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THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN FACULTY OF DESIGN DEPARTMENT OF FASHION & TEXTILES

### WHAT'S SO WONDERFUL ABOUT

### "THE WIZARD OF OZ"?

by

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Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art & Design & Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Design in Fashion 1998.

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### INTRODUCTION

On the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1938, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer paid Samuel Goldwyn seventyfive thousand dollars for the Rights to "The Wizard of Oz", the children's story by L. Frank Baum. This, Production#1060 was one of the forty-nine movies that would be released by "MGM" in 1939. During this period MGM was the largest of the Hollywood Studios, exploiting to the full the growing popularity of cinematic entertainment, by releasing a movie every nine days.

Mervyn LeRoy, the Producer, was responsible for the thousands of decisions, including staffing the picture, that transformed the "Wizard of Oz" into a finished feature.

Despite Walt Disney's success with Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs the year before, it was a Hollywood truism of the 30's that fantasy features were failures, but, from the moment of purchase L. B. Mayer himself showed interest in the picture. Spending an incredible \$2,777,000 on the production, MGM intended "The Wizard of Oz" as its "prestige" picture of 1939, as the story provided a perfect foundation upon which to drape the mantle of MGM's finest talents and accessorise with the genius of their most recent technology. The motivation for the company's extravagance was primarily to attract attention at the Academy Awards although the picture was never intended to make money. "The Wizard of Oz" was aptly named a "Technicolor Celebration", but despite the fact that it is, cinematically, the most ambitious technology, ever-progressing, quickly outmodes itself.

Why, therefore, fifty-nine years later, has "The Wizard of Oz", become the object of active hero-worship, watched more times and by more people than any other film to date?

What is it about Production #1060 that has affected culture itself? What causes that lingering effect on men and women who grew up with "Oz"? What made an anonymous bidder pay \$15,000 for Judy Garland's ruby slippers?

What is so wonderful about "The Wizard of Oz"?

In "Chapter 1" I study the black and white scenes in Kansas. This section of the film is particularly important in laying the foundation of the story. Although not the most memorable part of the film, I hope to discover what

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fig. 1. The original illustrations of Dorothy and her friends by W. W. Denslow were the starting point and only reference for their visual characterisations.



aspects of Dorothy's "real" life come together to motivate her transition into "Oz".

Throughout "Oz" we become aware of the developments taking place within Dorothy. Through her relationships with the characters she encounters, we witness her reaction and see ourselves in her. In Munchkinland (Chapter 2) Dorothy receives the encouragement she has been seeking although this conflicts with the introduction of the exaggerated evil of the Wicked Witch. Along the Yellow Brick Road in Chapter 3, I reveal the significance of the Scarecrow, Tinman and Cowardly Lion as human stereotypes and how these oddball friends play a major role in Dorothy's development and acceptance of the adult world. This lesson , however, is not fully understood until Dorothy reaches the Emerald City in Chapter 4 to be told to face her ultimate fear -The Wicked Witch. The Witch's destruction and the Wizards fall from "all powerful" to "humbug" is critical for Dorothy to believe in herself. This "ritesof-passage" film is represented in such a way as to form a bond and understanding between the heroine and her audience. This story with its universal theme, translates to the screen with its theme not only intact, but highlighted with such visual, musical and lyrical strength as to render its message almost subconsciously into our minds.

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For nearly forty years this story has given faithful service to the Young in Heart; and Time has been powerless to put its kindly philosophy out of fashion.

To those of you who have been faithful to it in return

....and to the Young in Heart ....we dedicate this picture.

"The Wizard of Oz" dedication after credits

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# CHAPTER 1 KANSAS



The film opens to reveal the monochrome "real world" of Kansas. The prairie envisaged by Herman Mankiewicz is very much influenced by the description penned by L. Frank Baum thirty nine years before. The setting is a vast, grey expanse of land. Dorothy and Toto run along a short stretch of road which blends into the grey picture of emptiness. With the introduction of two real characters comes real drama introduced by the first line:-

" She isn't coming yet Toto? Did she hurt you? She tried to, didn't she?"

Although we accept this as the "real world" of Dorothy Gale, Kansas looks no more real than Oz - it is an oil painting. A realistic picture of Dorothy Gale and her circumstances would give the mood of the film a heaviness making the leap into Oz seem unnatural and difficult. The picture painted by MGM has been softened by sepia-tone, giving it a warm amber and brown sheen. This Kansas seems emptier than "real empty". The flat horizon is broken only occasionally by vertical telegraph poles and divided by monotonous rows of fencing. As the picture grows, we see Kansas seems to be made up of a series of regular geometric shapes - wooden fences, poles, a tree trunk, a hanging rubber tree. A very simple approach has been taken in the representation of home by simple familiar uncomplicated shapes. This is a very child-like but effective view of the situation.

Dorothy introduces her relatives and guardians - Uncle Henry and Aunt Em. They look weather-beaten and tired and seem to belong in this picture. Dorothy however, does not seem to fit in. She has an un-real doll-like appearance against the harsh figures of her guardians. She seems unnaturally poor as harsh realities have been left out - she is well-fed and faultlessly turned out.

It was George Cukor who made the final decisions on the style and character of the heroine. He was appalled by the tests shot by Richard Thorpe and Mervyn LeRoy and was determined to simplify her hair and makeup. All of Thorpes scenes which featured Judy Garland wearing a blonde wig and heavy makeup were scrapped. Gilbert Adrian developed at least four different designs for Judy Garland's one dress. A snug-fitting brassiere under her costume flattened her bosom. With her gingham dress, her own natural, braided hair and a more natural and a more natural look to her make-up, she looks a great deal more at home in Kansas than Thorpe's original blonde Dorothy (see fig 3). Where Thorpe had conceived the role as fanciful, Cukor convinced Garland that her characterisation would be more effective if she played straight throughout the film. Cukor saw her talent and made her

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fig. 3. Judy Garland tested several variations of her costume and make-up, before a more natural look was decided upon by George Cukor.



realise that she only had to be herself to be believable. She was taught to remember "not to act in a ' fancy-schmancy' way", she was "....just a little girl from Kansas"\*

Although the Kansas scenes are certainly the not most memorable of the film, it is these "real life" scenes that are to provide the introductions and motivation to make such a dramatic journey. To carry us smoothly into Oz there must be a solid drive and purpose to Dorothy's character to keep the audience with her throughout. She is a clean-cut American girl looking for someone to talk to. With Auntie Em and Uncle Henry busy counting chickens, we are introduced to the various characters that live within the confines of the grey horizon which encompasses Dorothy's "real" Kansas life. The three farmhands in just a few lines, lay strong foundations for the characters of their Ozian counterparts:-

Hunk, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Oz's Scarecrow, reacts to Dorothy's situation with:-

" .....you ain't using your head......think you didn't have any brains at all... ....Well your head ain't made of straw y'know! "

Zeke, however, taking a more courageous outlook on her problems, advises her to take a stand against Miss Gulch. We learn quickly that this bravado is only a front as Dorothy falls into the pigsty and exclaims:-

" Why Zeke, you're just as scared as I am! "

Hickory, having no time for advice, takes a stiff robotic pose and declares:-

"Someday, they're going to erect a statue to me in this town!"

