oz* had successfully transitioned from the pages of a book to the theatre, radio, and funny papers.

While the films themselves may have met with a tepid response from audiences, they did not fail to provide the foundation for innovation with respect to marketing to children. Baum advertised for the films by decorating store windows. He filled the windows of department stores with Tin Woodman and Scarecrow dolls (which were produced as product tie-ins for the films). Interspersed with the dolls were stills from the films.³⁷ Even though the films failed to find their audience, an industry of toys, games, and other *Oz* paraphernalia developed and thrived. While the store displays may initially have been designed specifically to promote the films, their influence was more far-reaching. The store displays represented a web of commercial products. The stage plays sold the books which sold the films which sold the toys — which, in turn, sold the books and the stage plays.

³⁵ Swartz, 291-2; John Fricke, Jay Scarfone, William Stillman, *The Wizard of Oz: The Official 50th Anniversary Pictorial History* (New York: Warner Bros., 1989), 15. According to Fricke, et al., this animated version deviated quite drastically from Baum’s narrative.

³⁶ Clark, 138. A collection of these comics was published in book form under the title *Visitors from Oz* in 1960.

³⁷ Swartz, 288.

In the early twentieth century, such product cross-marketing was rare. By 1939, however, it had become quite commonplace. Oz remained at the forefront of this movement. The number and variety of Oz promotional products available leading up to the 1939 film was staggering. For instance, within three years of the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Denslow had designed a series of six posters depicting the Oz characters that were sold as wallpaper frieze for children's rooms. Little brass jewelry boxes with the Cowardly Lion mounted on the lid were given to ladies in the audience of *The Wizard of Oz* on April 15, 1903 to commemorate the hundredth performance. Buttons featuring many favorite characters from the *Oz* books, including the Scarecrow and the Woggle-Bug, were used to promote the release of a new *Oz* book almost every year. Colored maps of the land of Oz, featuring the royal flag of Oz on the back, were available for purchase in 1914. Detachable cardboard figures designed by John Neill (the illustrator who took over for Denslow) were sold — so children could act out their favorite scenes from the books at home. In 1921, Parker Brothers issued *The Wonderful Game of Oz*. Fans of the books could also purchase dolls and jigsaw puzzles. Children could even eat Oz Peanut Butter.³⁸

By the time the 1939 film was released, promoting Oz with tie-in products was a mainstay. A flood of commercial products followed: charm bracelets, pencil boxes, picture puzzles, writing paper, coloring books, and eventually (in 1957) a View Master slide. Figurines, dart games, and even patterns for Dorothy's dress were marketed. Oz Valentines were sold, featuring slogans like "'Oz' in Love with You," "Oil Be Your Valentine," and "I Wish I Had a Brain, So I Could Think of You."³⁹ There had been a seismic shift in the commercial nature of children's culture.

³⁸ Dick Martin, "The Toys and Games of Oz," *Baum Bugle*, Christmas 1962, 4-7; The Douglas G. and David L. Greene Collection of L. Frank Baum and Related Oziana, (New York: Swann Galleries, 1993), unpagged.

³⁹ Martin, 6-7; Fricke, et al, 154-5, 192-4.

So, by the Postwar Era, toys and games advertised children's books and movies (and vice versa) in ways that had been largely unknown a half century earlier — in no small part due to the role of Baum's Oz in the development of commercial culture in the United States.

It is important to note that the *Oz* books were not, in fact, the first works with such blatantly commercial aspects. Francis Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy* was also widely popular at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1893, Burnett's book was one of the two most likely books to be held by a public library (second only to *Ben-Hur*). *Fauntleroy* traded heavily in commercial tie-ins. *Little Lord Fauntleroy* playing cards, writing paper, perfume, and his trademark velvet suits were all commercially available (and popular). Librarians treated *Fauntleroy* with disdain similar to that with which they treated the *Oz* books. They derided *Fauntleroy* for its "sloppiness" and "artificiality."⁴⁰ *Fauntleroy*, however, was unable to maintain its popularity among children. The book was markedly Victorian — replete with moral lessons. It was, in fact, the perennial popularity of the *Oz* books with children that allowed it to have its large impact on the commercialization of children's literature. This popularity stemmed from Baum's setting aside the explicitly morally educative function of children's literature and embracing the role of the children's books as pure "entertainment."⁴¹ While Baum's *Oz* books might not have been the first works for children to practice heavy-handed commercialism, they were the epitome of the phenomenon — and likely had the greatest impact on the movement. The rapidly passing affection by children for *Fauntleroy* limited its influence. Baum's *Oz* books provided the successful model for creating a commercial empire around a series of books for children.

⁴⁰ Clark, 21-2.

⁴¹ The decision by Baum to treat children's literature as something other than a tool for teaching moral lessons to the young is discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 2.

With a procession of popular stage musicals, a quartet of underachieving silent films, and a cornucopia of toys, dolls, games, other product tie-ins, the world of Oz already extended far beyond the pages of Baum's beloved books by the time MGM released its monumental film version in 1939. Baum's attempts to garner popularity for his fantasy world through forays into various media and unabashed commercialism was a serious liability in persuading librarians, frequently hostile to the commercialization of children's literature, to include his books in their collections. However, Baum's web of texts (books, stage musicals, films, toys, shop windows, radio programs, comic serials, etc.) became a self-promoting machine. The power derived from this cross-marketing allowed Baum's books to maintain their popularity (and have a major impact on American culture) for the very reasons that the critics and librarians disliked them. Moreover, this heavy commercialization of the *Oz* books fundamentally changed the educational nature of these texts. Instead of confronting Baum's ideas only in their reading, the lessons of the books were integrated into more of their daily experiences. Children encountered Oz not only in their books — but also in their toy chests, on their radio, and in their local cinemas. Baum's dreams occupied their minds as they read, played, listened, and watched — increasing the quantity of time they spent with these ideas, but also changing the nature of that experience. The experience of Oz had become multi-sensory and incorporated into a wider array of the child's settings and activities.

Commercialization changed the access that children had to the stories. Neither teachers nor librarians encouraged children to read these stories.⁴² Young people were, therefore, exposed to the stories by other sources. These sources now included the cinema, the theatre, the radio, and the store window display. The *Oz* stories were more heavily integrated into their daily

⁴² In fact, children were frequently discouraged from using public library collections throughout much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For more on this, see Chapter 4.

lives, and they were not sequestered to school or library. Instead of solely reading the stories in a book, children saw the tales, heard them, and acted them out with their dolls as well. By appealing to their own sense of what an entertaining story might be, Baum (through the commercialization of his books) was allowing them to choose the type of tale they wanted to experience and providing them with a greater variety of ways to experience it. Increasing this variety decreased the distance between the author and his audience. In so doing, a powerful educational structure was created.

L. Frank Baum, Advertising Man

John Wanamaker, the owner of the first American department store, wrote in an 1884 editorial: “Seven years ago the winds of old trade customs were dead in our faces. Never did Kansas cyclones blow more fiercely. We could only do our best and trust the good common sense of people to set things right. We have not been disappointed.”⁴³ By the late nineteenth century, the United States’ transition from a rural country of independent farmers to an industrial, urbanized consumer society had begun. The era of the department store had been born — and the era of the general store was dying.

L. Frank Baum was keen to recognize this shift. Baum had moved his family to South Dakota in the days of the gold rush to operate a general store and publish a newspaper. When the gold rush was ending and Baum’s business was dropping precipitously, Baum was forced to invent new ways of marketing his goods to make ends meet. He would become the “first significant advocate of display” and “among the earliest architects of the dream life of the consumer age.”⁴⁴ One of Baum’s first book publications was *The Art of Decorating Dry Goods*

⁴³ Simon Bronner, “Reading Consumer Culture,” in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 29.

⁴⁴ William Leach, “Strategists of Display and the Production of Desire,” in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 107.

Windows and Interiors — a work that garnered him a significant reputation in the burgeoning field of advertising.⁴⁵ This reputation saved him from the job as a traveling salesman he had been forced to take when the gold rush ended, his store closed, and his newspaper shut down. He moved to Chicago to assume a full-time position as the editor of *Show Window*, a magazine devoted to advertising and design — the occupation that sustained him while he wrote *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.⁴⁶

While Baum's own initiation into the world of advertising had its advent in the poverty he and his family experienced in South Dakota, the driving force behind the rising importance of advertising was the abundance created by the advent of mass production. Factories were now capable of producing goods in quantities larger than the demand of the public. The Kansas cyclone of Baum's advertising became a necessary component in shaping public attitudes in the United States' new economic era:

...in a society of abundance, the productive capacity can supply new goods faster than society in the mass learns to crave these goods or to regard them as necessities. If the new capacity is to be used, the imperative must fall upon consumption, and the society must be adjusted to a new set of drives and values in which consumption is paramount.⁴⁷

If, therefore, a new set of drives and values were to be created in the culture, a process of education for the public needed to occur. This education took place largely outside of the school and in the new texts of visual culture: the film and the advertisement. Halfway through the twentieth century, the educational importance of these sorts of texts was obvious. As Lawrence Cremin notes:

⁴⁵ Swartz, 318.

⁴⁶ Riley, 76-7, 96.

⁴⁷ Simon Bronner, "Introduction," in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 3.

...the news broadcast conveyed information, the documentaries heightened awareness, the soaps conveyed formulas for resolving family conflicts, Captain Kangaroo taught about games and the world around us, and the commercials created wants and needs for consumer products.⁴⁸

By the era of the television, the commercial had become a standard educational tool for shaping public attitudes. Advertising was fulfilling the function that Wanamaker had envisioned at the end of the nineteenth century: it “educated desire.”⁴⁹

By the middle of the twentieth century, this advertising had the ability to reach most Americans through the television in the comfort of their own living rooms. However, the new site for education at the end of the nineteenth century was the shop window display. In reference to the rising prominence of the department store, Alan Trachtenberg notes, “As much as the school, and much like the factory, the department store served its customers as an educational institution...it sold along with its goods a lesson in modern living.”⁵⁰ The *Oz* films, plays, and merchandise exhibited a new educational function for children’s literature. While Baum’s own level of personal interest in the process of advertisement created a radical shift in the marketing of children’s literature, the importance of the intertextual web of Oziana extended far beyond simple marketing. Baum’s books led people into the new culture of mass marketing and introduced them to the fantasy that is the product of modern advertising culture. If children’s literature prior to the publication of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* books in England and Baum’s *Oz* books in the United States had constituted an extension of the moral education that children received in schools (which is argued in Chapter 2), then the *Oz* books gave the same sort of

⁴⁸ Cremin, 360.

⁴⁹ Leach, 102.

⁵⁰ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 132.

education as the department store. They were hardly devoid of important lessons, but few of them were explicitly moral in tone.

