

## There is No (such) Place Like Home: Rhetoricizing Kansas after Oz.<sup>1</sup>

By Carra Hood

### Final Scene.

Remember the last scene of *The Wizard of Oz*? Following Glinda's instructions, Dorothy closes her eyes and clicks the heels of her red slippers together three times, repeating "There's no place like home." She opens her eyes moments later, startled, to find Auntie Em, Uncle Henry, Professor Marvel, Hunk, Zeke, and Hickory standing beside her bed, smiling. Trying to comfort her, Auntie Em coos, "There, there, lie quiet now. You just had a bad dream." "No," Dorothy insists, "it wasn't a dream – it was a place." Pointing at Professor Marvel and her Uncle's three workmen, she adds, "And you – and you – and you – and you were there." But Dorothy quickly corrects herself, as if she spoke too quickly, before thinking, "you couldn't have been, could you?" Auntie Em makes a second unsuccessful attempt to calm her niece: "Oh, we dream lots of silly things when we..." Dorothy interrupts her. Emphatically, "No, Auntie Em – this was a real, truly live place. And I remember that some of it wasn't very nice but most of it was beautiful." Disappointed by her Aunt's incredulity, Dorothy pouts, "Doesn't anybody believe me?" Her Uncle assures her, patronizingly, "Of course we believe you Dorothy." The film ends with Dorothy hugging her dog Toto and Auntie Em hugging Dorothy who teary, but beaming exudes, "Oh, 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!"

I watched *The Wizard of Oz* every year of my childhood when it was broadcast on television – for this ending. I cried; tears welled up at precisely the same point in the final scene every year: when Glinda waves her wand over Dorothy, and Dorothy, cradling Toto, begins reciting the magic words that transport her from Oz back to Kansas. There's no place like home. There's no place like home. There's no place like *home*?

Home is not always the best of places, even for Dorothy. The sparkling, clean, bountiful, magical Oz certainly outdoes gray, dusty, meager, stormy Kansas. Besides, the

citizens of Oz treat Dorothy like a Queen; in Kansas, Dorothy further burdens an already burdened household. So why does Dorothy yearn for Kansas when she has the opportunity to thrive and laugh and live comfortably in Oz? Well, it's not because of love. The citizens of Oz love Dorothy, and she loves them. In the final scene, the Cowardly Lion tries to persuade Dorothy to "stay with us" because "we all love you," and "we don't want you to go." Dorothy replies that "it's going to be so hard to say goodbye"; to her companions and the citizens of Oz, she explains, "I love you all, too." So it's not because of love, and it's not because Kansas is a particularly desirable place.

In response to the Lion's appeal to "stay with us," Dorothy, apologetically, refuses, "Oh, that's very kind of you – but this could never be like Kansas." She adds that "Auntie Em must have stopped wondering what happened to me by now." These two passages reveal Dorothy's reasoning. One, there's *no place* like *home* since Oz can never be like Kansas, and Kansas can never be, like Oz, *no place*. Two, there's *no place* like home since, at home, Auntie Em will wonder what happens to her, but if Dorothy stays in Oz, Auntie Em will stop wondering. In other words, Kansas is both place and what the place represents (home); Oz is a place; however, Oz can only represent a negation (*no place, not home, not like home*).

Dorothy's second reason revisits the cliché "out of sight; out of mind." She does not want, and perhaps fears, being out of her Aunt's mind. Staying in Oz, she would be. Dorothy sees her Aunt when she is away from Kansas with the help of a crystal ball. However, Oz can never be like home since Auntie Em can see Dorothy only when Dorothy is in Kansas. This characteristic limitation defines home for Dorothy and, throughout *The Wizard of Oz*, seems more important than the two most common associations with home: familiarity and love. Although Dorothy's companion's matter, as does their love for each other, Auntie Em and Uncle Henry matter differently. Unlike Dorothy's companions, her Aunt and Uncle live in Kansas and are not transported with her to Oz. Auntie Em cannot imagine a "real, truly live place" like Oz, and Dorothy cannot imagine her Aunt and Uncle in such a place. When Dorothy sets her sights on returning to Kansas, she anticipates missing her companions; however, she does not express concern or fear that they will stop worrying about her after she leaves The

Emerald City. Home is geographically fixed; for Dorothy, it's Kansas and no place (Oz) else.

Geography replicates genetics in this film; Dorothy's Aunt and Uncle, blood relatives, *like parents*, come from there, work the land there, and worry what happens to her there. The residents of Oz, like Dorothy and her companions, migrate to The Emerald City, following their dreams and the yellow brick road. Work is fun, nothing like the drudgery of farm work in the Midwest; workers smile, singing "Hahaha, Hohoho" as they perform their tasks. And no one in The Emerald City worries; there's simply nothing to worry about. Finally, Dorothy can imagine a perfectly marvelous place, a place like no place else, and no place like home. On the other hand, Kansas, an immutable given, pulls Dorothy back with the same force that the tornado threw her out – and for the same reason.