So Dorothy, left in the company of Toto once again, is advised by Aunt Em to find a place where she "won't get into any trouble". This is our first introduction to that far away place.

The struggle of the story is this conflicting notion against the film's 'home is best' moral.

\*p143 "The Making of the Wizard of Oz"

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Dorothy, with an eager and enthusiastic heart, seeks company and finds none.

Frustrated, she embodies the human dream of leaving as powerfully as we understand the opposing dream of home-roots. 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' is a place where she belongs - where "skies are blue" instead of the monotonous grey of Kansas. This is where the great tension in the film exists. The childish frustration and lonely plea behind Judy Garland's voice shows a vulnerable charm bringing the audience at once to her heart and is enough to catapult us through Dorothy's adventure with universal empathy.

"Why, oh why can't I?"

The frustration increases as we realise that it is not only Dorothy who desperately seeks an explanation. Dorothy's question is one that I once tried and failed to answer but, it is the possibility of an answer to this childish puzzle that keeps me watching. That simple question reveals the frustration felt by children growing up in an incomprehensible adult world and as we are carried by Judy Garland's simple plea to search for an answer, our thoughts are coarsely interrupted by the mean figure of Miss Gulch. Her menacing theme tune disrupts the pensive mood of the previous scene and her stiff, straight-backed silhouette, as she rattles along on her bicycle, is a blot on the grey landscape of a lifeless Kansas. The juxtaposition of Dorothy's dreamy melody and the interruption by Gulch's bumpy bike ride is enough to install an immediate dislike for this miserable creature.

"I want to see you and your wife right away, about Dorothy"

With a cold voice and complaining tone, she states within her first line that Dorothy and herself share a troubled relationship - this is Dorothy's enemy. We are introduced to the evil that is to counteract Dorothy's all-round American-girl goodness. She is thin and mean, her motions fast and jerky. She gives orders rather than asking questions and when these orders involve destroying an innocent dog she meticulously confirms the evil that drives her character. What makes Dorothy's childish predicament even more pitiful however, is the lack of help she receives from those who would be supposedly supportive. Uncle Henry and Aunt Em disgrace the realm of 'adulthood' by giving up before a fight and the 'law' is on the side of Elmira Gulch who is obviously nothing but a witch. Dorothy is confused. She has no formidable adult role model to turn to and cannot understand how blind they all seem to

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fig. 4. Dorothy pleads with Aunt Em and Uncle Henry to save her dog, Toto. Elmira Gulch stands on her right with the basket for Toto.



be to such a morally corrupt situation. Therefore, she takes it upon herself to fight back ( see fig 4). Bringing the audience yet closer to her side, she childishly offers to sacrifice her own dinner to save her dear friend, Toto. She fights back with a commendable passion brought on by the frustration caused by such a seemingly hopeless predicament. Still treated as a child but with firm ideas and opinions of her own, she is forced to make this outburst having no adult representative who sees the situation as she does. Everywhere she turns, she finds them full of faults and as she awaits approaching adulthood, she lacks the direction and guidance that is necessary to make that step from her child's world with confidence and belief in herself. Dorothy shows immaturity with the presentation of her argument, however, we can see that she has formed a good foundation of opinions and moral beliefs, that, with confidence, knowledge and maturity, will mould her into the well-rounded adult we imagine she will make. Aunt Em suddenly surprises us by taking a stand against Miss Gulch only to increase our disappointment by concluding her argument with a pitiful excuse "too Christian to say it".

Dorothy is forced to run away, feeling betrayed by those whose care she is in. The girl, with only her dog as company, begins the journey down the long grey road to a now sorrowful version of 'Somewhere over the Rainbow'.

This road leads to the introduction of Professor Marvel, a travelling fortuneteller. As he reveals to us the goodness of his heart through his treatment of the girl and the situation, he also reveals that his proclaimed talent is a farce. Indeed, ironically the only true prediction he makes is in unknowingly giving us a preview to the character of the Wizard who

Dorothy later encounters along another road. His hypocrisy is overlooked as he uses his position as an adult and an outsider to make Dorothy begin to appreciate her family and her home-roots. As a stranger, he can empathise, but he also produces a sympathetic view of adulthood, trying to bring to light the care Aunt Em has shown Dorothy. Professor Marvel relates to Dorothy on a level no other adult has tried, and in doing so sets her back on the right track, to return home with a hopefulness in her heart.

It is now that Dorothy loses complete control of her situation as the elements take over. The cyclone appears, a dark, foreboding and twisting mass of black cloud - an effect envisioned and accomplished by A. Arnold (Buddy) Gillespie by building a giant 'wind sock' out of muslin. A miniature set of Dorothy's house (see fig. 5) and the surrounding barn and fence were used, and the muslin

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fig. 5. The model of the Gale farmhouse used for the tornado sequence.



tornado disappeared into a slot in the floor in the background, attached to a steel gantry running horizontally cross the top of the stage.

The curves, so ingeniously formed by the rapidly approaching 'twister', disrupt the formerly mundane Kansas horizon. The clean and simple geometry of everyday life is threatened by the uncontrollable, curving dance of the storm (see fig 6). At the farm, still unaware of Dorothy's absence, the adults struggle to protect their livelihood. The confusion and panic mounts as she does not appear when called. The panic in this, the pre-transitional sequence is visually represented by a series of quick shots of openings:-

- 1. The farmhands open the doors of the storm shelter.
- 2. Dorothy struggles against the wind to open the door of the house.
- 3. The door of the storm shelter closes.
- 4. Dorothy, inside the house, opens all the doors, searching the rooms.
- 5. Dorothy finds the shelter doors closed.

The tension reaches its height as a window is blown off its hinges and knocks her unconscious to the bed. As she awakens, the magic begins with the realisation that the house is flying, caught in the wind of the tornado. Such a frightening aspect of the film is immediately made more palatable by the sight of a cage of roosters flying by the window. It is this careful planning of each scene I feel, has a great deal to do with the success of

this picture. By bringing humour into what has otherwise been a very unpleasant situation, the terror is played down. Indeed, the previous scene as Dorothy searched desperately for Auntie Em seems more frightening.

Getting separated from a guardian can be a particularly traumatic experience for a child, whereas, flying inside a tornado is not such an everyday occurrence, and through the eyes of a child would be presented as an adventure, as fun. We are further comforted by the image of a unperturbed granny, knitting on her rocking chair, a cow and two men in a canoe, who stop to wave. The child feels safe within the confines of her room and watches the tornado rage outside as she would watch surreal images on a television screen.

However, just a s we have become accustomed to the jovial absurdity of the situation, Miss Gulch, introduced by the same menacing music, interrupts the scene, still sitting stiffly on her bicycle. Dorothy hides her face in the comfort of her sheets as Miss Gulch's figure takes on the flowing cape and pointed hat of a witch, while her bicycle is replaced by a broomstick. Her cackle is perfectly terrifying. Dorothy who showed no fear of the tornado

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fig. 6. The tornado sweeps across the Kansas landscape.



cannot even bring herself to look at the figure of Miss Gulch, who has the power to enter Dorothy's safe haven and create terror. This feeling of powerlessness and loss of control is visually highlighted as Dorothy, lying on her bed, begins to slide from wall to wall as the house twists and turns before landing. Since the arrival of the Witch in this scene, Dorothy's own bedroom and the security it implies, has been thrown into a state of disorder and her space invaded.