Of course, the work that Baum did for his book on shop windows and in the magazine *Shop Window* informed his fantasy writing. The rising consumer culture created “a worry that the humane spirit of the country was submerged beneath the surface allure of having and displaying possessions.”⁵¹ Baum’s fantasy world exploited the potential of this surface allure while defusing it by exposing it as artifice. The Emerald City is a sparkling jewel — a symbol of light and wealth. However, the glimmer of the Emerald City is the product of the green glasses all its citizens are forced to wear. It is the site of artistic flair, of beautiful subterfuge. The Wizard embodies the “humane spirit.” He represents the promise of the heart, the brain, and courage. However, the Wizard, too, is mere surface allure. Using visual tricks, the man behind the curtain presents himself as great and terrible. Nevertheless, the travelers are capable of finding their humanity through him. Dorothy finds her home. The Scarecrow receives a brain. The Tin Woodman finds a heart. The Cowardly Lion’s courage returns. Although the Wizard is a humbug, he is still capable of bringing personal fulfillment.⁵²

In this respect, the Wizard was not unlike the showman P.T. Barnum. Audiences loved Barnum for his trickery, for his grandiose presence, and for the spectacle that he brought them. According to T.J. Jackson Lears, his audience “expected a humbug and admired his skill at it.”⁵³

⁵¹ Bronner, “Reading Consumer Culture,” 13.

⁵² Selma Lanes makes an important point regarding the commercial nature of Baum’s books. In no Baum tale is the quest for material possessions. Despite her abject poverty in Kansas, Dorothy never goes on a quest for riches — even to save the family farm. With Baum playing such a prominent role in the rise of consumer culture, this may seem rather counter-intuitive. However, having the creative mind of an advertising man, Baum was able to use the vivid fantasy realm of Oz as a place where one finds deep personal fulfillment. Like an advertisement, the reader is drawn into the world by the promise of finding the happiness one is missing. Lanes, 98.

⁵³ T.J. Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of Consumer Culture, 1880-1930,” in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, ed. T.J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 28.

Twentieth century advertisers, like Baum, knew this, and advertisements mass-produced a “fantasy world of wish fulfillment.”⁵⁴ It is in this sense that the land of Oz is intimately tied to the idea of the advertisement. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is a story of wish fulfillment. The characters find everything they are lacking: a heart, a brain, courage, and a home. The Wizard is, in fact, a satire of P.T. Barnum, but it is a good-natured one. (The Wizard worked for “Bailum and Barney’s Consolidated Shows.”)⁵⁵ The promises that the Wizard makes, he cannot keep. However, he is a skilled humbug; regardless of the Wizard’s trickery, the wishes of the characters and the wishes of the children reading their adventures are fulfilled. Oz was a utopia, but as a utopia it “lacked refinement, smacking more of Barnum and Bailey than Old World elegance.”⁵⁶ The material abundance of Oz and the energy of its people in conjunction with the P.T. Barnum-like “ingenuity and bravado” of their leader, the Wizard, are what make Oz utopia.

While the Wizard’s humbuggery was a satire of Barnum’s extravaganzas, the Wizard also seems to be running a type of medicine show. In the 1939 film, the Wizard does so rather explicitly — he performs as a traveling magician in Kansas. In the book, too, he seems to exhibit many of these qualities. He employs trickery to sell something that doesn’t exist — the prizes he gives to the travelers are mere tokens.⁵⁷ Fittingly, Baum’s own family fortune was the result of one of these medicine shows. His father marketed a product known as Castroline — a type of “medicine” derived from petroleum. In essence, Baum’s satire of the Wizard is a self-satire — as the son of a medicine showman and as a flamboyant advertiser.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ L. Frank Baum, *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz* (New York: Dover, 1984), 48. This book was originally published in 1908.

⁵⁶ Lanes, 98.

⁵⁷ Tom St. John, “Lyman Frank Baum: Looking Backward to the Promised Land,” *Western Humanities Review* 35 (Winter 1982): 358.

Like snake oil from a medicine show, Dorothy and her companions are willing to accept the Wizard's tokens as though they were real. In a new consumer culture in which people were educated to desire through advertising, members of the new mass culture developed a faith in the promises of the advertised product. This trust in the power of the commodity to bring happiness uplifted consumer culture. Baum's *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* presented the purchased product as capable of bringing a new and satisfying life to its purchaser. Like an advertisement, it gave life to the commodity. Ironically, the modern advertising culture depended upon creating a sense of incompleteness among the people. Commercials depended upon fragmenting their viewer's sense of self — like a Tin Woodman with a missing heart.⁵⁸ Advertisers needed to “educate desire” and create a new set of drives for consumption in order for the system of increased production to remain intact. Within the context of the *Oz* books, the heart, the brain, and courage have become commodities. Even as Dorothy and her friends discover that they have always possessed each of these virtues, they remain unsatisfied until the Wizard has bestowed upon them trinkets representing each quality. In this sense, human values have become purchasable, because they are capable of being obtained as prizes for completing certain tasks, such as defeating the Wicked Witch of the West. Despite courage, compassion, and wisdom being requisite for completing these tasks, none of the travelers is willing to believe they embody these attributes until after receiving a material symbol from the Wizard.

Most of Dorothy's companions were also, in one sense, commodities. The Tin Woodman, the Scarecrow, Jack Pumpkinhead, the Sawhorse, the Patchwork Girl, the Glass Cat, and Tik-Tok are neither people nor animals. They are representations of people or animals brought to life by magical means. They are living mannequins. As long as they remain in Oz, they maintain

⁵⁸ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1925* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 37.

their energy and their life. Oz's magic is the magic of the advertisement; it gives life to the commodity. Dorothy expresses a desire to take the Porcelain Princess of the China Village (from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*) home with her. This distresses the Princess, for, she said, her joints would stiffen and she would die. The advertised product is alive, and the purchased product dies⁵⁹ — an idea that Baum, the advertising man, knew well.⁶⁰

By fragmenting the public's sense of self and imbuing inanimate objects with life, advertising causes "visual and verbal signs [to] become detached from all traditional associations and meaning in general is eroded. The work of advertisements gradually acquired an *Alice in Wonderland* quality."⁶¹ What is intriguing about this phenomenon is that, unlike Carroll, Baum's signifier never became semiotically detached from what it signified. Carroll's fantasy world was one in which nothing made sense — which was distressing for both Alice (who nearly drowns in a pool of her own tears) and the audience. Baum, on the other hand, created a world in which Dorothy's (and the audience's) deepest desires were magically fulfilled. In Baum's fantasy world, there is an internal logic: for instance, a man with a pumpkin head must carve himself a new one before the old one spoils. Oz, unlike Wonderland, is not wrenched from the real world; it is an ideal extension of an industrialized United States. The modern advertisement is Carroll's nonsense, not Baum's. Wonderland is the site of the inadequacy of the logical capabilities of man; Oz is an advertisement for what is good in mankind (a heart, a mind,

⁵⁹ Life and death was not the only dichotomy that was blurred by the advertisement. As Leach points out, the shop window as envisioned by Baum "celebrated metamorphosis, the violation of boundaries, the blurring of lines between hitherto opposed categories — luxury and necessity, artificial and natural, night and day, male and female, the expression of desire and its repression, the primitive and the civilized." Leach, 131. The lines between these opposed categories are constantly being redrawn throughout the *Oz* series. The poor young boy Tip becomes Ozma, the female ruler of Oz. The inanimate is regularly brought to life. The impoverished farm in Kansas, not the opulent Emerald City, is presented as home. One of the wonders of Oz is that it is a place in which one can fulfill any desire.

⁶⁰ Stuart Culver, "What Manakins Want," *Representations* 21 (Winter 1988): 97-116.

⁶¹ T.J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization," 21.

courage, and a home). Baum exploited the newly developed principles of advertising — principles he had a hand in developing — to teach people to find fulfillment in the modern consumer culture.

Baum's work may have been sold as "entertainment," but it still possessed important lessons for the children who read it. It is tempting to see Oz as an embodiment of the shop window. Children are drawn into the tale by the fantastic characters and exotic locales, and they are encouraged to believe in the power of the fantasy to provide fulfillment. After being drawn in, however, children find a warning hidden in the pages of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The characters only achieved self-improvement by finding strength in themselves and in their friends. Had the Wizard given them the tokens they sought before they defeated the Wicked Witch, they would have always lacked the realization they possessed a heart, a brain, and courage. More importantly, Dorothy would not have returned home to Kansas. In the later books, Dorothy would bring her family to live in Oz with her, but she spends the first book trying to get back to them. If Oz is an idealized extension of an industrialized United States, Kansas is the rural heartland of the nation. Even Dorothy was unable to resist the attraction of the wealth represented by the city, but she did learn the importance of maintaining her moral sense. Despite his important role in bringing about an advertising culture, Baum's work taught children to maintain their humanity in the modern (often fantastic) world.

The Department Store's Triumph

In *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), John Dewey lamented the inability of schools to stave off mass culture.⁶² In Trachtenberg's dichotomy of school and department store as sites of

⁶² John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1927); also, see discussion in William R. Taylor, "The Evolution of the Public Space in New York City: The Commercial Showcase of America," in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 291.

education, the public school found a powerful rival for educational supremacy in the United States. The department store was a symbol for the economic changes that were taking place, and the commercial advertisement became a powerful tool promoting the tenets of the new consumer culture represented by the department store. L. Frank Baum was one of the early engineers of this new tool. As such, Baum aligned himself with the department store and in opposition to the Progressive school. These two icons of turn of the century America were in direct competition. Teachers and librarians had created this dichotomy (at least insofar as it pertained to children's books). Publishers began to divide themselves into two categories: those who saw schools and libraries as their primary markets and those who sought to have their books sold in discount, department, and book stores.⁶³ Those publishers who produced books for the school and library market had to produce books of educational value — which meant having specific pedagogical intentions and, for the Progressives, a moral grounding. Books produced for sale in the department store were under no such obligation. They were free to provide the reading public with what they sought: leisure, pleasure, and recreation.

This was the expressed goal of Baum, and he made it explicit in his introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*: “modern education includes morality; therefore the modern child seeks only entertainment in its wondertales.”⁶⁴ Baum's attempts to bedazzle his audience without intending any direct moral or academic lesson established that his work was not an extension of the function of the school. Rather, he employed the tactics he developed with respect to the shop window to draw his readers into a world in which desire could be sated and personal fulfillment

⁶³ Haugland, 50.

⁶⁴ L. Frank Baum, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), 4.

could be found.⁶⁵ By relying on advertising and product tie-ins, moreover, Baum was allowing his works to become community property. Drawing children into the narratives and providing them with the opportunity to engage in recreation of his tales using toys and games broke down barriers between the stories and the audience. In turn, the educational power of the texts was increased, because Baum's ideas were becoming integrated into the daily experiences of the children who sought out stories about Dorothy and her companions.

