"Aunt Em: Hate You! Hate Kansas! Taking the Dog. Dorothy": Conscious and Unconscious Desire in The Wizard of Oz

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The quotation in my title—taken from a T-shirt popular in queer culture—bitchily suggests that in Victor Fleming's 1939 film adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz*, the rosy resolution we are left with ("There's no place like home") is somehow at odds with the preceding portrayal of Dorothy's turbulent emotional life. Yet the film's happy ending has not failed to convince generations of viewers and critics of its congruity with what comes before. Those satisfied with the ending see the events leading to it as growth-inducing conflicts that may reasonably be resolved. David Payne, for example, believes that Dorothy repeats "a basic, trustworthy moral about personal quests—one that is relevant for all of us who . . . sometimes wish to return home and to childhood and to the security of our families" (38). Jerry Griswold reflects on the text's consistency, stating that *The Wizard of Oz* tells us that "we already have what we sometimes think we lack . . . That we cannot be given what we already possess. That we are already home" (475). By way of support, Griswold cites L. Frank Baum's son: "What we want, the moralist whispers, is within us; we need only look for it to find it. What we strive for has been ours all along" and Margaret Hamilton, who played the Wicked Witch of the West: "What the picture tells me . . . coincides with the wonderful lesson Dorothy says she

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has learned at last, about feeling she has lost her home. . . . If you can't find it, it is still somewhere—you still have it" (474--75).

Those who conceive, design, market, buy, and wear the T-shirt, though, apparently sense that Dorothy expresses darker desires in the film. Resisting a conventional reading, they seem troubled by the idea that Dorothy could return home to a child's bed, surrounded by the same ineffectual and patronizing family and friends whom she earlier needed to escape, convinced that she seeks no more than this. Nor is the T-shirt an isolated comment. Salman Rushdie expresses such a view in response to Dorothy's final interaction with Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, in which she resolves not to look any further than her own backyard:

How does it come about, at the close of this radical and enabling film, which teaches us in the least didactic way possible to build on what we have, to make the best of ourselves, that we are given this conservative little homily? Are we to believe that Dorothy has learned no more on her journey than that she didn't need to make such a journey in the first place? Must we accept that she now accepts the limitations of her home life, and agrees that the things she doesn't have there are no loss to her? (56-57)

Rushdie might not be a representative viewer, but still he has independently uttered sentiments consistent with the T-shirt, although he speaks in earnest, whereas the shirt speaks the language of camp. Stuart Culver similarly comments that the film exposes the machinery behind the enchantment as mere humbug and insists that we learn to contain our imaginations and desires. . . . Just as her companions learn that what they already have must and will suffice, Dorothy learns to embrace the comfortable enclosure of the whitewashed picket fence and the domestic role it projects for her. The theme of containment is perversely underlined by the casting of Garland, then sixteen, in the role of a seven-year-old, infantilized and all too obviously confined by her costume and character. (99)

Consider also Hugh Prestwood's popular song "Dorothy," recorded by Judy Collins on the album Hard Times for Lovers, which laments Dorothy's return to Kansas: "Dorothy was a fool to leave [Oz], she had it made" (qtd. in Payne 38). Finally, and most compellingly, in his brilliant recent novel Was, Geoff Ryman spins a fantasy based on characters and events of and surrounding both film and book (a sad young Frances Gumm/Judy Garland and Baum himself are two memorable characters). Ryman portrays "Dorothy Gael" as a historical personage who lived as a child with her embittered Aunt Em and Uncle Henry near Manhattan, Kansas, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. After Uncle Henry molestes her, she becomes a prostitute and loses her mind, dying in a mental hospital shortly after recognizing herself fictionalized in the 1956 American television premiere of The Wizard of Oz.

Aljean Harmetz notes that Noel Langley, whose script formed the framework of the finished film, objected to the sentimental ending, which was invented by two other screenwriters assigned to the film after him: Florence Ryerson and Edgar Allan Woolf (33-59). Ryerson and Woolf felt that Dorothy's "desperate desire to get back home should be dramatized more fully" than Langley had done (qtd. in Hearn 19). Langley was "required to keep his hands off" the concept because Mervyn LeRoy and Arthur Freed, the producer and his assistant, "both sentimental men, delighted in the uplifting thought that true happiness can only be found at home" (Harmetz 57). Indeed, according to Michael Patrick Hearn, Freed "was particularly insistent that Dorothy repeat, 'There's no place like home,' three times when clicking her heels together" (22). Yip Harburg, who wrote the lyrics for the songs and edited the shooting script by blending the work of Langley, Ryerson, and Woolf, complained that "the picture didn't need that 'Home, Sweet Home,' 'God Bless Our Home' tripe" (qtd. in Harmetz 57). Harburg also "devised the satiric and cynical idea of the Wizard handing out symbols [of brains, heart, and courage] because I was so aware of our lives being the images of things rather than the things themselves" (qtd. in Harmetz 58). The oppositions that serve as a tension for the reexamination of the text, then, are to some extent mirrored and prefigured by those that informed its creation.