The house lands abruptly and the chaotic movement comes to a standstill. Suspense reigns as the confusion and unpredictability of the recent scenes give us no idea what to expect next.

Dorothy takes a last glance at the remnants of her now dishevelled child's world and walks in silent curiosity towards the front door.

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### CHAPTER 2

## MUNCHINKLAND





fig. 7. Dorothy - "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore. We must be over the rainbow".



Dorothy opens her front door and instead of a lifeless grey horizon, she is immediately presented with the wonderful world of "Technicolor". After the doorplaying of the previous scenes, Dorothy leaves her home not to enter another interior until "The Emerald City". When colour was still relatively new, the MGM crew decided that if Kansas was to be as grey and dull as L. Frank Baum described, then Oz was to juxtapose it as the most fantastical, most colourful and most un-Kansaslike environment that Dorothy could have hoped to land in. In many ways "The Wizard of Oz" presented to MGM a perfect opportunity to fully manipulate and celebrate the recent invention of "Technicolor". Indeed, this may partly explain MGM's determination to complete the picture, despite the many fallbacks and the excessive costs faced by the company. Following the fashion set by Disney's recent Box Office hit ' Snow White and the Seven Dwarves', MGM now put Disney to shame, providing as many breath-taking effects as the animation, except, Oz is shot in 'live-action'.

A soft, calm, orchestrated version of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' accompanies the view, easing us from the chaos of the previous scene into this contrasting world of colour and form. We are given a few moments to take in the beauty of our new surroundings and fully appreciate the glamour and extravagance of the new visual interest. The camera floats over the scene maximising the effect, giving us the benefit of a three-dimensional view. Strange big flowers with leaves that gleam like shiny plastic, surround a stream of water that is an extreme shade of blue. The tiny houses cluster together like flowerpots with thatched roofs. Although we have no previous knowledge of this place and no idea what to expect, the visual and musical harmony brings us to our ease. A simple belief in visual appearances is used to convey certainties, allowing us, to a certain extent to judge by appearance, and we are breathtaken by the beauty and interest of this new place (see fig.7).

Munchkinland appears immediately unthreatening (if anything, it is unsettling peaceful considering recent events). Everything is scaled down making Dorothy appear physically larger. The size of the set is comforting as we perceive that the inhabitants must indeed be smaller than Dorothy herself. (We presume that anyone who lives in a mushroom with a roof of grass must be harmless.)

"Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore. We must be over the Rainbow".



fig 8. Glinda, the picture of goodness.



The first representative of this new land that we introduced to, arrives in the form of a travelling bubble - a purely optical effect, achieved by double printing a filming of a silver ball, with the Munchkinland film and lap-dissolving the ball out to reveal Glinda (see fig. 8). Surprisingly, Glinda is a life-size adult. Billie Burke was an ideal choice for this role, having been a famous stage beauty in her day, and at fifty-three, she was known for her slightly daffy screen characterisations. If we have been taught so far to judge by appearances, we may deduce immediately that Glinda poses no threat. Although her method of transport, her tall crown and her wand imply power, her gown, sprinkled with little stars, and her faultless hair and make-up imply perfect goodness. She is as soft as the bubble she arrived in. Indeed our suspicions are confirmed as she herself confirms that:-

"Only bad witches are ugly."

This simple use of binary oppositions is defined as a rule, allowing Dorothy to feel a degree of safety in her strange but by no means threatening surroundings. As a spokeswoman for the Munchkins, Glinda establishes her power although this power does not translate into orders as in the character of Miss Gulch. In contrast to the domineering and overpowering figure, Glinda manages to retain with her position, a degree of naiveity, a weakness that brings us to her. She does not pretend to know everything and therefore is in no position to control others. Instead she simply advises to the best of her ability, and good advice is what Dorothy needs most of all.

The Munchkins are introduced through laughter and song, and Dorothy, through the death of the Wicked Witch of the East, is instantly proclaimed their National Heroine. She stands physically raised on a platform surrounded by adults much smaller than herself and modestly receives the attention and notoriety she had only dreamed of in Kansas. The apathy of Kansas folk contrasts the celebration triggered by Dorothy's mere presence in Munchkinland. Her flying house has landed, killing the Wicked Witch of the East, she is therefore a "Heroine" and her presence a "Miracle". Indeed, this is a formidable pre-conception for the little people to make, as we realise that Glinda's flying bubble would not create such a final effect 'upon' the Witch. Glinda, despite all her goodness and eagerness to protect, poses no threat to ANYONE. She is harmless. Dorothy, however, in the most casual manner makes an effective (although accidental) introduction by squashing the Munchkins enemy on arrival - a result beyond the means of a harmless witch in a floating bubble.

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fig.10. Test shots show the Mayor and the Lullaby League, who personally welcome Dorothy to Oz.







fig.11. The Coroner certifies the Wicked Witch of the East's death. Dorothy towers above the Coroner (on the left) and the Mayor of Munchkinland (on the right).



The Munchkins and their appearance, as miniature people, is crucial within this scene in highlighting the new importance of Dorothy's role and her growth in the eyes of the audience; Leo Singer headed up a successful vaudeville troupe of little people, augmented by the many independents who arrived and formed an 124-strong population for Munchkinland - a huge workload for the make-up and costume teams responsible for their visual transformation. Jack Dawn designed each individual make-up according to their role. With the aid of an assembly line of artists and a crew carrying trays of peach fuzz for their skin, noses, ears, beards, wigs, round apple cheeks and skullcaps, each character was pieced together meticulously, highlighting the individuality of each personality. The Munchkins were conceived as being somewhat doll-like and the costumes were stylised by Gilbert Adrian to make the little people look even smaller (see fig.9). Adamant about detail, the wardrobe department engulfed the Munchkins in oversizd belts and buckles, buttons and bows, tassels and pompoms and further accessorised with flowers and flowerpots, birds and birdcages. The intricacy of Adrian's designs required all the costumes to be made within the department, and the heavy lights and the length of filming time meant that felt was the only fabric suitable and stiff enough. The wardrobe of the Munchkins gave great scope for the enhancement of the "Technicolor" celebration that Munchkinland suggested and no corners were cut in achieving the perfect result. Camera and lighting crew along with "Technicolor" personnel and an often intolerant Adrian, tested and re-tested until they were satisfied. The cheerful explosion of visual and musical harmony that results is enough to disperse any unpleasantness or distastefulness caused by the horrifying nature of the Wicked Witch of the East's death.