In his history of moral education in the United States, B. Edward McClellan argues that progressivism failed to “insulate the school from the influence of conventional morality.”⁶⁶ The schools were providing the children with literacy and encouraging them to spend their leisure time reading. Ironically, this combination made schools less capable of combating the commercialization of children's literature. The children sought entertainment in their wondertales, and they returned to the schools with the popular wisdom provided to them by L. Frank Baum. In part, therefore, the inability of progressivism to buffer schools from changes in conventional morality precipitating from the development of consumer culture can be explained by its failure to combat effectively the commercialization of children's literature. At the same time, the development of commercial children's literature is attributable to the growth of literacy and leisure reading encouraged by Progressive schools.

It is little wonder, then, that schools were unable to stave off mass culture. Dewey's lament, nevertheless, became the cry of librarians and critics, who disliked the changing role of

⁶⁵ This educational function of advertising conflicted with the mission of the school. As Eliot Eisner argues in “The Three Curricula that All Schools Teach,” the implicit curriculum of the schools is one of delayed gratification. Baum's concentrating on the entertaining function of children's literature undermined its long-standing moralizing function. Likewise, his commercialization of children's literature stood against the school's attempt to diminish the influence of mass culture.

⁶⁶ B. Edward McClellan, *Moral Education in America: Schools and the Shaping of Character from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Teachers College Press), 60.

children's literature with respect to education that Baum's works represented. Lawrence Cremin, looking at the relationship between education and book publishing, observed, "virtually any book can be used for instructional purposes. But publishers, in deciding what to print, in which style, and for what markets, play a central role in determining which authors shall actually have the opportunity to teach."⁶⁷ Librarians, in deciding what to stock in their libraries, also play a large role in deciding which books would have the opportunity to teach children. Librarians in the first few decades of the twentieth century were seeking to create a type of children's literature that reflected their educational goals. By aligning himself with the department store instead of the school, Baum did not fit many librarians' conceptions of what children's literature ought to be. Many librarians, including and perhaps especially the prominent Anne Carroll Moore, penalized Baum for commercializing the books of children.

Many librarians may have resented the role Baum played in commercializing children's literature, but there was little they could do to combat the rapidly changing children's book market at the turn of the twentieth century. Baum's audience, the children, loved his books – and the myriad other means by which his narratives were presented to them. The school was unable to overcome the influence of mass culture, because department store values (with their advertisements of pure entertainment) were working upon the nation's children. Children received a different education from the *Oz* series than they did in schools. Baum's infusion of the fairy tale with the values of the rising consumer culture allowed possibly traumatic, but certainly unfamiliar, social changes to be processed within the pages of a children's book. He did so in a way that entertained, while it exposed humbuggery, embodied old-fashioned values, but accepted the promise of the bounty created by the surplus of goods made possible by rapid mechanization.

⁶⁷ Cremin, 427.

CHAPTER 6
BATTLING THE “RED” WIZARD:
LIBRARIANS, OZ, AND ANTI-COMMUNIST CENSORSHIP IN FLORIDA, 1939-1965

In February of 1959, Florida State Librarian Dorothy Dodd released a list of children’s books that would thereafter be banned from public libraries in Florida. Among the books on her list were many perennial childhood favorites: *Uncle Wiggly*, *Tarzan*, *Tom Swift*, the works of Horatio Alger, the *Campfire Girls*, the *Hardy Boys*, and the *Oz* series. The national media quickly brought the list to the attention of the American public. *Life* magazine, concentrating on the decision to remove the *Oz* books from the library, and noting the irony that Miss Dodd shared a name with the heroine of the *Oz* books, publicized the battle over children’s books in Florida in an editorial in its February 16, 1959 issue.¹ The article reported vociferous protests from parents, children, and a vocal public — including Florida Governor Leroy Collins who was dismayed that the works of his favorite childhood author (Alger) were in jeopardy: “I grew up on Horatio Alger, and I hate to have him put out of business.”² While the governor may have been most upset with the removal of Horatio Alger’s works, the bulk of the public ire against the removal of these children’s books centered on L. Frank Baum’s *Oz* books.

The battle over the *Oz* books in Florida’s libraries was not an isolated incident. It was merely one battle in a long-standing war between many librarians and proponents of Baum’s work. As detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, the *Oz* books had never been well-received by children’s librarians in the United States, and Dorothy Dodd’s decision to remove the books from Florida’s libraries set in motion a new set of purges of the books from libraries across the nation. Part of Dodd’s decision seems to have been motivated by the perennial distaste among librarians for

¹ “Dorothy the Librarian,” *Life*, 16 Feb. 1959, 47.

² *Ibid.*

series books; all of the books on Dodd's list were serials. Nevertheless, the character of, rhetoric surrounding, and motivation for Dodd's censorship attempts were markedly different from those of previous generations. After the Bolshevik Revolution, libraries cracked down on leftist literature, and most of the pressure placed on libraries by special interest groups concerned the inclusion of literature deemed politically subversive.³ Certainly, Baum's *Oz* books became targets (on a small scale) for removal from children's libraries under these auspices. In 1917, copies of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* were withdrawn from libraries in perceptible amounts.⁴ The Post-World War II Red Scare, however, had made the utopian elements of Baum's works (explored in Chapter 3) highly suspect to many librarians. Moreover, Dodd and the librarians who followed her lead felt the *Oz* books' lack of direct pedagogical intentions hurt librarians' efforts to create institutions that would provide the type of educated populace needed to win the Cold War. Dodd's suppressions focused on politics and national security instead of the *Oz* books' status as series book and their blatantly commercial aspects.

Beginning in 1938 and continuing through the early 1960s, a transformation in the debate over the *Oz* books' appropriateness for American libraries took place. Anticipating the release of the 1939 MGM film *The Wizard of Oz*, the leftist political periodical *New Masses* published a piece entitled "The 'Red' Wizard of Oz" which mused that Baum's series of *Oz* books had a strong communist subtext: "Good Heavens! The land of Oz is a fairyland run on Communistic lines, and is perhaps the only Communistic fairyland in all of children's literature."⁵ The *New Masses* article claimed that Baum's decision to make Oz a land in which money did not exist

³ Christine A. Jenkins, "Strength of the Inconspicuous: Youth Service Librarians, the American Library Association, and Intellectual Freedom for the Young, 1939-1955." PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 1995.

⁴ Michael Patrick Hearn, "Toto, I've a Feeling We're Not in Kansas City Anymore... or Detroit... or Washington, D.C.!" *The Horn Book Magazine*, January/February 2001, 25.

⁵ Stewart Robb, "The 'Red' Wizard of Oz," *New Masses*, 4 Oct. 1938, 8.

betrayed his own Marxist sympathies. In *The Road to Oz* (the fifth book of the series), the Tin Woodman explains the economic system that the fairyland uses:

Money! Money in Oz! ... What a queer idea! Did you suppose we are so vulgar as to use money here? ... If we used money to buy things with, instead of love and kindness and the desire to please one another, then we should be no better than the rest of the world... Fortunately money is not known in the Land of Oz at all. We have no rich and no poor; for what one wishes the others all try to give him, in order to make him happy, and no one in Oz cares to have more than he can use.⁶

Such a position struck the article's author as close to the communist mantra: from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs. The article also used Baum's indictment of bankers (who sought to foreclose on Aunt Em and Uncle Henry's farm) and his declaration that Oz was free of "cruel overseers" set to watch over laborers as evidence of his radical left-wing sympathies.⁷ Largely beginning with the publication of the *New Masses* article, charges that the books encouraged communist thinking in children would dog the books from that point through most of the Cold War.

The Library Bill of Rights of 1939 and the Changing Role of the Librarian

While censorship of books in libraries (particularly for political reasons) seems to have hit something of a high water mark in the 1920s, much of this type of activity seems to have abated somewhat in the following decade. The rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s had severe and obvious impacts on intellectual freedoms, and American librarians responded by seeking to protect those freedoms.⁸ Additionally, as it became clear that public libraries were going to become permanent fixtures in the educational landscape of the United States, professional librarians felt a certain coming of age. In 1939, the American Library Association re-evaluated

⁶ L. Frank Baum, *The Road to Oz* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1991), 164-5. The original date of publication was 1909, and the publisher was Reilly and Britton; Robb, 8-9.

⁷ L. Frank Baum, *The Emerald City of Oz* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1993), 22, 31; Robb, 8-9.

⁸ Jenkins, 146.

its position on censorship of books and approved a Library Bill of Rights. This made an anti-censorship stance the policy of the professional librarian just as librarians were carving out their own role as professionals. As David Berninghausen wrote in an article for the ALA Bulletin in September of 1950, “[L]ibrarians are beginning to assume the role of professional educators with increasing understanding of the vital importance of their function as impartial disseminators of information.”⁹ The ALA’s mission for the public library was to provide the public access to a diversity of viewpoints. Librarians began to see it as their duty “to prevent censorship and encourage free inquiry.”¹⁰ They began to divest themselves of the notion that it was their role to be a gatekeeper or censor on the public’s behalf.¹¹

This change in librarian self-identification took longer for children’s librarians than librarians for the general population. The ALA did not adopt the School Library Bill of Rights until 1955, and this stands as the first document to speak directly to the rights of young readers.¹² While in the late-1930s and 1940s there were very few documented cases of direct censorship of children’s books, children’s librarians were not uniformly convinced that the Library Bill of Rights applied to their patrons. Some, such as William Heaps, library educator and author of the textbook *Book Selection in Secondary School* (1942), believed that “school librarians [were] not bound by the Library Bill of Rights” because it contradicted the librarians’ traditional duty to

⁹ David K. Berninghausen, “The Responsibility of Librarians,” *American Library Association Bulletin*, September 1950, 305-6.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 306.

¹¹ Jenkins, 72.

¹² School libraries have existed in the United States since as early as 1838, but it was not until the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed in 1965 that in-school library service was available in many areas of the country. Miriam G. Martinez and Lea M. McGee, “Children’s Literature and Reading Instruction: Past, Present, and Future,” *Reading Research Quarterly* 35 (January 2000): 158. While school libraries tended to adopt the intellectual freedom model of service more slowly than public libraries outside of schools, they were smaller in number and served far fewer patrons. For this reason, this dissertation focuses more heavily on *Oz* censorship in non-school public libraries.

“protect immature minds” from questionable literature.¹³ Between 1939 and 1955, these attitudes toward children’s librarianship gradually moved closer to those held by public librarians serving adults, by shifting toward a position that valued the protection of children’s intellectual freedoms over the safeguarding of their “immature minds.”¹⁴

While the ALA began to redefine the role of the librarian as guardian of an impartial, public collection, they were reluctant to develop hard and fast policies of library selection, feeling that such rules would be too stifling. Additionally, at a time when librarians were gaining power and professional status, the association felt that having a uniform selection policy would take power away from individual librarians — undermining that newly acquired status. By resisting the movement to develop uniform selection policy, the ALA believed they were ensuring the status of the librarian as a professional — while providing communities with collections that best represented a diversity of perspectives.¹⁵

Schools and school libraries in the postwar began to follow the precedents established by public libraries. By 1950, the National Education Association seemed to adopt a position on censorship similar to that of the American Library Association. In a meeting of the NEA’s Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development on February 14, 1950 in Denver, Colorado, a policy on censorship was endorsed in response to what was perceived as “attempts to censor and eliminate certain materials and discussion thereof from the public schools.”¹⁶ The policy they adopted, it seems, had two major provisions. The first was to reiterate that “the professional staff in our schools possess the right to determine its own canons and protect itself

¹³ Cited in Jenkins, 144-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-4, 143.