The precise moment in the story to which the note on the T-shirt alludes is ambiguous. It could be one early on, when Dorothy sets out with Toto to avoid another encounter with Miss Gulch, from whom Toto has just escaped. Or it could be at the end of the film: Dorothy, no longer content with the supposed comforts of home, and emboldened by a degree of independence gained through her dreamed adventures in Oz, lights out once again, this time openly in anger. The T-shirt might convey both possibilities simultaneously or ascribe a general attitude to Dorothy not traceable to a single event or events. But that the T-shirt recharacterizes the end of the film rather than the
beginning is the more cogently ironic possibility, since its message could then be taken as a direct contradiction of Dorothy’s last words and thus of the sincerity of the ending. In any event, the T-shirt explicitly ascribes motives to Dorothy that seem barely acknowledged (if at all) in her filmic characterization; it claims that Dorothy resents and desires to move beyond Aunt Em and Kansas, and that she believes the lowly Toto—he somewhat unappreciatively characterized here as “the dog”—to be her only worthy companion.

Through a reading of the film-text informed by semiotics and Freudian psychoanalysis, I shall argue that while The Wizard of Oz constructs Dorothy as a character motivated solely by the desires she articulates through her manifest words and deeds (conscious desires), it also cogently articulates a deeper discourse of often disturbing (unconscious) desires. The film maps out these hidden desires indirectly, expresses them in sublimated form, and projects them onto Dorothy. It is the film’s success in expressing—even insisting on—both types of desires at once, I believe, that has led to a reception characterized by the diametric oppositions noted.

Because Dorothy is a textual construction, a reading of The Wizard of Oz as a film-text must be cautious about claiming that she has conscious and unconscious desires. The terms of the reading must be qualified as follows:

1. Dorothy’s desires are discernible only to the extent that she speaks and acts in the film in such a way as to render her motivations consistent with her characterization; she can be said to desire only to the extent that her wishes are manifest.
2. The film-text by which she is enunciated might nevertheless be said to delineate other desires and, by means of a variety of cinematic narrative devices—especially that of the dream, with its interpolation of disguised figures from Dorothy’s waking life into her dreamscape—project these desires onto Dorothy. Because the film-text enunciates Dorothy’s desires as split, as both manifest and “latent,” it lends itself to a psychoanalytic reading; the filmic operations of The Wizard of Oz mirror the dichotomy and tension between the conscious life of the ego, or self, and the repressed desires of the unconscious of Freudian psychoanalysis.

The terms of my discussion differ from those of other psychoanalytic readings of The Wizard of Oz as film-text, as well as from those of psychoanalytic film theory generally. Harvey R. Greenberg reads The Wizard of Oz as though Dorothy were a patient on whom he is practicing psychoanalysis, treating her motivations and actions as those of a person rather than of a textual construction (13–32). Daniel Dervin similarly “analyzes” Dorothy, but his focus is narrower than Greenberg’s: he describes the girl’s adventures in terms of the acting out and resolution of conflicts solely and specifically associated with the primal scene (56–65). Psychoanalytic film theory in general “grounds its description in an equivalence between the film-viewer and the dreamer, taking that archetypal production of unconscious fantasy, the dream-work, as analogous to the film itself” (Stam et al. 140). It is primarily concerned with the psychoanalytic construction of the cinematic subject-spectator and the social impact of the institution of the cinema. I am concerned instead with the cinematic operations of the film-textual system, with their manifestation through specific textual instances. My method of psychoanalytic reading is informed by Freud, particularly The Interpretation of Dreams, and by Bruno Bettelheim’s The Uses of Enchantment.