Warmly welcomed by the Mayor, the Lullaby League and the Lollipop Guild, (see fig.10), Dorothy gracefully accepts her sudden and accidental fame (see fig.11). Just as the celebrations reach the climax, the song and dance is cut off by a cloud of thick red smoke which disperses revealing for the first time in glorious "Technicolor" the terrifying image that Dorothy previewed inside the cyclone. It is this point of the film I feel is the most crucial in the development and growth of Dorothy's character. The subtle, almost unnoticeable, change that has occurred within the girl is highlighted by that familiar childish reaction, this time by the Munchkins, to the appearance of the Wicked Witch of the West. As we saw Dorothy hide her face in her blanket away from the image of Miss Gulch inside the tornado, so



fig.12. A test shot of Margaret Hamilton as the Wicked Witch of the West displays her terrifying profile to it's full effect.



the Munchkins fall to the ground, blinding their eyes to her "Technicolor" counterpart, the very Wicked Witch of the West. However, this time Dorothy does not hide. She stands strong on the platform. She does not even notice herself, the new confidence within her. Her position within the frame is enough to confirm her growth - the Munchkins disappear to the ground and even Glinda, in all her glittering goodness, stands safely behind Dorothy (see fig.14).

Strangely, the Wicked Witch of the West's first line is her most humane throughout the film:-

"Who killed my sister? Who killed the Witch of the East? Was it you?"

This glimmer of family loyalty is overlooked as she looks for the culprit and we familiarise ourselves the new colour-magnified evil that Dorothy faces. Margaret Hamilton provides us with an expert characterisation. Two hours of make-up every morning brought about the application of a false nose, a jutting chin and a horribly ugly wart with accompanying hair growth. With her black eyebrows, thickened and extended, and all exposed parts of her body covered with green paint, the former Miss Gulch takes on the misshapen appearance that her evil implies. George Cukor saw to it that her hair was pulled back severely to better expose that unlikeable visage (see fig. 12). To enhance the ugliness of her green skin, the costume encompassing her twisted figure in black, consisted of a tall, pointed witch's hat and a cloak, manipulated to produce a powerful effect. Her crooked, crawling figure and ugly irregular features are terrifying , and she smells, Glinda tells us, of sulphur. This characterisation is perfectly executed, for although the Wicked Witch appears for only twelve minutes on screen, her overshadowing threats pervade the movie enough to inject the necessary degree of fear into our hearts. As she approaches, Dorothy does not move from her position. Obviously disturbed, but with her gaze fixed on the Witch, she pleads innocence. Through the cackling threats, Dorothy stands still with Glinda behind giving her good advice. It is Glinda who reminds the Witch of the precious ruby slippers on the feet of her dead sister which protrude unrealistically from beneath the Kansas farmhouse (see fig. 13). The falseness of the visualisation of the Witch's remains allows an unpleasant situation to be overlooked.

Glinda confirms her magic powers by transferring the ruby slippers to Dorothy's feet where ".....there they are and there they'll stay"; as the Wicked

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fig.13. The ruby slippers on the feet of the Wicked Witch of the West's dead sister.



fig.14. Dorothy faces the wrath of the Wicked Witch of the West (note the Munchkins cower on the ground).



Witch is the only one who understands their power, Glinda entrusts their magic with Dorothy, who readily accepts the responsibility. As she does so, the Witch reveals a flaw in her fearless character, cowering, as Glinda giggles:- "Be gone before someone drops a house on you", whereupon the Witch disappears into the ground in a cloud of smoke and fire, like a devil returning to Hell, and the Munchkins, responding to Glinda, quickly recover their upright positions.

After this, yet another, traumatic experience, Dorothy is determined to return to Kansas. She has seen first-hand, that this land also has its troubles and recalls the Witch's parting words:-

"I'll get you my pretty, and your little dog too".

With the Wicked Witch gone and Glinda unable to tell where Kansas lies, we are now introduced to the idea of a higher power - "the great and wonderful Wizard of Oz himself", who is "...very good but very mysterious". As this is the only piece of advice Glinda feels worthy to give, Dorothy, as instructed, begins her journey in the centre of the spiral from which springs the Yellow Brick Road as Glinda's bubble disappears into the horizon. Any doubts Dorothy has of herself are dispersed by the encouragement from the Munchkins as they launch her into her journey, setting her on her way:-

"Follow the Yellow Brick Road."

With the colourful population cheering and urging her from the border of Munchkinland, Dorothy waves goodbye and faces the long strip of the Yellow Brick that lies ahead, with a catchy tune in her heart:-

> "You're off to see the Wizard The Wonderful Wizard of Oz".

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## CHAPTER 3

# THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD


It is surprising to note that when asked to pick a single defining image of the "Wizard of Oz", most would suggest the Scarecrow, the Tinman, the Cowardly Lion and Dorothy skipping down the Yellow Brick Road. It is strange that a film brimming with the technical wizardry of the time should be distinguished by the least cinematic piece of filming, however a surreal setting is the perfect introduction for the surreal comedy that is to further motivate Dorothy's journey

George Gibson, head of the Scenic Art Department was responsible for the painted backdrops along the Yellow Brick Road. Working with twenty artists, he used a piece of heavy white muslin four hundred feet long and thirty-five feet high painted with pigment and well-watered glue. As colour filming was far from perfected, a great deal of testing and experimenting was required for a perfect reproduction of colours. We are presented with a landscape so distant from the flat Kansas horizon, with rolling hills, steep cliffs, deep ravines and bright cornfields that manages to be surreal enough for the following events to seem strangely natural.

Dorothy, following the seemingly straight-forward advice down the Yellow Brick Road, finds herself lost once more as she is faced with a crossroad. Advice, however, seems to come out of the blue before panic sets in:-

"Pardon me, that way is a very nice way.... It's pleasant down that way... Of course, people do go both ways".

Its seems perfectly natural in this strange setting, that the confusing suggestions come from a brainless scarecrow who cannot make up his mind. Ray Bolger fought with good reason for his part as the Scarecrow. Originally cast as the TinMan, his good-natured, almost lazy physical grace applies perfectly to the Scarecrow's character. Walking on his ankles to achieve maximum floppiness, Ray Bolger becomes a truly believable walking, talking, but, pitifully brainless strawman. The character, however, physically brainless, does possess a strange sort of logic like common-sense.

Dorothy:- How can you talk if you haven't got a brain? Scarecrow:- I don't know, but some people without brains do an awful lot of talking. Don't they?

With a newly-made sense of wonderment in his voice, like that of a child, he is a man without knowledge. He is a fully grown adult stuck on a pole and as

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fig.15. The Scarecrow's head was covered with a burlap-like sack, and his make-up modified to match.





fig.16. Dorothy helps the Scarecrow at the cornfield.



Dorothy helps him, he falls to the ground and confesses his incompleteness to her.

A desperately dopey sight, his visual characterisation was heavily influenced by W.W. Denslow's original Scarecrow drawings (see fig. 1). The intricacy of Bolger's make-up resulted in weeks of testing. A mask of baked rubber was applied to simulate burlap and this was highlighted with make-up and tied to his body with a rope (see fig. 15). He wears on his head a copy of Denslow's broad-brimmed pointed hat.