¹⁵ Editorial, “Quote... Controversial Books,” *Library Journal*, 1 Oct. 1966, 4572.

¹⁶ “Policy on Censorship Endorsed,” *American Library Association Bulletin*, 15 April 1950, 122.

from the pressures of every minority, class, party, church, or organization bent on using the school or the teacher for its own special purposes or conception of public purposes.”¹⁷ The policy did uphold the maxim that materials “disseminating hatred of a race, religion, or nationality”¹⁸ would not be allowed. However, the second major provision of the proposal was that school libraries were only to include those works that were appropriate for the child’s reading level, so that “the ability of individuals or groups to understand what they are reading or discussing” will not be compromised.¹⁹ The policy on the NEA reflected the idea of the teacher as trained professional. It was the teacher who was granted the right to “determine a canon” and select works targeted at the intellectual capabilities of the child. The new NEA policy on censorship, in essence, sought to take power away from parents — some of whom were seen as trying to eliminate works with which they personally disagreed from a list of books objectively developed by a trained teacher.

The NEA policy, in certain ways, mirrored the position laid out by the ALA. Both advocated the trained professional as the person most qualified to decide which books would be included in a given library collection or school classroom, because their training made them better capable of making such a decision. The NEA policy, however, granted more power to the teacher than the ALA granted to the librarian. The ALA position advocated that the librarian be viewed as “an impartial disseminator of information.” In order for this to be possible, the librarian must, then, stock books written from a variety of different perspectives on each subject. The NEA policy, however, envisioned the teacher’s role as one of protecting the classroom from succumbing to the “pressures” of allowing classrooms to be used as an outlet for all the positions

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

of the community. The schoolroom was, summarily, not the site for discussing the “special purposes” of a minority group. The teacher was encouraged not to allow interest groups to promote their minority viewpoint in the public forum, but the librarian was encouraged to fight to make a plurality of viewpoints available for public consumption.

By and large, it seems librarians were willing to adopt the persona of guardian of the child’s developing moral sense. It was clear, for instance, that as professionals were outlining potential selection policies for libraries after the ALA’s Library Bill of Rights of 1939, they considered it axiomatic that children were to be protected from the “obscene and the directly vulgar.”²⁰ From the very beginning of the twentieth century, many children’s librarians (most notably Anne Carroll Moore) had already established a strong precedent in setting moral standards for deciding which children’s literature would be included in the nation’s libraries. They admonished books be “banished”²¹ from the sight of children for portraying “selfish and unsympathetic characters.”²² Frank discussions of subversive political ideas were far beyond the pale of accepted discourse in books for children and adolescents.

Fear and Fantasy in Florida: Baum and the Red Scare

After the Library Bill of Rights in 1939, the ALA was carving out its role as an organization advocating the role of the professional librarian as guardian of free, uncensored public libraries. Meanwhile, long-standing traditions regarding attitudes toward the censorship of children’s literature continued to solidify during the postwar period — and particularly in the

²⁰ Hannah Lugosa, *Book Selection Handbook for Elementary and Secondary Schools* (F.W. Faxon and Co.: Boston, 1953), 23-4.

²¹ Hearn, 18. As discussed in Chapter 5, Anne Carroll Moore believed that the works of Baum should be “banished from the sight of impressionable young children.”

²² *Ibid.*, 18-19. Hearn is quoting Sarah Beckby, head of the juvenile department of Los Angeles public libraries, who discussed the modern revival of written fairy tales in the United States that followed Baum’s writing of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

1950s.²³ Certainly this was, in large part, due to a fear of the spread of communism and a desire to protect children from its evils — in conjunction with perennial concerns about the moral character of books for children. However, questions about the type of literature children would be encouraged — or even allowed — to read seemed more pressing to parents and librarians for reasons only tangentially related to political and moral philosophy. Part of the renewed concern over children’s literature was a product of demographic shifts. By the early 1950s, huge numbers of children were reaching reading age at the same time.²⁴

It is clear that professional librarians took their responsibilities to this veritable wave of new library-goers quite seriously. Librarians felt that they had an obligation to provide these young ones with quality books to read. The ALA *Postwar Standards* read: “A special objective of the library’s program should be to foster good reading habits in children and young people in order to develop a population that knows and appreciates books. There should be a planned program of direct assistance to parents, teachers, and other leaders of children.”²⁵ By 1948, nearly half of the average library’s operating costs went toward literature for young people (19 percent on children’s literature, 27 percent for adolescents).²⁶ In particular ways, the development of book collections for young people had become a major priority of the nation’s

²³ As high school attendance became nearly universal in the postwar period, American youth culture, as something largely distinct from adult culture, began to develop. Many adults were suspicious of music, film, dance, and dress favored by the young, and children used these to rebel against adult mores. However, attempts at censoring teen music and film from radio and television became increasingly unsuccessful through the 1950s and 1960s. John L. Rury, “Democracy’s High School? Social Change and American Education in the Post-Conant Era,” *American Education Research Journal* 39 (Summer 2002): 315. Nevertheless, the political atmosphere of the late-1950s made books with a questionable agenda targets for censorship from libraries, and these attempts were more successful because it was easier to keep such material out of public institutions than privately run media outlets. Certainly, children could (and did) go into bookstores and purchase Baum’s books, but some librarians found success keeping the books out of their stacks.

²⁴ Joseph A. McFalls, Jr., Bernard Gallagher, and Brian Jones, “The Social Tunnel versus the Python: A New Way to Understand the Impact of Baby Booms and Busts on Society,” *Teaching Sociology* 14 (April 1986): 131.

²⁵ Emerson Greenway, “What about Tomorrow’s Children?” *Library Journal* 75 (April 1950): 657.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 658.

libraries. This elevation of the importance of children's literature within the agenda of public libraries was a product not only of Cold War fears of falling behind the Soviets in intellectual capacity, but also of feelings of responsibility to provide quality books to the flood of new readers.

To provide this wave of library patrons with the number of books they would require, librarians had to lobby state and local governments for larger financial support. Florida's librarians had discovered a powerful tool for encouraging legislators to open their coffers. Efforts to increase funding and support for the expansion of Florida's library system were tinged with anticommunist rhetoric throughout the postwar period. Thomas Dreier, head librarian of the St. Petersburg public library and member of the State Library Board, often discussed the importance of funding libraries as a tool protecting the country against the dangers posed by the Soviet Union. In one article written for *The St. Petersburg Times*, Dreier showed concern that the Soviets were working diligently to develop a literate population which he felt would give them an advantage on the world stage:

All of us must face the fact that Russia is seeking world domination. It is possible that Russia will succeed. Only one thing will enable Russia to triumph ... It will not be sputniks or missiles or material explosives of any kind. Such things ... are details. What will enable Russia to win is its possession of more mental capital than the people of the free world ... One way in which it is being done is through building public libraries at fantastic speed.²⁷

If Russia had an advantage over the United States, Dreier believed, it was (at least in part) a product of the importance it placed on public libraries. Dreier envisioned his own job as librarian as one intimately tied to national security. In a letter for the Florida library newsletter, Dreier reiterated, "Russia has 394,000 libraries. The United States has 25,000. Florida ranks

²⁷ Thomas Dreier, "Libraries Will Help Russia Win Minds of the World," *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 April 1960, no pagination.

39th among our 50 states. If Russia eventually outstrips us it will be because they seek everywhere the ideas and learn how to make better use of their minds.”²⁸ In essence, Dreier was arguing that his movement to improve the quantity and quality of Florida’s libraries was a necessary front in the Cold War. He viewed libraries as extremely important educational institutions that would create an educated populace capable of defeating the Soviet Union in the marketplace of ideas. Referencing Arthur Trace’s popular book *What Ivan Knows That Johnny Doesn’t*, Dreier wrote an article for the St. Petersburg public library newsletter entitled “Johnny Will Read.” In it he wrote, “It has been cried aloud all over the country that ‘Johnny can’t read’... More Johnnys would read if given the chance ... One thing is sure, we’ll not get [the type of library required to inspire our children to read] until the citizens demand it.”²⁹

The role of the library in Florida was rapidly changing in the late 1950s to early 1960s. Florida’s Library Services Act of 1957 drastically increased the quantity and quality of Florida’s libraries. At the time the Act was passed, only three of Florida’s sixty-seven counties provided countywide library service. By 1964, thirty counties provided library service in six regional library systems and thirteen single county systems.³⁰ Most Florida counties were experiencing their first non-subscription, state-funded libraries.

²⁸ Thomas Dreier, “Russia’s Book Reading Public,” *Libraries for Florida*, Feb 1960, no pagination.

²⁹ Thomas Dreier, “Johnny Will Read,” *Your Public Library: Food for the Mind*, not dated (circa 1961), series 1506, carton 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee Florida. *Your Public Library* was a newsletter for the public library of St. Petersburg, FL. The reference to Trace’s book (published in 1961) being a topic of conversation among people in the country indicate that the article was published soon after the book.

³⁰ Verna Nistendirik (Library Extension Officer) to Dr. Frank Sessa (Head Librarian of Miami Public Library), 26 Feb. 1964, series 1510, carton 3, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, FL.

By national standards, Florida's libraries remained inadequate,³¹ but the rapid pace at which libraries were being built and regional library systems were being developed represented a substantial change to Florida citizens' access to educational reading material. Dreier sought to create a Florida library system that would rival the public school system in educational importance: "Let us not forget that there was a time when high schools also had to fight for support. The majority of taxpayers were against paying for those 'higher education' institutions."³² The State Librarian's office saw its crusade as an educational one, not one of entertainment, escape, or distraction. Dreier believed his efforts to increase the influence of the public libraries in Florida were the logical extension of the battle to establish public elementary and high schools. He saw one of the major educational goals of the public library system as improving the position of the United States in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. State officials like Dorothy Dodd and Thomas Dreier were gaining power and influence — and considered themselves as educators building the potential of the United States to fight the communist threat.

Librarians from other states, seeing its effectiveness in building Florida's library system, began to adopt Dreier's thesis that libraries provided a line of defense of against communism. In March of 1961, William Hinchliff, librarian in Pacific Palisades, California, wrote a letter to Dreier thanking him for granting permission to reprint his *St. Petersburg Times* article. He noted, "The reprint has already helped spur public library support in Los Angeles."³³

³¹ According to Nistendirik's letter (cited above), there were no libraries in Florida that would have been considered adequate according to the Standards of the American Library Association — with the Miami system coming closest. While the national average for per capita library expenditures was \$1.62 in 1964, Florida's was \$1.17. The ALA recommended \$3.50.