When we first encounter Dorothy, in the foreground of the black-and-white opening long shot of a country road, she is already breathlessly running away from Almira Gulch, who has hit Toto with a rake. Dorothy approaches her guardians, Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, but they ignore her; eventually, alone with Toto, she laments in song that she cannot be transported “somewhere over the rainbow.” Miss Gulch then comes to the Gale farmhouse on her bicycle, demanding to see Aunt Em and Uncle Henry about Dorothy. After a bitter argument (to which I shall return), she seizes Toto, taking him to the sheriff to be “destroyed.” Toto escapes from the bicycle basket and runs back to Dorothy, who suddenly realizes that home does not offer safety, that she must flee once more. Dorothy and Toto walk down a dusty road, where they meet Professor Marvel, the carnival charlatan. Marvel speculates that “they don’t understand you at home. They don’t appreciate you.” Although he is mistaken about the cause of her departure, Dorothy agrees emphatically. Her dissatisfaction is thus presented, if only briefly, as at once local and global, immediate and all-encompassing. The cinematic narrator hints that the fear for Toto’s well-being that ostensibly served as the sole catalyst for Dorothy’s departure might in fact be the last straw in a series of mounting tensions on the Gale farm. Still, given the subtlety and brevity of this exchange with Professor Marvel, all but Dorothy’s most immediate, manifest discontent is left unexplored.
Dorothy asks the Professor whether she and Toto can accompany him on his travels. Gazing into his crystal, he pretends to see the Gale farm and suggests that Aunt Em is ill; Dorothy, seized with remorse, resolves to return home. She scrambles out of the wagon, and we see a gust of wind striking the wagon and shaking the surrounding trees as Marvel approaches his horse—the first sign of the cyclone. Now there, is a lap dissolve to a long shot of the Gale farm, where the cyclone visibly advances. Up to this point, Dorothy's conscious desires are constructed through what might be characterized as a cooperation between her verbal communication and a visual and musical articulation made possible by the semiosis of cinema. Dorothy says what she means and is charmingly ingenuous and good-natured; the cinematic narrator confirms this understanding visually and musically by contrasting her with world-weary or otherwise troubled adults and by featuring Judy Garland-as-Dorothy's showstopping rendition of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Still, a hidden need to escape has been set and running. The varying shades of grey and the vast, empty expanses by which the film denotes "Kansas" suggest the objective bleakness of her surroundings and imply that this is a place no one would wish to be.\(^2\) Well before "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," the narrator suggests that Dorothy needs to get away.

The film narrative emphasizes this need through dramatic irony, by having Dorothy return home only because she has been tricked into feeling guilty for leaving. The irony implies that Dorothy's conflicitive feelings about Kansas are merely (and perhaps wrongly) censored, not resolved, that her return to the farm is no more than the unhappy result of a motivation thrust on her by a patronizing (if well-meaning) humbug acting in loco parentis. This divergence of Dorothy's self-articulation and other narrative articulations establishes a central tension in the text.

When the storm begins, the narrative articulation veers still more insistently from Dorothy's straightforward verbal self-articulation. Baum does not provide Dorothy with a last name until the third book of the Oz series, *Ozma of Oz* (1907), where she is called Dorothy Gale. The film-text, by contrast, gives her this full name at the moment of her introduction, thus connecting her with the cyclone that ravages her guardians' farm. Although Dorothy's own motivations at the time the cyclone hits are guilt, remorse, and a desire to return home, the film-text implies that the cyclone represents Dorothy's buried rage, desire to punish those who have disappointed her, and need to escape, since it appears just after Professor Marvel succeeds in censoring Dorothy's unhappiness and persuading her to return to the farm. When she does return, the cyclone sends Aunt Em and Uncle Henry running for cover, visually (and retributively) balancing what Dorothy herself has just had to do because of them. It also effectively defers the reunion between child and guardians at a moment when—given the circumstances of Dorothy's departure—a reunion could not have been a happy event for Dorothy.

Moreover, during the storm Dorothy's bedroom window hits her head, sending her into a dream that removes her from Kansas and thus accomplishes the escape that she has abandoned. Here the film at once delineates and fulfills a repressed desire that is filmically expressed in sublimated form by means of the cyclone and the dream, leaving Dorothy's manifest desire unchallenged: Dorothy is able simultaneously to stay in Kansas and to leave. In this way the narrator paradoxically both insists on the potency of the underlying desire and denies its existence by maintaining the narrative continuity of Dorothy's desire to be home.

In the book there is no dream; Dorothy's experiences in Oz are real. By treating Dorothy's adventures in Oz as a dream, then, the post-Freudian film further compels a psychoanalytic reading of those adventures in a way that the pre-Freudian book does not.\(^4\) Indeed, the filmmakers introduce many characters and elements in the Kansas sequences not found in the book, with the result that the film's Dorothy is imbedded with a more psychologically complex motivation for her dream/adventures than is Baum's: Miss Gulch and her bicycle and basket, the farmhands, Professor Marvel, and Dorothy's fantasy-in-song of being transported over the rainbow all reappear in Oz, transformed in ways that recall their earlier introduction as features of Dorothy's psychic landscape.