The clever use of humans to portray the Scarecrow , the Tinman and the Cowardly Lion, brings to light the fact that Dorothy's opinion and advice are now being sought by adults (see fig. 16). The Scarecrow, a stranger, is looking up to her, admitting his weaknesses and faults and not trying hide them behind the shield of half-truths and excuses the Kansas folk use. Here is an adult who is innocently honest and speaks to her as a friend rather than seeking superiority in physical size.

"Oh, I'm a failure because I haven't got a brain".

The Scarecrow introduces his wish for a brain through song as Dorothy wished to be 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow': however, it is the comedy of his situation that brings us to him. His character is lovingly silly and as he, like Dorothy, seems a little lost and lacking direction, Dorothy agrees that he may accompany her in seeking advice from the Wizard (see fig. 17).

The new found friends skip along the path until an apple orchard provides a cure for Dorothy's growing appetite. Now accustomed to the unexpected, she is hardly surprised as the trees come to life and snatch the freshly-picked apple from her hands. It is the Scarecrow's innocent ingenuity that provides a feast of apples for his young friend, as he insults the trees into making a bombardment of their fruit.

It is at this point we encounter our second faulty friend:-

"A man... a man made out of tin".

Dorothy, delighted at their discovery, does not hesitate to oil the rigid figure of the Tinman (see fig.18). An enthusiastic assistant to his re-discovery of movement, it appears that he has been rusted stiff for over a year, and, like In the characteristic state of the end of the end of the construction of the state of the end of

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fig.17. "To Oz"





fig.18. Dorothy and the Scarecrow oil the Tinman.



fig.19. Jack Haley's Tinman make-up and costume were tarnished and rusted for a more realistic look.



the Scarecrow, he is grateful for his regained freedom, and, also suffers a similar sense of incompleteness:-

"The tinsmith forgot to give me a heart."

Underneath the hard exterior of his encompassing robotic costume, Jack Haley, with his almost effeminate facial expressions and a longing in his breathless voice that seems all too real, manages to bring forth a character of such emotion and romantic notions that we immediately feel for the lovesick dreamer. Using an actor for this specific role works very well as we are visually presented with a real man confined within the stiff metal structure of a robot. The Tinman's appearance was achieved using buckram covered with stiff silver leather. Any skin left visible by the costume was coated with silver paste and his shiny face was topped by a funnel hat with a stationery chin strap (see fig.19). The limitations caused by the costume almost personifies the frustration felt by the emotionless Tinman - a perfect role for Haley, a famous vaudeville performer, who was well-acquainted with the use of physical and facial movement as a strong means of expression. As he rattles through his confined dance we sympathise with the man inside the metal, and so, he too receives an invitation down the Yellow Brick Road to ask the wonderful 'Wizard of Oz' for a heart

It is comforting to know that Dorothy is not alone on her journey, but yet again, as we become comfortable with her situation, our hopeful thoughts are menacingly disturbed by the Wicked Witch cackling from the roof of a nearby shack. This time she does not threaten Dorothy personally, but, instead chooses to warn the Scarecrow and Tinman against helping the girl. Dorothy's friends are physical evidence of her caring spirit and growing strength and it is this goodness that the Witch strives to undermine. However, despite the nastiness behind her threats and the evilmindedness of her tortures, the Scarecrow and Tinman deny their fears with such courage as to almost reverse the Witch's scare - creating a more positive situation from their terror. The solidarity between the three is confirmed, encouraging them 'off to see the Wizard' with a new stronger chorus. Dorothy, by offering hope to these lost characters is now discovering that they are willing to face their worst fears to return the favour, and she finds strength in her growing number of friends.

The Yellow Brick Road brings them upon a 'dark and creepy' part of the forest where the 'Cowardly Lion' pounces into their path, knocking them to the ground (see fig.20). Dorothy watches on from the shadow of a tree trunk as



fig.20. Dorothy, the Scarecrow and the Tinman in the Lion Forest.







fig.21. Bert Lahr poses in his Lion costume, with the make-up enhancing his own characteristics.



he threatens the Scarecrow and Tinman who, cower uselessly beneath the fifty pounds of genuine lion skins which heavily pad out the figure of Bert Lahr - the man inside the lion. The only human parts visible beneath his overwhelming costume are his eyes and mouth. Rubber pieces were used to enhance rather than obscure the actors' own characteristics (see fig.21). Bert Lahr had not only the perfect face but also the perfect personality for his part. Originally a burlesque comedian, used to the most physical and unsophisticated type of comedy, the Cowardly Lion's part presented to Lahr a chance to give full vent to the braggadocio of his personality.

"Put em up! Put em up!"

Surprisingly it is Toto who returns his taunts and as Dorothy rushes to aid her out-sized pet by slapping the bully, we realise the transparency of his bravado (see fig.22). Here is the perfect example of a character who hides his own neurotic anxiety behind his physical size. However, he too finds in Dorothy someone in whom he can confess his hypocrisy and incompleteness.

The juxtaposition of his lack of courage with Dorothy's own reaction to her situation, in the company of a strange lion, highlights once again her growth in self-confidence. Not only does she look her fear in the eye as she did with the Wicked Witch in Munchkinland, but this time she slaps it on the nose. She fully confronts her fear and in doing so discovers that she has nothing real to be scared of.

As he tearfully confesses his incompleteness, Dorothy's sense of morality and sympathetic tenderness overwhelm any feelings of fear and it is the Scarecrow who suggests that the Wizard may be able to find some courage for the Lion.

The Scarecrow, the Tinman and the Lion all believe themselves to be "hollow" men - lacking and in their own way, incomplete. It is their honesty

and anti-heroism that allows Dorothy to accept them as friends and stand among them as an equal. These characters, all adult in form, do not deny their imperfections or allow their physical size or unmentioned ages to dictate superiority. By seeking her help and friendship they are showing her respect and she finds herself motivated by her generosity to help her increasingly eclectic group of friends.

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fig.22. Dorothy confronts her fear as she slaps the Lion's nose.



The unbreakable chain of the four friends is a strong image to counteract the evil shadow of the Wicked Witch who watches their progress in her crystal ball in her dark and foreboding castle.

The skipping quartet now find themselves at the edge of the forest where they catch their first glimpse of the gleaming towers of the Emerald City, unaware of the Witch's poisonous poppies that cover the distance between themselves and their destination. The evil spell however poses only a minor setback for the friends, counteracted by a snowstorm sent by Glinda. As they near the end of the Yellow Brick Road, the Witch, on her broomstick, makes her way to meet them at the Emerald City. 의 가는 가지 않는 것 않아? 가지 않는 것 같은 것이 가지 않으셨는 것 이 있었다. 이 가지 않는 것 같은 것 같은 것 같은 것 같은 것 같은 것 같은 것 같이 있다. 이 가지 않는 것 같은 것이 이 가지도 한 것은 가지를 가지 않는 것 같은 것은 것이 가지 않는 것이 가지 않는 것이 가지 않는 것 같은 것이 있다. 것 같은 것이 같은 것 같은 것이 있다. 것 같은 것이 있다. 같이 있다. 같 이 나 많은 것 같은 것 같은 것을 것 같은 것이 같은 것은 것 같은 것?