³² Thomas Dreier to Verna Nistendirik, 23 April 1959, series 1502, carton 6, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, FL.

³³ William E. Hinchliff to Thomas Dreier, 20 March 1960, series 1506, carton 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

Encouraged by this rhetoric, the principal of an elementary school in Westwood, California announced in late 1961 that he was banning *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* from his school, because Baum “had communist sympathies.”³⁴ Dreier also explained in a short note to Dodd that libraries in Pennsylvania were having some success against strong state opposition to increasing library funds using his anticommunist argument.³⁵ When it came to employing the tactic of using the public’s anticommunist sentiment to build a stronger library system, Dreier and Dodd were not alone.

Dorothy Dodd’s anticommunist rhetoric was far more tempered than Thomas Dreier’s, but she still appealed to public fear of falling behind the Soviet Union to give her the power to shape children’s library collections. “Kids don’t like that fanciful stuff anymore,” Dodd responded when asked to justify her decision to remove the *Oz* books from Florida libraries: “They want books about missiles and atomic submarines.”³⁶ The *Life* magazine article saw Dodd’s censorship attempts as part of a larger battle over the value of fantasy fiction in an atomic age: “They [Dodd’s arguments] stem from the recurrent fad for teaching kids to ‘adapt to reality’ by shunning fantasy.”³⁷ In the context of the Cold War, Dodd believed children who read practical books (or books about “missiles and atomic submarines”) would increase their personal knowledge and consequently increase the nation’s scientific and technological potential.

The *Life* article cited child psychologist Dr. Brock Chisholm, who felt that “in an atomic age it is wrong to teach children to believe in Santa Claus on the ground that they refuse to ‘think

³⁴ Mary Lou White, “Censorship — Threat Over Children’s Books,” *The Elementary School Journal*, Oct. 1974, 6; Michael Hearn, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), xcvi.

³⁵ Thomas Dreier to Dorothy Dodd, 27 March 1961, series 1506, carton 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

³⁶ Martin Gardner, “The Librarians in Oz,” *Saturday Review*, 11 April 1959, 18.

³⁷ “Dorothy the Librarian,” *Life*, 16 Feb. 1959, 47.

realistically' when they grow up."³⁸ Among many professionals who influenced the types of books children would be able to access, fantasy books caused a great deal of suspicion. Many of them felt that postwar librarians ought to have looked for books rooted in "honest realism."³⁹ Books that did not direct the mental efforts of children toward pragmatic goals not only threatened to waste the time of youngsters who could be pursuing serious academic subjects instead, but it could create in them an unrealistic worldview they could ill-afford in a time of atomic fears. Thomas Dreier's efforts to increase Florida government support of libraries by billing the public library system as an educational institution at the forefront of the Cold War complemented Dorothy Dodd's censorship of the *Oz* books. If the libraries were to become training fields for the next generation of scientists and diplomats, the library collections would have to reflect the new educational agenda. Removing children's fantasy books would, thus, help the effort to stop the spread of communism — particularly when the fantasy series in question was already suspected of instilling communist sympathies.

Dodd, in fact, overestimated postwar children's aversion to the *Oz* series when she said kids did not seek fanciful literature. The *Oz* books were as popular in the late 1950s as they ever were. In 1959, there were seven different editions of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in print, and they were all good sellers. The publisher Reilly and Lee was selling so many copies of the books that it was forced to re-illustrate the books, because the plates containing the illustrations were wearing out. Milwaukee libraries (where the books were not banned) reported that children had worn out 135 copies of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in eight years, and the remaining fifty

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Elizabeth Nesbitt, "Librarians Must Seek the Right Books," *Library Journal*, 75 (Apr. 1950): 660.

copies were rapidly deteriorating.⁴⁰ Ralph Ulveling, head librarian at the Detroit Public Library, underestimated the public's affection for the *Oz* books as well, when he removed them from the children's library in Detroit in 1957. The story quickly attracted the attention of the national media, and Ulveling was flooded with negative attention over his decision. *The Detroit Times* even went so far as to publish *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* serially so that local children could have an opportunity to read it. In response to this onslaught of public criticism, Ulveling wrote his own defense in the American Library Association's Bulletin "so that librarians ... will not be placed in an awkward situation ... should the matter be raised in their own localities."⁴¹

Dodd was placed in just such an awkward situation (and had not learned from Ulveling's experiences). After *Life* gave national exposure to her list of children's books to be removed from the library, she was left to explain herself and take responsibility for a major scandal:

In view of what has happened, it does seem too bad that we used the list of children's books in the Newsletter. I can't say, however, that I would have been perceptive enough to foresee the furor it did create. As for me taking the rap, I think I am the one to take it. I do it with good grace because I think we are fundamentally right in insisting these books in question are not suitable reading material. I hope though, that this experience will teach us that a soft approach is better.⁴²

Part of the "furor" that Dodd's list inspired came in the form of letters from an irate public demanding to know why their favorite books were being removed from the library. Dodd, in

⁴⁰ Martin Gardner, "Librarians in Oz," 18. It is also important to note that with children wearing out so many copies of the books, it would have proven quite expensive for libraries to keep the books in stock. With forty books in the series it is difficult to see how a cash-strapped library could afford to continually replace the books. While financial concerns might have been used as a possible reason for keeping the books out of Florida's libraries, it does not appear they were. Dodd's order was that all the books mentioned on her list were "not to be purchased, not to be accepted as gifts, and not to be circulated. Any title now on the shelves should be withdrawn from circulation." Thus, even if the book came to the library at no expense or was already on library shelves, Dodd wanted it removed. Michael Hearn, "Toto, I've a Feeling We're Not in Kansas City Anymore... or Detroit... or Washington, D.C.," *The Horn Book*, Jan-Feb 2001, 31.

⁴¹ Ralph Ulveling, "Ralph Ulveling on Freedom of Information," *American Library Association Bulletin*, Oct. 1957, 653-5, 721.

⁴² Dorothy Dodd to Thomas Dreier, 18 Feb. 1959, series 1506, carton 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

fact, had to respond to so many letters that she had little time for anything else. She was forced to write a letter to Thomas Dreier explaining her tardiness fulfilling her duties as State Librarian: “As a result of the letters I’ve had to write about the children’s books, I am way behind on a number of things including the biennial report.”⁴³

While Dodd eventually convinced the governor to stand by her decision to remove the children’s books, even some of Dodd’s coworkers had serious reservations about her censorship attempts. Library Extension Officer Verna Nistendirk, at great professional risk, went so far as to reprint the *Life* article, that “brutal Verboten piece,” in her own library bulletin, directly defying Dodd.⁴⁴ Over the course of 1959, the relationship between Dodd and Nistendirk steadily deteriorated. Their personal relationship had gotten ugly, and their working relationship was inharmonious. These problems had become common knowledge among library employees across the state, and they threatened to nullify the hard work that they accomplished building the Florida Library System during the late 1950s. Thomas Dreier eventually offered Dodd the choice: “You hired her. You can fire her.”⁴⁵ Dodd decided not to fire Nistendirk, but Nistendirk’s role in the children’s book drama almost assuredly prevented her from being promoted upon Dodd’s retirement.

Nistendirk was respected by her colleagues all over Florida. Even Dreier expressed feelings of confidence in her work prior to the episode regarding the children’s book removal: “In choosing Verna we thought that you [Dodd] had shown judgment that approached

⁴³ Dorothy Dodd to Thomas Dreier, 25 Feb. 1959, series 1506, carton 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

⁴⁴ Thomas Dreier to Dorothy Dodd, 2 Feb. 1959, series 1506, carton 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

⁴⁵ Thomas Dreier to Dorothy Dodd, 18 Nov. 1959, series 1506, carton 2, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

perfection.”⁴⁶ Six years after Dodd released her list of children’s books, Margaret Chapman, president of University of South Florida, wrote of Nistendirik in a letter to Adam G. Adams, the Chairman of the State Library and Historical Commission:

I know that Dorothy has never thought of Verna in terms of a possible successor, but I believe in all fairness that she should be considered. She has certainly worked harder to increase public library service in Florida than anyone within living memory ... It will be hard to find anybody who knows as much as Verna does about the county set-up in Florida ... [In asking for information and advice from her] I have been increasingly aware of her knowledge and capabilities and her complete loyalty and dedication to her job.⁴⁷

In response, Adams wrote, “Verna’s competence and willingness and knowledge of people is tremendous.”⁴⁸ In many ways, Nistendirik was the likely and popular candidate to assume Dodd’s position upon her retirement, but the relationship between Dodd and Nistendirik never recovered from the personal and professional conflicts stemming from Nistendirik’s response to Dodd’s list. Without the blessing of Dodd, Nistendirik’s chances of serving as her replacement were small; she was not offered the position.

Conclusion

In 1939, American professional library associations began to envision their institutions as places where a diversity of viewpoints would be protected and presented. Children’s librarians, lagging behind their adult-serving counterparts, officially adopted a position that would protect the intellectual rights of children in 1955, during the heart of the Red Scare. As a great deal of pressure was placed on librarians to keep politically controversial works out of their collections, many librarians responded by using their new-found professional influence to guard their

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Margaret Chapman to Adam Adams, 7 July 1965, series 1510, carton 3, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

⁴⁸ Adam Adams to Margaret Chapman, 13 July 1965, series 1510, carton 3, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee, Florida.

institutions against groups seeking to remove any perspective that disagreed with their own. On the other hand, Florida's library system, still in its infancy, found in the Red Scare a powerful tool for establishing public and legislative support of increasing library funding. Library officials presented the library as an essential educational institution that would provide patrons with the power to defeat the Soviets in the marketplace of ideas.

The power of librarians greatly increased in Florida during the postwar period. The size of the state library system greatly expanded, largely because of increased state spending on libraries. This spike in spending was in no small part the product of efforts by librarians to portray the library as an institution instrumental in educating the populace and giving the United States the edge over the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Linking the growth of libraries to battling the Cold War, however, had an effect upon the willingness of Florida librarians to stock certain books — particularly books children would be able to access. The wild fantasy and the perception of subversive political ideas in L. Frank Baum's *Oz* books made them an obvious target for censorship attempts by state library officials. Even as American librarians were more frequently acknowledging the right of children to a diversity of reading material, pockets of librarians across the nation began to use the tactics of Florida librarians to garner additional funding by removing Baum's fantasy from their shelves.