Thus the film, in contradistinction to the book, suggests that Dorothy's adventures in Oz are the product of what Freud would call her "dream-thoughts," her "thoughts" (as they are articulated filmically through her characterization) prior to the dream.\(^5\) If we accept this argument, Dorothy's adventures in Oz can be interpreted as wish-fulfilling fantasies relating to the "dream-day," the filmic day immediately preceding the dream. According to Freud, "dreams are given their shape in individual human beings by the operation of two psychical forces; one of these forces constructs the wish which
is expressed by the dream, while the other exercises a censorship upon the dream-wish, and, by the use of that censorship, forcibly brings about a distortion in the expression of the wish" (225). The cinematic articulation of Dorothy's fantasies might, then, be taken to represent an expression or construction of her unconscious or latent desires in distored form. Freud further notes that "dreams are distorted and the wish-fulfillment contained in them disguised to the point of being unrecognizable precisely owing to the repugnance felt for the-topic of the dream or for the wish derived from it and to an intention to repress them" (244). That Dorothy dreams her adventures in the film is thus consistent with the interpretation that these adventures represent fantasies that would be unacceptable to, or, in film-textual terms, incompatible with the characterization of, the girl we meet in Kansas (see Freud chapters 4 and 6).

The blow to Dorothy's head is the catalyst for these fantasies. We begin with a superimposed prism shot of the unconscious girl, the cyclone, and the house hurtling through the air. When Dorothy "awakens" from her delirium a moment later, she is clearly dreaming. In a medium shot encompassing the bedroom, she looks apprehensively out her window, where she sees debris from the farm and various Kansas folk floating by before she peers down into the cyclone's twisting funnel. Now Dorothy sees Miss Gulch riding her bicycle in profile and identifies her aloud with revulsion. Miss Gulch approaches the camera; her clothes become a flying robe and conical witch's hat, her bicycle a broom. She shrieks with malevolent glee. After a series of long shots of the cyclone, the house, and Dorothy, the house whirls down toward the camera until it blackens the screen.

This sequence might be compared to what Freud calls an "introductory dream." A main dream, according to Freud, is sometimes preceded by an introductory dream that, he writes, can be interpreted as causing the events of the main dream (425-27). Dorothy's initial dream sequence is discrete, brief, and occurs in black and white, whereas her subsequent events is still implied, for Freud argues that "the other method of representing a causal relation . . . consists in one image in the dream, whether of a person or thing, being transformed into another" (427). That Miss Gulch is transformed into a witch before

Dorothy's eyes here becomes crucial, for Freud stresses the importance of witnessing the transformation and establishing a causal relationship of dream events: "The existence of a causal relation is only to be taken seriously if the transformation actually occurs before our eyes and not if we merely notice that one thing has appeared in the place of another" (427).

In other words, whether we view it as an introductory dream or as part of the main dream, the material of this sequence suggests a causal relationship between these and later dream events. By showing Miss Gulch's transformation into a witch, the only form in which she will subsequently appear in Dorothy's dream, the enunciator suggests that Dorothy needs Miss Gulch to become a witch so that her appearance as the Wicked Witch of the West in Oz is motivated, so that she is a witch for a reason—because she was transformed into one. Following Freud's reasoning, the enunciation seems to argue further that Dorothy's cinematically represented unconscious has chosen the events it has here in order to guard the waking character (or ego) from inappropriate impulses. Dorothy's unconscious will not permit the direct expression/fulfillment of the desire to kill real adults. Yet by distorting an unacceptable hostile relationship with an adult into a hostile relationship with a witch, the enunciator argues, Dorothy's unconscious overcomes the psychic force of censorship and her wish can be fulfilled in disguise (see Freud chapter 4, particularly 224-28).

When Dorothy lands, she picks up Toto, walks through the door of her house into a fantastic Technicolor land, and utters one of the quintessential understatements of Hollywood film: "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." This ratification of the escape gives way to an important exchange when Glinda the Good Witch dissolves in from a pink-tinted bubble and inquires whether Dorothy is a good witch or a bad witch. Dorothy protests that she cannot be a witch because "witches are old and ugly." Glinda introduces herself; Dorothy, chastened, apologizes. Glinda gently corrects her, "Only bad witches are ugly."