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## CHAPTER 4

# EMERALD CITY



### Dorothy:- "There's Emerald City! Oh, we're almost there, at last! At last! It's beautiful isn't it, just like I knew it would be. He really must be a wonderful Wizard to live in a city like that!"

Derived from a tiny photograph of a German pre- World War 1 sketch that looked like upside-down test tubes, the augmented Ozian cityscape, achieved by matte printing, is indeed an impressive sight. Emerald City, the largest interior set of the picture, covered twenty-eight hundred square feet and consisted mostly of glass. As the majestic gates open to the visitors the screen is flooded with green. Everything, down to the emerald stockings and shoes of the three hundred inhabitants was dyed to ensure a uniform appearance. Gilbert Adrian decided on a 'wooden soldier' look for the men and the women were compatible 'doll-like' in appearance. The Emerald City, the Hollywood of Oz, is where dreams come true, horses change colour, life is perfect and everything glistens (see fig.23).

"Jolly good fun".

Dorothy and her friends, greeted once again with a happy chorus, are given an Emerald City-style makeover in preparation for their encounter with the Wizard.

"That's how we laugh the day away In the Merry old Land of Oz".

Dorothy and her friends enthusiastically accept the celebrations on their arrival. Having finally reached the destination where lies the answer to their various problems and again, just as home, seems to be around the corner for Dorothy, the unresolved situation with the Wicked Witch over-shadows the climax of the celebratory song, as her smoky message lingers in the sky as a warning to her, her friends and the city dwellers. This scene was amazingly achieved by using a miniature witch three-eighths of an inch high, who rode a hypodermic needle rather than a broomstick. A solution of canned milk nigrosine dye was squirted from the needle to produce the smoky appearance of the writing:-

"Surrender Dorothy"

The panicked crowd rush to the Wizard's palace in the hope of an explanation only to be dispersed rapidly by the guard. However, on hearing that he is in

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fig.23. The interior of the Emerald City.



the presence of the Dorothy referred to in the Witch's threat, he leaves the group of oddball friends to announce their presence to the Wizard himself. The friends, in perfect trust of the abilities of a man they have yet to see, faithfully believe that their prayers are almost answered. Throughout their adventures they have learnt to trust appearances (unless part of an evil spell such as the Wicked Witch's poisonous poppies). Up until now they have trusted their sight in deducing their situation and the difference between good and evil, however, in the case of the Wizard it seems that the entire Land of Oz has put their absolute faith in a Wizard that nobody has ever seen. As the guard returns any hopes the adventurers had disappears.:-

Guard: - "The Wizard says, 'Go away!'." All four friends: - "Go away!" Scarecrow: - "Looks like we came a long way for nothing."

The guard listens on as Dorothy tearfully shrinks to the ground blaming herself for the hopeless situation they are all in. Touched by her story and revealing as we all do, an empathy with the girl he vows to help them.

"I'll get you in to see the Wizard somehow. I had an Aunt Em myself once."

The doors open and they proceed under the towering arches that form the corridor to the Wizard's Throne Room (see fig.24).

"I am Oz, the Great and Powerful! Who are you? WHO ARE YOU?"

Before their surprised eyes floats a giant green disembodied head in a mist of smoke - a powerful image augmented by flashes of fire and a loud commanding voice (see fig.25). This Wizard, unexpectedly insulting and somewhat condescending, creates a terrifying situation for the trembling friends who by no means expected such an un-welcoming introduction at the end of their journey. Their situation in the presence of the Wizard is certainly not one that they foresaw and their fear of his seemingly magnificent power contradicts the image they had built of the man they had been told could help. Despite her terror, however, Dorothy bravely scolds the unworldly image before her as the Lion swoons, overcome with fear.

Dorothy: - "You ought to be ashamed of yourself frightening him like that when he came to you for help!"

The Wizard :- "Silence Whippersnapper! The magnificent Oz has every

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intention of granting your requests. But first you must prove yourselves worthy by performing a very small task. Bring me the broomstick of the Witch of the West!" Ammentana di petro orgina do traguno non con contra da con Decese Manneever avec l'Ardia, por formo ogna ta viver el Ro Boregome she bravento trada ato eta ato da che solecco co



fig.24. A test shot of the Wizard's throne room interior.






# CHAPTER 5

# THE WITCH'S CASTLE

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## THE WUNNESS CASTLE



fig.26. The ugly, misshapen forms of the Haunted Forest, one mile from the Witch's castle.



We meet the four adventurers in the Haunted Forest, not far from the castle of the Wicked Witch of the West. Although it is sign-posted, we need only our eyes to understand that we are nearing her evilness. The darkening sky, gnarled, deformed trees and haunting bird cries are enough to announce the closing distance between the friends and their enemy (see fig.26). The visual interpretation of evil is a direct contrast to the representation of home and safety using the simple, geometric shapes of the Kansas scenes.

Nearby, the Witch, impatient for their arrival, sends an army of Winged Monkeys to capture Dorothy and Toto. Her aim to posses the power of the ruby slippers is forefront and by separating the present owner from her group the Witch believes she will weaken Dorothy, undermining her strength in their friendship.

"Take care of those ruby slippers. I want them most of all. Now fly.........FLY!"

The following scene injects terror into our hearts as the misshapen forms of the Winged Monkeys sweep down from the sky and carry a helpless Dorothy back to their leader. With the Lion and Tinman left to piece back together the remnants of the Scarecrow, Dorothy faces her captor alone in the castle (see fig 27). To obtain the slippers the Wicked Witch has every intention of killing Dorothy who openly admits her fear and loneliness. Unaware of Toto leading her friends to the rescue, she seeks comfort in the monochrome image of her Aunt Em in the Witch's magic crystal ball (see fig 28). When the Witch's menacing visage interrupts her solace Dorothy again sees that appearances are not always what they seem and she realises complete helplessness and isolation. Meanwhile, however, three characters and a faithful dog are set on overcoming their fears in order to help the girl who had the heart to help them.

The rescue is truly valiant and as the Tinman, the Scarecrow and the Lion are reunited with Dorothy confidence is restored for only a moment before the Witch imprisons all of them inside the gates of the castle. The chase that results leads them to the chamber at the top of the tower where the friends are cornered under the threatening spears of the Witch's Winkie Guards. The threatening and imprisoning aerial view of the castle's four towers joined by narrow battlements with a wild, flowing mountain river far below was achieved with the use of a matte painting (see fig.29). The Wicked Witch of the West







fig.27. Nikko, the Witch's monkey Commandant, produces the same basket used by Elmira Gulch to hold Toto, before he is destroyed.





fig.28. Dorothy, captive in the Witch's tower, beholds the terrifying image of the Witch in her crystal ball.





fig.29. Clever camera work, combining the set construction and matte painting of the

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castle.



is in her element. She is in a position where she can indulge her evil mind in the torture of her captives.

"The last to go will see the first three go before her."