There was a danger in the growing power of librarians to affect the financial success of children's books, because "institutional sales are generally far more vital to the success of a children's title than an adult one ... since school and library sales generally mean the difference between a profit and a loss on most titles."⁴⁹ A rash of book bannings could have spelled financial doom for a given volume. In the end, this was not the case with *Oz*. The "furor" was

⁴⁹ Selma G. Lanes, *Down the Rabbit Hole: Adventures and Misadventures in the Realm of Children's Literature* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 149.

so great over Dodd's attack on the beloved *Oz* books that, by her own admission, she would have to think twice about directly censoring books in the future. When it came to librarian attempts to control access of children to the ideas of the *Oz* books, Baum's successor as author of the *Oz* series Ruth Plumly Thompson noted, "[T]he children themselves settled the matter by buying millions of Baum's books ... though many whose parents could not afford to buy the books were deprived of the delights and excitement of the wonderful Land of Oz."⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Ruth Plumly Thompson, "Librarians, Editors, Critics, Children, and Oz," *Baum Bugle* 28 (Autumn 1984): 7-8.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

Economic incorporation in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to massive social upheaval and “wrenched American society from the moorings of familiar values.”¹ At a time of significant technological advancement and a corresponding increase in industrial production, utopian novels (like Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*) made it easier for middle-class readers to imagine a world better than the one typified by internal and external crises. While utopian novels offered readers visions of ideal societies, progressivism provided a concerned middle class with the promise of an improved social order. The state, Progressives felt, could not only regulate the economy, but also transform their fellow Americans in such a way as to end class conflict and reestablish a set of moral values.²

Many Progressives concerned with a perceived decline in public morality turned to newly founded organizations and governmental offices in an attempt to counteract rising crime rates, the dissolution of the family, and deviant behavior. Progressives sought to keep control of the social order by having the lower classes inculcate middle class values. Literacy rates increased in the United States throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This growth was, in large part, due to the efforts of Progressives who sought to increase school attendance by instituting mandatory schooling laws. Correspondingly, children less frequently sought employment, spent more years in school, and, freed from the pressures of earning a living, had more leisure time to spend on their own pursuits.³ With this increase in literacy rates came a

¹ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 7.

² Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), xiv-xv, 69-71.

³ Peter Bailey, “‘A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures’: The Victorian Middle Class and the Problem of Leisure,” *Victorian Studies* 21 (Autumn 1977): 10.

corresponding proliferation of reading material for the young.⁴ By establishing public libraries (and by maintaining strict controls over the types of books held in library collections), Progressives hoped to provide children with the type of reading material that would instill such middle class values as self-reliance and a strong work ethic.⁵

Ironically, compulsory schooling made it more difficult, in certain ways, for teachers and librarians to control the moral influence of the reading material of the young. As more people were able to read and write, the market responded to this increased need for cheap and consumable literature. Series books became the standard reading material for young Americans.⁶ Series like *Nancy Drew*, *Tom Swift*, *Hardy Boys*, *Bobbsey Twins*, and, of course, Baum's *Oz* books were purchased by the millions.⁷ These books were voraciously read by impressionable youth and, therefore, contributed to the development and structuring of the ideas and attitudes of young people.⁸

⁴ The period over which Baum's books were written was the heart of "The Golden Age of Children's Literature." The number of books published for children increased substantially over the period. Publishing companies, like Macmillan, began to open divisions dedicated to children's literature. Recommended reading lists, children's rooms in public libraries, and academic courses devoted to children's literature demonstrate the increased attention that was being paid to literature for the young. Richard S. Alm, "The Development of Literature for Adolescents," *The School Review* 64 (April 1956): 172-7. Although Alm did not mention them, series books (which would become hugely important forms of children's literature) also developed to meet the reading needs of youth.

⁵ Larry E. Sullivan, "Introduction," in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, eds. Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia CushmanSchurman (New York: Hayworth Press, 1996), 2.

⁶ Edward T. LeBlanc, "A Brief History of Dime Novels: Formats and Contents, 1860-1933," in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, eds. Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia CushmanSchurman (New York: Hayworth Press, 1996), 14

⁷ The first book in *The Hardy Boys* series, one of the more popular serials produced by the Stratemeyer Syndicate, was published in 1926. *Nancy Drew*, another Stratemeyer production, followed on the heels of *The Hardy Boys*, in 1929. Two more Stratemeyer series, *Bobsey Twins* and *Tom Swift* preceded both *Nancy Drew* and *The Hardy Boys*. Those series began in 1904 and 1910 respectively, making them closer contemporaries of Baum's *Oz* series. The Stratemeyer Syndicate began publishing in 1899 (with a series called *The Rover Boys*). The publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900 made Baum's *Oz* books and those of the Stratemeyer Syndicate early examples of the literary form.

⁸ John T. Dizer, "Authors who Wrote Dime Novels and Series Books, 1890-1914," in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, eds. Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia CushmanSchurman (New York: Hayworth Press, 1996), 75.

Many librarians sought to keep the *Oz* books out of the nation's libraries for nearly seventy years after the publication of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the reasons for the reluctance of many librarians to accept Baum's work were numerous. First, Baum's *Oz* books dispensed with the overt moralizing that typified American children's literature throughout its history. Second, while Baum's *Oz* books represented important texts in the history of the utopian novel, they did not embody the type of utopian thinking endorsed by Progressive reformers. Progressives' faith in the power of social science to cure society's ills reflected the type of utopian thinking found in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. Baum's *Oz* books, on the other hand, were transitional texts. They bore some of the anti-modernist sentiments that would lead to the prolific utopian and dystopian visions of the early- to mid-twentieth century. However, this critique of modern, industrial life would be re-read during the Red Scare as an endorsement of communist thinking, and Cold War librarians would continue the fight to keep Baum's books off library shelves.

Moreover, Baum's *Oz* books were an early example of series books for children. Series books developed out of the dime novel tradition, and the dime novel was a perennial target of censorship by zealous librarians and Progressive activists who found their moral influence on young minds troubling. That Baum unapologetically commercialized his art — with toys, games, films, stage plays, and the like — and used this commercialization to build an audience for his series books further angered Progressive librarians.

Connecting the Dots

The reasons explored in this dissertation for librarian disapproval of the *Oz* books seem quite disparate: *Oz*'s place in the changing moral character of children's literature; *Oz*'s role in the developing genre of the utopian novel; *Oz*'s series book status at the birth of the medium; *Oz*'s service as harbinger of the coming commercialization of children's literature; and creative

Cold War readings of Baum's political sensibilities. At the same time, the battles over the acceptability of the *Oz* books in the nation's library collections were, seemingly, discrete. For the first seven decades of the twentieth century, librarians fighting to keep Baum's books out of public libraries had similar motivations: the books undermined the library's function as an educational institution.⁹ Although librarian decisions to go on the offensive against the works of Baum may have been motivated by a desire to create library collections that would achieve their own educational goals, each battle had its own distinctive character. Turn of the century librarians who felt strongly about the pernicious influences of series books (because of their close relationship to dime novels) assailed the books for promoting deviant behavior in the young. Following the precedent set by Anne Carroll Moore, later librarians found *Oz*'s commercial empire too worldly for children's literature and its history of dispensing morals to children. While Dorothy Dodd eschewed Baum's books both because of their status as series books and because of perceived political undertones, her motivation was to promote the use of the library as an educational institution pivotal in helping the United States battle the forces of communism. Librarians following Dorothy Dodd's example found the books to be a dangerous diversion for youngsters who should be reading books to improve the nation's mental capital.

The individual motivations for removing the books may have varied widely, but collectively, the librarians who sought to keep Baum's books out of the hands of the young did so primarily because they felt the books tarnished the high moral and pedagogical mission

⁹ More recent attempts to ban the *Oz* books from libraries have been for markedly different reasons. Christian fundamentalists have fought to keep the books off school reading lists and library shelves, arguing they promote a belief in magic and improper gender roles. Meanwhile, some parents, dismayed by negative racial stereotypes included in many of Baum's works, have tried to have the books removed from libraries because of these depictions. These recent battles, however, differ greatly from those that preceded them. First, librarians, by and large, fight against concerned parents to keep the books on the shelves. Second, the predominant argument is no longer that the *Oz* books do not belong in an educational institution. The books are now singled out for what they teach, not what they fail to teach.

entrusted to them. Still, one might be tempted to think that each of the battles discussed in the individual chapters of this dissertation bore little relation to one another. After all, while a belief in the educational function of the library might have been the common thread linking the librarians discussed in this examination of the *Oz* books, the differing criticisms of Baum's work by these librarians (from being lowly dime novels to having a communist subtext) seem quite disparate. In a sense, they were radically different criticisms. Baum began his *Oz* series in a time of drastic societal change. The books were transitional texts within the history of the utopian novel sub-genre — bearing some marks of both the nineteenth century modernist utopia (typified by Bellamy's *Looking Backward*) and the twentieth century anti-modernist utopias and dystopias (like George Orwell's *1984* and James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*). Moreover, the *Oz* books were instrumental in fostering changes in children's literature, signaling the decline of the moral tale and the rise of children's literature as entertainment and ushering in a new era of commercialization of children's literature. The books were also an early example of the series book, and series books led, more or less, to the demise of the dime novel,¹⁰ which began an important trend in the reading of young adults through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century.

Written at crossroads for many branches of literature, the *Oz* books were pivotal texts in several different literary genres and sub-genres: utopian novels, fairy tales, children's novels, and series books. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the ensuing books were all of these things. In this regard, they were unique. They were utopian novels in the form of fairy tales for children in a series. Moreover, they were published at a time of massive transition for each of these genres

¹⁰ Edward T. LeBlanc, "A Brief History of Dime Novels: Formats and Contents, 1860-1933," in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, eds. Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia CushmanSchurman (New York: Hayworth Press, 1996), 19.

and sub-genres. In each of the early battles over the *Oz* books, it seems they were demonized by critics afraid of the type of change to the status quo that the books represented. In this respect, the various critiques leveled against the *Oz* books throughout its history were intimately related to one another. That these different genres found themselves in flux at the time of the publication of the *Oz* books was hardly coincidental. Each genre was in a time of transition because of the social climate at the turn of the century. Production in the United States' industrial sector had increased drastically in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.¹¹ Likewise, the country experienced rapid growth in immigration, urbanization, incorporation, communication, and transportation.¹² These changes had the potential to increase the productive capacity of the United States, and Darwinism brought with it a belief that these changes demonstrated the inevitability of human progress.¹³ Although poverty levels increased in Eastern cities, there remained a cultural belief that Westward expansion offered every American the opportunity to become an economic success. This social climate of optimism fostered utopian thinking, and social science brought the promise of building a better society, a lasting cultural assumption that began in the late nineteenth century.¹⁴

By the close of the nineteenth century, however, much of this utopian optimism had subsided. While Western thought has traditionally equated technological advancement with

¹¹ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 43-4.

¹² Simon J. Bronner, "Introduction," in *Consuming Visions: Accumulations and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 6.

¹³ Harold V. Rhodes, *Utopia in American Political Thought* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1967), 29-31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

societal improvement,¹⁵ the changes in industrial production, communications, and transportation did not translate into an improvement in the quality of life of the average American worker. Frederick Jackson Turner argued that the frontier had closed. Even so, grim growing conditions in the Midwest caused a massive emigration to major cities. When rural families arrived in the cities, most of the time their dream of a better life went unfulfilled. They were greeted with market panics and labor riots.¹⁶ Additionally, laborers' wages dropped drastically in the 1890s, and the United States had become increasingly vulnerable to depression because it was "no longer the nation of self-sufficient farmers."¹⁷ The promise of leisure and comfort in modern living had gone unfulfilled for many people.