Since, as Glinda claims, witches do not reveal their identity merely by their (unsightly) appearance, and since the Munchkins and Glinda have identified Dorothy as a witch, the suggestion is that Dorothy, despite her protestations to the contrary, unconsciously believes she is a witch herself. The reason for this belief might be surmised from the Kansas scenes: the guilty girl who ran home
thinking she might have caused her aunt to fall ill, only to have her reunion deferred and her anxiety increased by an intervening cyclone, secretly suspects that she herself magically caused the cyclone. If we adduce the outcome of Dorothy's dream actions thus far as wish-fulfillments, we can conclude that (according to the cinematic narrator) the girl wishes either that the cyclone she witnessed prior to the dream had the power to lift her house in the air and bring it crashing down upon an evil matriarch, or that the girl herself had this power. According to Freud, in dreams "boxes, cases, chests, cupboards and ovens represent the uterus, and also hollow objects, ships, and vessels of all kinds. . . . Rooms in dreams are usually women" (471). Thus a Freudian reading suggests that Dorothy's house is a symbol for herself.

Who is the evil matriarch of Dorothy's fantasy? The shot of the house lying on top of the Witch of the East suggests a grim follow-up to Aunt Em's fleeing that very house—possibly for fear that she might meet a similar fate—minutes earlier. Indeed, as the Munchkins' song subsequently reveals, the house "landed on the Wicked Witch in the middle of a ditch" (an unlikely place for the Witch to have been standing); this childish rhyme recalls the subterranean farm storm cellar to which Aunt Em retreated and which, but for the doors that sealed her in and Dorothy out, would have left the aunt as vulnerable as the Witch. In the book, the storm cellar is actually inside the house, "a small hole, dug in the ground, . . . reached by a trap door in the middle of the floor" (9). Thus the film appears to strengthen through the Munchkins' song the book's suggestion that Dorothy has metaphorically crushed Aunt Em (in the form of the witch) with the house. It might even be argued that the film ascribes unconscious resentment to Dorothy over Aunt Em's successful self-preservation; in her final waking moments Dorothy is shown stamping on the storm cellar as she calls to Aunt Em, who does not respond.

Indeed, Harmetz reveals that in the early stages of production, Dorothy and Aunt Em were mutually hostile. She notes that in Noel Langley's first version of the script, it was Aunt Em who was presented as the harsh and cruel woman who forced Dorothy to give up Toto: "Miss Gulch, the schoolteacher, played no part in the decision. She merely informed Aunt Em that Toto had bitten another student" (37). Harmetz quotes both Langley's Em ("You have disobeyed your Uncle and myself and broken the school rules; so you have only yourself to blame for your punishment") and Dorothy's comments about her: "she never really wanted me here . . . or she wouldn't always be saying how ungrateful I am, after she and Uncle Henry took me out of the asylum: but Hickory, she really wasn't very dreadful in the asylum; they didn't used to get angry. Not as often as Aunt Em" (37). Similarly, in Ryman's Was, Aunt Em and Miss Gulch are bluntly conflated; the bitter aunt's full name is Emma Gulch.

Moreover, that the once-drab Kansas home now appears in full color atop a dictatorial ruler visually connects the attributed fulfillment of Dorothy's desire to escape to a place "somewhere over the rainbow" and the attributed fulfillment of her desire to injure the mother figure from whom she fled. That Aunt Em is herself a surrogate mother to the orphaned girl makes sense of the fantasy of killing a faceless evil female ruler. According to the latent dream logic, it seems, the witch is substituted for Aunt Em primarily to avoid unconscious censorship, but Aunt Em's actual role as a surrogate seems further to motivate and explain her distorted appearance. In this way the cinematic narrator cogently conflates two wish-fulfillments—escape and punishment.

Three significant events occur in this sequence. The Munchkins acclaim Dorothy a heroine, a title with which she seems content; the Wicked Witch of the West arrives and blames Dorothy for her sister's death, causing her to protest her innocence; and Dorothy acquires the ruby slippers. By showing Dorothy rejoicing in her exalted status, the cinematic narrator implies that the girl wishes she could overthrow Aunt Em and usurp her position. Now she rules over a child-like people just as Aunt Em had dominated her in Kansas. When the Witch of the West intimidates her, though, Dorothy's fearful response suggests that she still needs to view herself as an obedient child—one who does not "mean to kill anybody." In other words, she consciously disowns her own right to the power she has seized. Still, when (thanks to Glinda) Dorothy obtains the ruby slippers via the magic of the Good Witch instead of having Dorothy claim them for herself, the enunciator once again affirms her unconscious desire (to help herself, to be in control, a free agent) in a manner consistent with Freud's assertion that the unconscious expresses desire in dreams in such a way as to avoid censorship. To claim the slippers for herself would be unacceptable, would afford Dorothy's unconscious more
confide in its claim to adulthood than it believably can have. Still, that the slippers fit her perfectly shows that Dorothy wishes to be their rightful owner, that she "unconsciously" desires to be the one in charge.