Dorothy's strength and determination, motivated by her own heart's desire as well as her new friends has proved to be frustratingly inconvenient for the Witch in her aim for absolute power. As the flames pass from the Witch's glowing broomstick to the straw-filled arm of the Scarecrow, Dorothy with all her good intentions and common-sense, uses water to put him out. As unintentional as was the destruction of the Wicked Witch of the East in Munchkinland, so Dorothy's situation leads to the accidental murder of her even more wicked sister, the Wicked Witch of the West (see fig 30). Splashed with water, pure and clear, she melts to the ground and her evilness and all its effects shrink away until not a trace exists except, of course, the broom which is offered in thanks to Dorothy.

"Hail to Dorothy! The Wicked Witch is dead!"

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fig.30. Witch- "I'm melting.....melting. Who would have thought that a good little girl like you, could destroy my beautiful wickedness".



# CHAPTER 6

# THE WIZARD



Wizard:- "Can I believe my eyes? Why have you come back?"

The Wizard's reaction, as he is presented with the Witch's broomstick, is an unforeseen one.

"Go away and come back tomorrow."

We understand from his surprise that he did not expect a successful result from the young girl and her friends. He, like the Kansas folk, underestimated Dorothy's strength of character and is trying to pass her off in the same way. In Kansas we watched her fight back in childish frustration and run away from her problems. Later on, along the Yellow Brick Road she learnt that by facing her fear in the Lion's forest she could overcome it, revealing to herself that often fear is unjustified. Now with her friends by her side, she finds the strength to challenge the terrifying image of the ultimate power of the Wizard. Dorothy has learnt that while appearances may say a great deal, they are by no means grounds upon which to deduce good from evil. Together the group of friends have successfully faced the wrath of the Wicked Witch, encouraging them in their quest, making them shamelessly impatient as the Wizard attempts to brush them off until tomorrow.

It is Toto, the harmless terrier who pulls back the curtain revealing the true Wizard to be nothing but a frightened little man. Frank Morgan was chosen by Mervyn LeRoy from MGM's contract list - a perfectly befuddled character, the Wizard of Oz is a humbug. However, unlike the adults in Kansas, the Wizard willingly admits his pretence. He does not attempt to excuse or in any way escape from his hypocritical behaviour but simply states the truth:-

"Yes, exactly so..... I'm a humbug......I'm a very good man just a very bad wizard" (see fig. 31).

His honesty in declaring his fallibility runs parallel to the confessions made to Dorothy by the Scarecrow, the Tinman and the Lion. With all pretensions now lost he is able to turn his hand to helping them as best he can - by being himself. The integral message to this unmasking of the Wizard remains that the Wizard's descent from "ultimate power" to "humbug" must occur for Dorothy and her friends to believe in themselves. The Wizard reveals to them that they already possess the qualities which they so desire. The Scarecrow has shown ingenuity throughout their journey, the Tinman has displayed constant love and care and the Cowardly Lion was brave enough to lead Dorothy's rescue party. The three simply lack physical proof of their

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fig.31. The real Wizard of Oz.



attributes which the Wizard is more than willing to supply. We see that perhaps the Wizard should take his own advice in realising that he is not such a bad Wizard after all and that by simply being himself he is giving the best help he could give. He teaches the Lion that courage is found not by losing fear but by overcoming it and the Tinman could not have felt such longing for a heart if he did not already possess one. The most insightful evidence of the Wizard's advice, however, as the Scarecrow realises his brain, is the fact that the geometric equation that flows from his lips is completely incorrect proving that true intelligence comes from a natural sense rather than an extended vocabulary.

As the Wizard now turns to help our heroine, we learn that he, too, arrived in Oz by accident. Travelling in a hot air balloon, similar to Glinda the Good Witch's mode of transport, he, like Dorothy, was proclaimed to be a miracle, earning the title of the Wizard of Oz. Since that time, he has hidden his true self behind a mask of powerful imagery. Both immigrants in Oz, Dorothy has taken a "small and meek" but honest approach to her situation whereas the Wizard, taking the opposite strategy of survival has shrouded his own antiheroism behind a camouflage of fire, smoke and false bravado. To keep his promise to help the friends, however, he has had to admit the truth to them and himself and in revealing their worth and solving their problems he has realised his own true abilities. He teaches them that only by being themselves can they perform true magic. Therefore, the only way the Wizard can help Dorothy is to take her back to Kansas himself.

Dorothy has come to the Wizard for an answer to her problems and in doing so has forced him to reassess his own situation and face his true "self" by returning to the "real" world.

As Dorothy, Toto and the Wizard prepare to leave in the balloon, with the Scarecrow, the Tinman and the Cowardly Lion ironically left to rule Oz in the Wizard's absence disaster strikes once again as a seemingly luckless Dorothy is left behind. Hope is not lost, however as Glinda arrives with some advice.

Dorothy:- "Will you help me? Can you help me?" Glinda:- "You don't need to be helped any longer. You've always had the power to go back to Kansas"

Dorothy, as we have witnessed, has always had strength of character but lacked belief in herself. Through her relationships with the characters in Oz she has learned many lessons. The three "hollow" men that Dorothy met along

<sup>1</sup> Subsective equal of the Construction o

n de la companya de Esta de la companya d Esta de la companya de the Yellow Brick Road, the anti-heroes who saw themselves as incomplete and useless, are now governing the Land of Oz. For the message that this ironic situation suggests to have its full impact, however, Dorothy's belief in the Wizard had to be destroyed in order for her to realise that she already possesses everything she needs and if she only believes in herself and trusts in her own heart she needs help from no-one else in achieving her goal.

"If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard because if it isn't there I never really lost it to begin with."

She says a tearful goodbye to the friends she has made, closes her eyes, taps her heels together three times and understands in her heart:-

"There's no place like home."

In a moment Dorothy finds herself back in her monochrome bedroom in Kansas (now restored to its neat and organised state), surrounded by those she loves (see fig.32). Her adventure has allowed her to reassess her relationship with the Kansas folk and brought about a new understanding of, not only herself, but of the adult world that she lives in.

"But anyway, Toto, we're home...home.....and this is my room and you're all here and I'm not going to leave here ever, ever again because I love you all and.....Oh Auntie Em...there's no place like home." (c) a construction of the construction of the state of the state of the construction of the state of the s

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fig.32. Dorothy finds herself back in Kansas with, (from top left) Professor Marvel (the Wizard), Uncle Henry, Zeke (the Cowardly Lion), and (from bottom left) Hunk (the Scarecrow), Hickory (the Tinman), and Auntie Em.



### CONCLUSION

"The Wizard of Oz", MGM's prestige picture of 1939 did receive credit at the Academy Awards. Retrospectively, with post-depression America awaiting the certainty of World War II, the dream of escapism in Judy Garland's rendition of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" drips with a sentimentality and feeling of isolation all the more poignant (see fig.33). Strangely, however, it was not for more than twenty years that regular television appearances led to its ever-increasing influence on popular culture (see fig.34).

It is true to say that the timeless longevity of the picture stems from its simple philosophy of innocence and optimism. For adults and children alike, "The Wizard of Oz" offers a message of hope - as Julius Marini (who paid \$2,400 for the Cowardly Lion's costume) explains:-

"The picture gave me a certain sort of lift. It told me what to do when things go wrong. It said you don't get things from someone else, you get them from within yourself".