Although many Progressive Era reformers were disappointed with the failure of the technological advancements to improve the lives of all Americans, their utopian impulses had served to create an educational system that impacted the lives of increasing numbers of lower-class Americans. As a result of their efforts, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the number of students enrolled in school had climbed, funding for public education had expanded, and the length of the school year had grown.¹⁸ At a time when life was becoming increasingly unsatisfying for many people, larger numbers of children were attending public schools. Likewise, a greater percentage of the American population was becoming literate without a concomitant improvement in their economic station. Although it was true that literacy was highly correlated with social class (people of higher social class were more likely to be

¹⁵ Arthur Lewis, "Utopia, Technology, and the Education of Society," *Journal of General Education* 37 (Fall 1985),: 163.

¹⁶ Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 13-15.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁸ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in the United States* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 110.

literate), it was not true that becoming literate translated into higher incomes or social status.¹⁹ Carl Kaestle borrows Harvey Graff's term "the literacy myth" to describe the phenomenon. Illiteracy is "more of a symptom than a cause of disadvantage." Rising literacy rates served to create more readers across social class lines. A more varied readership led to the development of new literary forms to appeal to readers in lower social classes who were previously excluded from the practice of leisure reading.²⁰

As the literary landscape in the United States diversified, dime novels became a staple for working class readers, and libraries, under the direction of the American Library Association, made it their mission to direct working class patrons to volumes that promoted their own middle-class values.²¹ At the turn of the twentieth century, the amount of leisure time was on the rise. In increasing numbers, Americans began to use their free time for commercial entertainments: professional sports, cinema, and department store shopping.²² Armed with the ability to read, a sizable population previously absent from the book-buying market added literature to their leisurely pursuits. Correspondingly, the book market changed considerably to accommodate the desires of the reading public. One of the major innovations in the publishing world to satisfy these new readers was the dime novel. Available through the post almost anywhere in the United States for a reduced rate, dime novels provided amusement-hungry audiences with cheap reading fare filled with lurid tales of adventure and romance. The *Oz* books, like dime novels, were serials, hastily written and filled with wild, madcap escapades. They were relatively

¹⁹ Carl F. Kaestle, *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading since 1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 24-5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xix, 24-5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 56-9.

²² Claude S. Fischer, "Changes in Leisure Activity, 1890-1940," *Journal of Social History* 27 (Spring, 1994): 453-57.

cheaply produced and sold at rates generally affordable by most Americans. However, they also inherited dime novels' low-culture status and, thus, the distaste of many librarians.

Changes in the development of the utopian novel also arose from the larger numbers of literate Americans. For most of their history, utopian novels were thinly disguised philosophical treatises. They were designed to simultaneously teach and delight. The emphasis of Thomas More's *Utopia*, for example, was more social philosophy than eventful narrative. The commercial considerations of the larger (and more varied) reading audience forced authors of utopian novels to concentrate more heavily on the delight and less on the teaching.²³ That is not to say that utopian novels lost their function as texts concerned with social philosophy. Instead, they downplayed the direct discussion of philosophy to attract a larger market for their books.²⁴ Indeed, they still served a vital role of educating people to inhabit, make sense of, and orient themselves in a dynamic culture.²⁵

The *Oz* books reflected the changing political and economic tide of the country. On the one hand, Baum's works applauded the "magic" of modern machinery — bringing the phonograph to life, using the wireless telegraph to contact the distant people of Oz, and dedicating a tale to the wonder of electricity. Born of Baum's own difficulty transitioning into the modern world, the *Oz* books offered children a strategy for dealing with the rapid social changes. Baum approached these changes with trepidation, fearing what they could mean if Americans failed to cling to existing moral structures. The *Oz* books encouraged young readers

²³ Philip Wegner, *Imaginary Communities Utopia, the Nation, and Spatial Histories of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 3.

²⁴ Downplaying intellectual concerns is a symptom of mass marketing. Producers will rarely risk their own capital on works of literature outside of popular taste, everyday experience, or common knowledge. The intellectual requirements to understand a written work, therefore, are necessarily reduced. Joseph Bensman and Israel Gerver, "Art and the Mass Society," *Social Problems* 6 (Summer 1958): 4-10.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 15.

to see the magnificence of the city, without leaving behind the moral grounding of rural life. The books taught the importance of banding together to achieve mutual goals while uplifting the importance of maintaining individuality. In sum, the books advocated the traditional (rural) morality represented by Dorothy's upbringing by Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, while expressing a profound respect for the wealth and opportunity represented by the Emerald City. Baum's books represented the fractured social climate of the time, but they also provided a method for making sense of and finding happiness in a changing world. That is, by expressing the hopes and fears of the era in which they were written, the vision of utopia provided by the *Oz* books was one in which such ambivalent tension was eased. In the sense that they attempted to alleviate the transition through the rapid changes that were taking place in the United States, the *Oz* books also symbolized an evolution of the utopian literature genre. Mid- and late-nineteenth century utopian novels tended to espouse a modernist belief in the potential represented by industrialization and technological advancement. By the early- to mid-twentieth century, utopian novels had adopted an anti-modernist sentiment typified by a belief in the superiority of the moral life of the pre-industrial era.

Like the relegation of the social philosophy in the utopian novel to the background, American children's literature began to dispense with the moralizing that had previously been an important element of literature for the young. Increases in literacy rates and a greater availability of affordable literature (due, in part, to the success of the dime novel) changed the character of children's literature, and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was in the vanguard of this development. While Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* had altered the moral character of British fantasy for children — dispensing altogether with the traditional moral lesson, the transformation took much longer in the United States. Baum's

claim in the introduction of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that the book was meant to be “only entertainment”²⁶ for children distinguished it from other children’s books published in the U.S. in the era. Just as the authors of utopian novels had discovered that market success of their books often depended upon their ability to diminish the role of teaching to increase the delight of the reader, Baum dispensed with the explicit moral of the tale — under the auspices that “modern education includes morality.”²⁷

Removing the blatant moral lesson from children’s literature was, in essence, a product of Progressive Era education, although not exactly in the way Baum indicates in the introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Progressive school reforms had increased the literacy rate among children in the United States. Having the ability to read, many schoolchildren, in turn, sought out entertaining books. Simultaneously, as books were becoming financially affordable by adults who had been unable to purchase them, children also developed an appetite for entertaining literature that they could afford. This changed the market for children’s books. Children were now able to choose their own literature — and not be entirely dependent upon the preferences of their parents. Entertainment, not education, became the primary concern of the buyers of children’s literature. The *Oz* books filled that niche. The primary concern of librarians, on the other hand, remained providing books they felt had direct educational benefits to their patrons. Baum flouting that tradition for market considerations did little to please many librarians who saw themselves primarily as educators and purveyors of pedagogical literature.

Much to their chagrin, librarians and their educational literature faced competition in the marketplace. Baum found innovative ways of marketing his tales, and he developed a

²⁶ L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2000), 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

commercial empire devoted to the promotion of his books. Toys, games, films, comic strips, stage shows, and radio programs were dedicated to Oz and its outlandish denizens. In the chapter on commercialization of Baum's books, I argued that this type of advertising (in no small part attributable to Baum's work in the advertising industry) was a necessary by-product of modern industrial society. That is, advertising became a necessity for "educating desire"²⁸ because of the huge increases in industrial production. Nevertheless, this is not the extent of the role of industrialization in the commercialization of children's literature. The same impulses that created the series book and encouraged American children's book authors to downplay the role of the moral lessons in their tales also led to the development of this new multimedia experience of children's texts. Industrialization gave rise to advertising, and children's authors (largely beginning with Baum) used these new advertising tools to sell more books.

Librarians of the period were still in the process of debating whether works of fiction belonged in the nation's public libraries²⁹ — where children were, by and large, unwelcome. Throughout the 1890s, most libraries had stated age limits, usually between twelve and fourteen.³⁰ As late as 1893, children under twelve were barred from more than half of the nation's large libraries for fear that they would be distracted from their schoolwork and would find themselves under the pernicious influences of fiction.³¹ In the meantime, the cinema welcomed children. In 1909, eighty-seven percent of St. Louis's youth admitted to attending the cinema regularly. Sixty-seven percent of Cleveland's school children in 1913 attended the

²⁸ William Leach, "Strategists of Display and the Production of Desire," in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon Bronner (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), 102.

²⁹ Esther Jane Carrier, *Fiction in the Public Libraries* (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1965), 89-92.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 180-1.

³¹ Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 207.

cinema almost daily.³² Critics who sought to keep works of fiction out of the hands of children by barring both children and fiction from the nation's libraries tended also to speak out against whichever new medium was most popular at the time (e.g., dime novels or film).³³ Many upper middle-class education reformers leveled the "mass culture critique," the belief that mass culture is an aberration born out of commercial greed and public ignorance.³⁴ Baum, in the meantime, sensing the rising popularity of the film industry, brought his printed narrative to the silver screen in a series of silent films. As librarians made their collections less accessible to children, Baum was inviting children to experience his narratives in books, at the movies, and in their toy boxes. Librarians like Anne Carroll Moore were suspicious of the works and eliminated the books from their library shelves because of their popularity, but many children loved the works of Baum and carved out an important place for the books in American children's literature. The huge success of the works ensured that this type of cross-marketing would become commonplace.

The *Oz* books epitomized changes to the production and reception of literature in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century. They exemplified a profound transformation in the character of the utopian novel — as the movement morphed from one reveling in the promise of modern society to one expressing a belief in the failure of that promise. The publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* represented a watershed moment in the history of American literature for children; it was the first full-length fantasy for American

³² David Nasaw, "Moving Pictures in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950*, eds. Elliot West and Paula Patrick (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 17-19.

³³ Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 4-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

children and an early example of an American work for children without an explicit moral lesson. The *Oz* series arrived at a time when series books, an outgrowth of dime novels, were in their infancy. Additionally, Baum's works brought American children's literature into the age of advertising. The precedent they set changed the way books for the young were marketed and deeply affected the ways children experienced the narratives written for them. All of these changes in the literary world were taking place around the turn of the twentieth century, and the *Oz* series (beginning in 1900) found itself at the nexus of all of these transitions.

The economic changes that took place in turn-of-the-twentieth-century United States gave rise to each of these literary changes: the advent of a less didactic children's literature (directly marketed as works of entertainment), the development of a less overtly philosophical utopian literature, the evolution of dime novels into series books, and the commercialization of children's literature. Utopian sentiments in upper-middle class Progressive reformers, heightened by a belief in the power of technological advancement, led them to crusade to increase access to education by the lower classes in an effort to ease class tensions and provide economic opportunity in the new economy. In turn, rapid industrialization created a new consumer culture that changed the production and reception of books. Consumer culture gave rise to advertising culture and changed the way books were marketed. This army of new readers with very little disposable income sought cheap, entertaining books. The creation of the dime novel followed — with the development of the series book shortly thereafter. Additionally, the blooming market for affordable books filled with exciting adventures led authors to cast aside instantly recognizable discussions of philosophical and moral matters in their works; this changed the face of both utopian and children's literature.