In short, in the manifest dream narrative, Dorothy is portrayed in a manner consistent with the Kansas scenes. She is not hostile to her superior, needs help, and seems not to desire the power bestowed by the slippers. Yet, as we shall learn later in the film, Dorothy no longer requires the assistance of others: she has the means to protect herself and to return to Kansas; she has become independent. Still she fails to recognize her powers, seeing herself as a child in need of the advice of both Glinda and the Wizard of Oz to provide her direction. By having Dorothy remain, in a sense, willfully naive, the cinematic narrator gives us a textbook Freudian dream. The tension between the dream's manifest and latent content suggests that Dorothy's unconscious expresses an age-appropriate conflict between a childish need for security and dependence and an adolescent need for independence (see Bettelheim 95). And indeed, this duality is evident in subsequent events. Glinda leaves Dorothy to control her own adventure but defines its terms for her (the girl is to call on the Wizard of Oz for advice); Dorothy is at once benefactress and charge to the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion, whom she invites to accompany her on her journey to the Emerald City, extending to them her hope of the Witch both as incomprehensibly antagonistic like Miss Gulch and as understandably desirous to increase her own power by seizing Dorothy's, the cinematic narrator suggests either that Dorothy unconsciously believes Miss Gulch is jealous of her, or that Dorothy wishes she were—or both. One might even read this encounter as the expression of a "counter-wish," in which case events that ostensibly suggest the opposite might be said to argue instead that it is Dorothy herself who wishes to usurp Miss Gulch's power (see Freud 228-44). In any event, the implication is that Dorothy's manifest helplessness in the dream expresses her latent wish to be in control.

That Aunt Em appears in the crystal ball followed by the Witch further suggests that Dorothy unconsciously experiences Miss Gulch and Aunt Em as the same person. In Freudian terms, this scene might be said to serve as a cinematic representation of "the work of condensation." Condensation is the means by which the unconscious conflates a variety of figures from the dreamer's waking life into one dream figure. Following this reasoning, the Witch can be interpreted not just as Miss Gulch (her obvious counterpart in Kansas) but as Aunt Em as well.

In the distortion, then, the enunciator argues that Dorothy at once expresses her hostility toward Miss Gulch/Aunt Em and reveals that she experiences the Witch's aggression as Aunt Em's and Miss Gulch's retaliation for that hostility. Dorothy's role as victim is undermined, for it is shown that she is, and thus that she wishes she were, a force to be reckoned with, despite—or indeed because of—the dream-narrative's manifest protestations to the contrary.

At this point Toto takes an increasingly active role in the cinematic representation of Dorothy's desires. First, he makes his way back to the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion in the forest and leads them back to the Witch's castle, where the Tin Man releases Dorothy, and Dorothy ultimately saves the group (and wins a paean from the Winkies) by melting the Witch with a bucket of water, ostensibly to save the Scarecrow, who is on fire. Next, when they arrive back at the Wizard's throne room with the broomstick and meet with a rebuff, Toto runs to the background to a curtain hanging around the side of the room. Dorothy reprimands the Wizard for breaking his
promise, and Toto pulls the curtain aside to expose a man (Professor Marvel) talking into a microphone and working the controls of the throne. The Wizard, now revealed as a fraud, offers to take Dorothy back to Kansas in a balloon—but at the moment of takeoff, Toto once more plays a key part, spotting a cat and jumping from Dorothy's arms. She hops out of the basket after him, and the balloon leaves without her.