This lesson of self-awareness and self-confidence within the story was a truism with which Louis B. Mayer, Mervyn LeRoy and Arthur Freed wholeheartedly agreed. The appeal of MGM's movie version of the "Wizard of Oz" starts with the appeal of L. Frank Baum's original book, but by no means ends there. Mervyn LeRoy insisted from the beginning of the conceptualisation of "Oz", that the cast and crew understand the message behind the story in order to interpret it in the most effective cinematic way.

Indeed, the thinking process found in the original book, similar to the thinking of a child, are dominated by wishes and fears and, most importantly in the translation from page to screen, visual imagery. As the story contains most of the child's deepest fears of being lost, abandoned or broken, it was integral to achieve a visual translation that would, as much as possible, remain true to Baum's original themes. This all had to be done while, at the same time, creating a fantasy that an audience of 1939 could believe in and accept.

It was apparent to Mervyn LeRoy after the first two weeks of shooting that Richard Thorpe did not possess the qualities required to direct the picture with the warm handling that Baum's story suggested. It was in Victor Fleming, however, that LeRoy found a director who truly understood how delicately the \*"The Making of The Wizard of Oz" p309

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fig.33. The reaction to "The Wizard of Oz", premiered at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on August 15, 1939.



film had to be handled in order to keep its message intact.

A story for children, so deep in underlying themes and ideas had to be translated, by adults, in a manner comprehensible to all ages without losing its sense of fun and adventure. Victor Fleming approached "The Wizard of Oz" with a child's eye view, keeping in mind his own relationship with his two daughters - this approach is paramount in the film's success.

The Kansas scenes, as I defined in "Chapter 1", remain an integral part in laying the foundation for the picture's motivation. The introduction of the three Kansas farm-hands, before we encounter their Ozian counterparts, succeeds in achieving a clear understanding of Dorothy's lesson in self-reliance and independence. By relating the three "hollow" characters of "Oz" to the "real" world, the visual links between the two very different settings allow Dorothy to apply what she has learned of adulthood to her everyday Kansas life.

Within the screen adaptation several major changes were made to the story in order to make such a fantastical adventure seem more natural to its audience. Noel Langley decided that the entire journey should be fashioned as a dream after all it cannot be denied that such a series of events are much more likely to occur and are, therefore, more believable within the context of a dream rather than in real life, as Baum had conceived. Immeasurable attention was given to the visual stylisation of the Land of Oz and its inhabitants.

Throughout the casting period the Art Department, led by Cedric Gibbons and William Horning, began solving the problems of how to visually represent Oz. An Emerald City, a Haunted Forest and a Witch's Castle, none of which exist in the real world, had to be portrayed in a way that, while unreal, were still believable and immediately comprehensible. Again, a child's point of view was found to be most effective in conveying certainties in the introduction of strange, unfamiliar territories. This can be seen most effectively by comparing the friendly colour and harmony of Munchkinland with the foreboding shadows and twisted forms of the Haunted Forest.

This method of conveying situation with visual appearances rather than the written word was also used to its full effect in Gilbert Adrian's costume designs. We need only use our eyes to deduce the good from the bad witch:-

Glinda - white gown, pure and sparkling = Good The Wicked Witch - black gown, shadowy = Bad

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fig.34. Judy Garland, as Dorothy, promotes "The Wizard of Oz" on the cover of "Movie Life" magazine.



Jack Dawn's designs completed the character make-ups, enhancing each players characteristics in accordance with his/her role. MGM was known for perfectly tailoring its roles to suit its players, indeed, especially within the context of "The Wizard of Oz". These characters work perfectly on the screen because the actors are simply exaggerating their own personalities they each convey a certain understanding of the roles they play. The heartfelt yearning of the Scarecrow, Tinman and Cowardly Lion, as they dream of being complete can be seen in their eyes and heard in their voices.

The songs in "The Wizard of Oz" accomplish what straight dialogue never could - a captivating method of accenting the sentimental and emotional foundation of the story. E. Y. Harburg penned lyrics that successfully and emotionally introduced many of the film's themes and Harold Arlen's melodies anchor them deep in our memories. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" so perfectly introduces the foundation of our interest, the film's primary motivation. Indeed, it is this universal theme that has gained Production #1060's world-wide recognition.

I discussed, in "Chapter 2", the immeasurable effect of the Munchkins' encouragement and gratitude, on Dorothy's confidence. A scene remembered mainly for its flamboyant colour, cheerful melodies and flowing optimism is strangely centred around the squashing of a Witch under a flying house.. The delicate handling of such incidents within the context of a children's feature is critical for a successful visual translation. Within this Chapter I revealed how clever use of imagery, music and casting allowed the development of Dorothy's character to overshadow the unpleasant themes of death and evil.

The Yellow Brick Road, the path that leads to life's answers (Chapter 3), also led us to characters who were to join Dorothy as visual proof of her increasing understanding of others. This companionship offers comfort in its honesty and strength in numbers. The meticulous perfection of the characterisations of the Scarecrow, the Tinman and the Cowardly Lion and their sincere yearning for wholeness, run parallel to Dorothy's own desire, forming an empathy between themselves and the audience. These friends act as further motivation for Dorothy as she faces the mysterious power of the Wizard of Oz in the Emerald City (Chapter 4) and with a joint determination and group empathy Dorothy is able to confront her ultimate fear - the Wicked Witch of the West (Chapter 5). As we watch the enemy diminish and Dorothy's fear melt away to nothing, we come to the realisation that the true terror stemmed from not the Witch, but from Dorothy's own insecurity. For Dorothy to understand this herself, the uncovering of the Wizard's powerful

mask must take place. The almost frustratingly simple answer to her heartfelt plea is that such an incredible journey was necessary, not to receive a solution from a higher power but to look for the answer within herself. A lesson in optimism and self-confidence, this thought, wrapped in a manifestation of enthusiasm and understanding from every creative department of MGM's studios has resulted in the legend that "The Wizard of Oz" has become.



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# APPENDIX

# MGM's "THE WIZARD OF OZ"

# THE CAST

Dorothy	Judy Garland
Professor Marvel/The Wizard	
Hunk/The Scarecrow	
Zeke/The Cowardly Lion	Bert Lahr
Hickory/The Tinman	Jack Haley
Glinda	Billie Burke
Miss Gulch/The Wicked Witch	Margaret Hamilton
Uncle Henry	Charlie Grapewin
Auntie Em	Clara Blandick
Nikko	Patte Walshe
Toto	Toto

# THE CREW

Produced by	Mervyn LeRoy		
Directed by			
	George Cukor	(3 days)	
	Victor Fleming	(4 months)	
	King Vidor	(10 days)	
Screenplay by	Noel Langley		
	on & Edgar Allan Woolf.		
Initial input from Ogden Na	sh & Herman Mankiewicz		
From the book by	L. Frank Baum		
Art Director	Cedric Gibbons		
Associate	William A. Horning		
Special Effects by			
Costumes by			
Character make-ups by			
Music by	Harold Arlen		
Lyrics by			
Musical adaptation by			



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