As explored extensively in the fourth chapter, the mission of many librarians in the Progressive era was to direct patrons to works of higher art. While educational reforms had been successful in raising literacy rates among poorer Americans, they had done little to change their aesthetic taste. A person with an elementary school education who reads high art texts is atypical. Librarians found their policy requiring such a person to be directed to such works increasingly unenforceable.³⁵ The market was encouraging authors to remove the directly educational elements from their works, and librarians were, as a matter of course, refusing to let these books onto their shelves. Progressive reformers' desire to increase the educational opportunities of the lower classes had aimed to reduce class tensions. Instead, it turned the public library into a new front in an existing class war. The works of L. Frank Baum were an obvious lightning rod for librarian criticism. Their uncanny ability to reflect the cultural attributes of the people reading them, however, made it impossible for Progressive librarians to quash them.

From Dorothy to Harry and Back Again

In *The Emerald City of Oz*, Baum describes the town of Rigamarole where people talk incessantly without saying anything:

Some of the college lecturers and ministers are certainly related to these people ... and it seems to me the Land of Oz is a little ahead of the United States in some of its laws. For here, if one can't talk clearly and straight to the point, they send him to Rigamarole Town; while Uncle Sam allows him to roam around wild and free, to torture the innocent people.³⁶

Intellectuals are described in heavily unflattering terms; in a more perfect world, intellectuals are sequestered from the rest of the population. The Scarecrow's quest for brains in *The Wonderful*

³⁵ Ibid., 126.

³⁶ L. Frank Baum, *The Emerald City of Oz* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1993), 235-6.

Wizard of Oz indicates a certain appreciation by Baum of intelligence. However, Baum valued intelligence of a particular variety. Elsewhere, Baum wrote:

What you call my wisdom ... is merely common sense. I have noticed some men become rich, and are scorned by some and robbed by others. Other men become famous, and are mocked at and derided by their fellows. But the poor and humble man who lives unnoticed and unknown escapes all the troubles and is the only one who can appreciate the joy of living.³⁷

Here, Baum expresses a preference for the everyday wisdom of the common man over the book learning of the intellectual. The Scarecrow reiterates this sentiment in a conversation with the Thoroughly Educated Woggle-Bug:

I have heard, my dear friend, that a person can become over-educated; and although I have a high respect for brains, no matter how they may be arranged or classified, I begin to suspect that yours are slightly tangled. In any event, I must beg you to restrain your superior education while in our society.³⁸

Most librarians seeking to keep Baum's books out of library collections had attained more formal education than the rest of the American population. In the late nineteenth century, more than fifty percent of librarians had a college degree, with an additional twenty percent having completed some college.³⁹ Even as the librarians took steps to keep children away from Baum's books, Baum derided the type of thinking that led these librarians to these conclusions. Their "superior education" made them unpleasant. They were incapable of seeing the delight and magic that the books brought to the children who read them. Instead, their "tangled" brains

³⁷ L. Frank Baum, *Rinkitink in Oz* (New York: Dover Publications, 1993), 220. (orig. 1916)

³⁸ L. Frank Baum, *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1985), 161, (orig. 1904)

³⁹ Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 19. Educational attainments of librarians were substantially higher than those of the general population. High school graduation rates began a steep climb around 1910. In 1910, the high school enrollment rate as a percentage of fourteen to seventeen year olds (excluding the South) was between twenty and thirty percent. Graduation rates at this time were around fifteen percent in New England and ten percent in the Middle Atlantic. While approximately ten percent of the general population was graduating from high school, fewer than ten percent of librarians had *not* done so. Claudia Goldin, "Egalitarianism and the Returns to Education during the Great Transformation of American Education," *Journal of Political Economy* 107 (December 1999): 73-4.

made them think they were better equipped to decide what children ought to be allowed to read. The “poor and humble” reader was provided with a vision of a world better than our own. Ray Bradbury once described this dream world:

Oz is a place, ten minutes before sleep, where we bind our wounds, soak our feet, dream ourselves better, snooze poetry on our lips, and decide that mankind, for all its snide and mean and dumb, must be given another chance come dawn and hearty breakfast.⁴⁰

I have argued in this dissertation that, with respect to the *Oz* books, many librarians believed their own educated opinion ought to take precedence over that of the children who sought to read Baum’s works. In effect, librarians relied on their “superior intellect” when they should have seen the wisdom of common sense.

However, as Ray Bradbury eloquently argued, books that seem like frivolous fantasy may, in fact, make people “better” in ways that are difficult to analyze. At times during the writing of this work, I must admit, I have felt like something of a Woggle-Bug, intellectualizing the cultural milieu in which the *Oz* books were written to such a degree that the magic of that utopia has been lost. It is entirely possible, for all my defenses of his books, that Baum would have disliked my work. In the end, I can only hope that this dissertation has provided a detailed examination of how and why librarians and other Woggle-bugs, despite strenuous attempts, were unable to quash Baum’s works.

On the other hand, the history of education, as a discipline, contains scant few examples of works dedicated to examining the educational implications of media that were not explicit in their instructive purposes. In their major works, Bernard Bailyn and Lawrence Cremin issue a clarion call to scholars of education, suggesting that, by avoiding texts that have such a profound impact on people’s cultural attitudes, historians of education are ignoring a hugely important

⁴⁰ Quoted in Michael Patrick Hearn, “L. Frank Baum,” in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, volume 22: American Writers for Children, 1900-1960*, ed. John Cech (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1983), 15.

dimension of people's education. This dissertation tries to answer that call. The story of Dorothy and her companions is, in many ways, central to the American experience and defines how we see ourselves as a culture. With this dissertation I have tried to provide an account of the difficult road Baum's story had to travel to become America's fairy tale.

The recent fervor over the simultaneous release of the final book in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and the fifth *Harry Potter* film indicates the seismic shift in children's literature that has taken place since *Oz*'s times of trial. Librarians eschewed Baum's books because of the commercial empire he built to promote them. *Harry Potter* fans can play video games, buy beach towels and costumes, eat candy, and go to films inspired by their favorite book series. Cross-promotion has become commonplace and accepted without consternation. Early twentieth century librarians actively tried to thwart children's efforts to read series books for fear that it would lead to a lack of discrimination in reading choice. Parents of elementary school children are now encouraged to direct the attention of their children toward books in series: "Introduce your child to 'series' books — the Babysitters Club, Goosebumps books, etc. Tell her about the books you read when you were young — Nancy Drew or Amelia Bedelia. Help her get started by reading the first book in the series aloud together."⁴¹ To try to interest an apathetic youngster in reading, parents are directed to ask a librarian "if there's a series that might hook her interest. Kids often get attached to the characters in series books and want to read the next book — and then the next."⁴² *Harry Potter* is now credited for getting a generation of children interested in reading.⁴³ Librarians are taking up what the President of the Young Adult Library Services

⁴¹ The Parent Institute, *Elementary School Parents Make the Difference*, January 2007, 1.

⁴² Kristen Amundson, *Elementary School Parents Make the Difference*, March 2007, 3.

⁴³ Tim Scheld, "Principal: Harry Potter Encourages Kids to Read," July 6, 2007, abcnews.go.com (accessed July 25, 2007).

Association called the “welcome challenge” of finding books like *Harry Potter* to keep children interested in reading now that the series has ended.⁴⁴ Less than a century ago, librarians were trying to bar children from accessing Baum’s *Oz* books for fear that children would be encouraged to read more books like them. *Oz*, an early example of the literary form, was able to overcome these challenges, and series books came to dominate the reading of American youth.

Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and his ensuing books found themselves at the eye of a perfect storm of librarian animosity. Arriving when they did in the history of American books for children, Baum’s works were trailblazers in changing not only the form of children’s literature, but its moral and commercial quality. One cannot say that children’s literature would not have become the heavily commercial, “only” entertaining, series-dominated market it is today had it not been for the contributions of Baum’s *Oz*. Indeed, *Alice* anticipated the changes in the moral function of children’s literature. *Fauntleroy* did the same for its commercialism, and the Stratemeyer Syndicate began its production of series books slightly before Baum began writing them. Baum, with his keen mind for advertising, saw a way of achieving success as a children’s writer (as measured by numbers of delighted children who would love his books), by harnessing and bringing together these three literary trends. This combination made his works anathema to librarians, but it was powerful enough to ensure they would weather the storm.

Due to renovations of the Smithsonian Institute, several of America’s most iconic symbols have been temporarily moved to the Air and Space Museum. Judy Garland’s ruby slippers from the 1939 film version of *The Wizard of Oz* now have a place of honor alongside Abraham Lincoln’s top hat. Baum’s story of a little girl from Kansas and her curious companions has become America’s fairy tale and an essential component of the American cultural identity. The

⁴⁴ Stephanie Kuenn, “YALSA offers resources, read-alikes to keep teens reading after final Harry Potter book,” July 17, 2007, ala.org (accessed July 25, 2007).

road that Baum's works took to achieve this status, however, was rocky, at best. Library reformers sought for decades to keep the books out of the hands of the young for fear they were a negative moral influence and undermined the workings of a well-ordered society — which was, perhaps, a more outlandish utopian vision than Baum's Oz.

APPENDIX A
L. FRANK BAUM'S OZ BOOKS

- *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900)
- *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (1904)
- *Ozma of Oz* (1907)
- *Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz* (1908)
- *The Road to Oz* (1909)
- *The Emerald City of Oz* (1910)
- *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* (1913)
- *Little Wizard Stories of Oz* (1914)
- *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)
- *Glinda of Oz* (1920)

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Andrew Grunzke was born in California in 1979, but his father's career allowed him the opportunity of living all over the world. Never having had a geographic location he called home, he could never quite relate to Dorothy's intense desire to return from the Marvelous Land of Oz. Even so, when he discovered Baum's books describing the adventures of Dorothy and her companions on the shelves of the library at the American School of Kinshasa, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), he was also living in a strange, unfamiliar place and needed help making sense of his surroundings. Baum's books came to shape his political identity and became an important part of his developing literary sense. More than a decade later, he returned to Oz in an attempt to provide a historical analysis of the way that Baum's books shaped the lives of the early-twentieth-century children for whom they were written – and he stumbled across an intriguing tale of rampant commercialism, political subversion, and unapologetic censorship.

Eventually, he settled down at the University of Florida, where he completed a Bachelor of Arts in English, a Bachelor of Science in mathematics, a Master of Arts in teaching mathematics, and a Master of Arts in English. He has prepared this dissertation as part of his requirements for becoming a Doctor of Philosophy, specializing in social foundations of education.