The activity and aggression that Toto evinces in these and other scenes are particularly interesting because from the first scene of the film, Toto and Dorothy are so closely identified as almost to share the same personality. Like her, he is playful and free-spirited. His apprehension and subsequent escape ostensibly prompt Dorothy to run away, but as I have noted, the sequence of events leading to and immediately following her flight implies that Dorothy herself has already been longing to leave. Even in the Kansas scenes, then, he seems to justify the fulfillment of wishes that the enunciator implies Dorothy cannot express. For instance, shortly after we learn that Toto has attacked Miss Gulch, we are shown that the Gales have wanted to do this for a long time. Aunt Em can convey her feelings toward Miss Gulch only with restraint. Dorothy herself tries to be reasonable until, thoroughly provoked, she screams at the woman, “You go away you—ooh—I’ll bite you myself!” She might merely be responding here to the threat to Toto, but given Aunt Em’s allusion to the history of strained relations between the Gales and Miss Gulch, we sense that Dorothy must have been wanting to bite Miss Gulch long before Toto did so. Toto seems to express her unconscious desire before she begins to dream, a desire that takes over when she loses control.

It is thus not surprising to find that in the dream itself, Toto continues to elaborate Dorothy’s latent desires. According to the manifest logic of the dream, Dorothy has traveled all the way from Munchkinland to the Emerald City, survived multiple confrontations with the Witch before (accidentally) killing her, and finally walked all the way back to the Emerald City, ostensibly in order to gain the Wizard’s help. This progression suggests that Dorothy does not desire control, only assistance. Yet Toto’s actions in escaping from the Witch’s castle, leading the friends back there, and pulling back the curtain just as Dorothy is reprimanding the Wizard all expose once more and thus confirm the conflict noted elsewhere between Dorothy’s manifest dream desire to be helped and latent desire to be in control. Toto, then, seems to fulfill Dorothy’s unconscious wish to undermine the authority of others, to cut the adults around her down to size, to affirm her power. Finally, when Toto defers Dorothy’s departure, his action suggests a further implication, that Dorothy wishes not to return home. Although Dorothy is consistently characterized by her manifest dream wish to get back to Kansas, the cinematic narrator hints through the equally consistent mapping out and projection of contradictory, repressed desires onto her that a more global contradiction will follow. Toto’s final act of intervention implies just such a contradiction.

We see this tension staged in the final Oz scene. After the Wizard leaves Oz in his balloon, Glinda returns in her bubble to tell Dorothy that the slippers can take her home. She begins cryptically: “You don’t need to be helped any longer. You’ve always had the power to go back to Kansas.” When the Scarecrow asks why Glinda has withheld this information, she explains, “She had to learn it for herself.” The Tin Man asks Dorothy what she has learned, and the girl answers that “it wasn’t enough just to want to see Uncle Henry and Auntie Em . . . and . . . 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! Is that right?” Glinda responds affirmatively and reveals to Dorothy how it is that she has had the power to get back all along: “Now those magic slippers will take you home in two seconds!” But, of course, while Glinda says that Dorothy had to figure out for herself that she has always had the power to get back to Kansas, in actuality she has had to inform Dorothy of the very fact she says the girl discovered for herself. Moreover, Glinda has to tell Dorothy that the slippers are the means of returning home and teach her how to make them work. This contradiction is ostensibly resolved insofar as we are given to understand that what Glinda meant by saying Dorothy had to discover her powers herself is that Dorothy had to learn just the opposite: that home provides us with all we require; that we need not individuate. Thus, according to the manifest meaning of the dream, Dorothy must learn like an adult, paradoxically, that she is still a child.

Even so, this cinematic moment equally powerfully articulates Dorothy’s underlying desire for individuation. Again, it does so indirectly, by having Glinda demand that Dorothy fulfill her deep desire to individuate—acknowledge her own power, take control—while at the next moment having her accept as satisfactory Dorothy’s childish response. This act of cinematic indirection presents us with a conflict that
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is clearly and importantly unresolved. Dorothy’s manifest dream decision to look no further than her own backyard expresses her humble congruency with her place in the world. Yet in light of the pattern of underlying desires articulated in the preceding scenes and culminating in an interaction in which Glinda and Dorothy talk at cross-purposes about Dorothy’s central problem, the cinematic narrator insists that Dorothy desires the true power, the autonomy, that Glinda demands she recognize and claim for herself.

Consistent with the manifest logic of the dream, Dorothy returns to Kansas once she has learned her lesson. Because this denouement is what Dorothy has wanted since she landed in Munchkinland—and because she has developed a new appreciation for home—the film ostensibly ends happily. Yet given the pattern of articulation and sublimation of Dorothy’s underlying desires (especially those of the dream) leading to this moment, the return to Kansas is also tainted insofar as it demonstrates Dorothy’s abdication of the power bestowed on her through the fulfillment of unconscious desires.

The tension in Dorothy’s desires is acknowledged cinematically in the fact that the final Kansas scene reverts from Technicolor to black and white. On one level we are in the realm of only conscious desire, and thus verbal and visual articulations must be acknowledged to be in greater harmony than they are in the dream. But in light of all that has happened since black and white first became associated with the innocent desires of the pre-dream Dorothy, this filmic device is now semiotically altered. Black and white signifies that Dorothy is safe and secure, but it signifies just as potently that she is in every way back where she began, progressless and powerless in a bleak, grey world. Indeed, black and white now connotes psychic regression. As Bettelheim notes of the resolution of unconscious conflicts in fairy tales:

Many fairy-tale heroes, at a crucial point in their development, fall into deep sleep or are reborn. Each reawakening or rebirth symbolizes the reaching of a higher stage of maturity and understanding. It is one of the fairy tale’s ways to stimulate the wish for higher meaning in life: deeper consciousness, more self-knowledge, and greater maturity. . . . Change signifies the need to give up something one had enjoyed up to then, such as Snow White’s existence before the queen became jealous, or her easy life with the dwarfs—difficult and painful growing-up experiences which cannot be avoided. (214)

By portraying Dorothy as an adolescent (as opposed to the book’s young girl) and by treating her adventures in Oz as a dream, the film seems to have been leading the heroine to a similar awakening, toward a burgeoning womanhood. The final affirmation of the status quo, then, denies this development. One might even argue that Dorothy has been cheated out of her right to fabulousness, a right implicitly bestowed by her construction within a Hollywood genre film. As Rick Altman notes, one of the consistent merits of the genre film—not least the musical—is its offer of wish-fulfillment in problematic cases: “the genre film . . . solves problems (or at least seems to) which society has thrust aside because it refuses or is unable to handle them” (334). Dorothy, full of tales of Oz, is not taken seriously back in Kansas. She protests for a moment but is quickly overwhelmed by the condescending response of her audience and resolves to focus on the meager comforts of the here and now. Dorothy’s frustration seems as alive as Miss Gulch, who will, no doubt, soon be back for Toto—waterproofed, armed with a better basket, and possibly accompanied by the sheriff; but these problems are deferred for the sake of closure. Although the affirmation of Dorothy’s conscious desires renders the film’s happy ending congruent in one way with what came before it, then, the fanciful message of the T-shirt sums up Dorothy’s “unconscious” emotions—emotions that might finally be traced back to Baum’s Dorothy, who in subsequent books in the series leaves home for Oz again and again, at first accidently, but by the sixth book, The Emerald City of Oz, of her own will. With Toto too.

NOTES

1. In film theory, “enunciation,” a linguistic borrowing, refers to the discursive markers or stylistic traces in a film signaling the presence of an author or a narrator. The “enunciator” can be a voice-over or character-narration, for example, or, as I take it to be in The Wizard of Oz, a general cinematic narrator comprising the numerous codes of the cinema (Stam et al. 95-96).

2. I should stress, however, that my concerns differ from Bettelheim’s in that my purpose is not specifically to elucidate Oedipal issues in the text. Although Oedipal questions emerge to some extent in my essay and could be developed further elsewhere, I subordinate them to the larger project of distinguishing conscious from unconscious desires generally in this film-text. The terms of my film-semiotic analysis derive primarily from recent theories of film-narratology.
3. As Rushdie notes, "Dorothy and Toto have been running down a short stretch of 'road' in the MGM studios, and this shot has been matted into a picture of emptiness. 'Real' emptiness would probably not be empty enough" (20).

4. It is a striking coincidence that Freud published _The Interpretation of Dreams_ the same year that Baum published _The Wonderful Wizard of Oz_.

5. Jane Feuer discusses the relationship between Freudian dream interpretation and dream sequences in American musicals generally. However, she invokes the relationship in order to confirm the happiness of the happy ending, not to question it. She argues that musical dream sequences, a "secondary realm," act "as a kind of exorcism, leading to the actual fulfillment of desires" in the "primary realm (waking life)" (73, 69). Thus for Freud, "Dorothy returns to a Kansas transformed by her knowledge, however imaginary, of Oz" (71). For the centrality of the relationship between the "dream-day" and the dream-contents, see Freud, chapter 5. For the argument that dreams are a fulfillment of a wish, see Freud, chapter 3.

6. In _Was_, Ryman connects the duo explicitly: Dorothy explains that she and Toto have the same name because "My mama got the two of us on the same day. So I'm called Dorothy and he's called Toto. That's short for Dorothy" (10).

WORKS CITED


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