### **To Stay or to Go**

Dorothy imagines places other than Kansas. She dreams of Munchkins and witches, yellow brick roads and glistening, green palaces. She travels outside of Kansas in her mind. She experiences a full range of emotions for people and things beyond her own backyard. She likes much of what she sees there, too. Yet, home remains special. And, clearly, Dorothy comes to desire it, compulsively, in the film. By the end of *The Wizard of Oz*, she wants to return to, and vows never to ever leave again, the same drab, gray, cheerless Kansas she escapes at the beginning. Why? When what makes home special is nothing particularly special? Unlike her unhomely creation, Oz, Dorothy does not create or even choose to live in Kansas; she arrives there, an orphan, from an unidentified someplace else, under unexplained circumstances, to live with relatives as "sober gray" as their surroundings, whose hardscrabble existence has "taken the red from [their] cheeks and lips" (Baum).<sup>2</sup>

Despite its dreariness, and despite her intentional departure, Dorothy chooses to return to Kansas. In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, L. Frank Baum's Dorothy explains her decision to the Good Witch in economic terms. If she stays away, "Aunt Em will surely think something dreadful has happened to me, and that will make her put on mourning; and unless the crops are better this year than they were last, I am sure Uncle Henry cannot afford it" (Baum). So rather than the bonds of love, friendship, family, the

connection to place, or Dorothy's desire not to be forgotten, some of her reasons for returning to Kansas in the film, the antecedent text portrays a character motivated by parsimony. She seeks a way back to Kansas to prevent her Aunt and Uncle from spending their meager funds on her funeral. Dorothy anticipates feeling guilty if she remains in Oz, in other words, and she wants to avoid that at all cost; Baum's Dorothy, a thrifty child, cannot enjoy her luxurious life in The Emerald City knowing that it might cause her Aunt and Uncle financial hardship. Home, then, in this version of Dorothy's story, connects to a broader cultural narrative about the virtue of sacrifice and obligation at the expense of selfish enjoyment, happiness, and whimsy, temptations offered to Dorothy in Oz. By resisting them, Dorothy shows the worthiness of her trip; she learns an important lesson, as a result, and returns to Kansas a stronger, more moral individual than she was when she left. Baum's Dorothy inhabits a Kansas that despises waste, where even dreams must have practical uses. The ending of Baum's text, too, lacks the exuberance and emotional mushiness of the film's closing scene. Dorothy, deposited in front of her Aunt and Uncle's farmhouse, "gravely" explains to her Aunt that she has just returned "from the Land of Oz," adding "Aunt Em! I'm so glad to be at home again!" (Baum).

I shared Dorothy's stoicism and her frugality when I was a child; my parents instilled these values, too. "Picking yourself up by your bootstraps" and "putting something away for a rainy day" had purposes; to do both could offer a buffer against disaster during hard times and could provide a means to take advantage of unexpected opportunities in the future. And although I associate these lessons with home, I would not have cried reading the last page of the book for the same reason that I cried watching the final scene of the film. The final scene of the film muddies its domesticating message with emotional content. All that talk about love confuses a child viewer into believing that, even if it does not always seem so – and it did not for Dorothy or for me – home is the sole place of love, pure and unconditional love, the sort of love that cannot be found anywhere else. I cried not because I believed this moral but because I thought that I should.

The ending of Baum's text lacks the film's ambiguity and, as a result, also lacks its emotional content. Dorothy makes a calculated, fiscal decision to return home; neither Aunt Em nor Dorothy utters the word "love" when they reunite. Dorothy explains

“gravely” – as if returning constitutes her interment – that she was gone, now she’s back, and she’s glad to be home. Like all repentant prodigals, Dorothy returns to the place she belongs. That’s that, and life goes on as before. Baum intends to eliminate a moral from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; in the “Introduction,” he points out that the story “aspires to being a modernized fairy tale,” and therefore, he “gladly dispenses” with “devis[ing]...a fearsome moral” ending (Baum).<sup>3</sup> He accomplishes this goal to an extent. The moral to the story convention is absent from the book’s ending. In particular, Glinda facilitates Dorothy’s return to Kansas, without requiring the girl to repeat what she learns from her travels to Oz. However, the film reintroduces a moral. In response to Glinda’s remark that Dorothy “had to learn...for herself,” the Tin Man asks, “What have you learned, Dorothy?” She replies with the moral to the film: “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.” Although the book does not contain these words, Baum’s Dorothy becomes the vehicle for an even harsher, lesson: stay home; there’s work to be done. In addition, Baum’s Dorothy really has no choice; home – more precisely, the obligations of home – binds her. I would have cried at this ending, empathizing with Dorothy’s plight, my own as well, saddened by the prospect of ongoing drudgery, no choices, a future identical with today. Whether a brutal realist or extremely cruel, Baum fashions Dorothy’s return to a functional home, an efficient economic unit, the place where she belongs and where she has a job to do.

The film presents a more frivolous Dorothy, a child who plays with her dog, gets in the way of working adults, and imagines other worlds. The only child in the film, adults either ignore her, coddle her, or shoo her away; unlike Baum’s Dorothy, this child does not work. At home, though, farm work has priority over Dorothy’s concerns. When she tries to tell her Aunt, her Uncle, Zeke, Hickory, and Hunk about Miss Gulch’s threat to destroy Toto, for instance, the adults, too busy to listen, brush her off; they all consider their work more important than Dorothy’s clash with the town’s “sour-faced old maid.” Her Aunt urges Dorothy to leave them alone: “Dorothy, please! We’re trying to count!” She then commands Dorothy to “stop imagining things” because she “always get[s]...into a fret over nothing,” adding “just help us out today, and find yourself a place where you won’t get into any trouble.”<sup>4</sup>

Dorothy worries (bothers) her Aunt when she is at home, chattering about trivial, non-work related, issues, so her Aunt encourages the child to go some place else, yet when Dorothy leaves, her Aunt also worries (agonizes) until, of course, Dorothy has been out of her sight for too long. This contradiction – stay here; go away or I want you where I can see you; I want you out of my sight – circumscribes the relationship between many parents and their children. Absent from the book, the contradiction – more precisely, Dorothy’s struggle with a home producing such a contradiction – frames the film version of her trip to Oz. At the beginning of the film, Dorothy tries to figure out where she can go to stay out of trouble. She asks Toto, “Do you suppose there is such a place?” After traveling there, though, she resolves that “there’s no place like home.” Home is the place for Dorothy to leave in the opening scene, yet by the end of the film, home is the place to stay.

### **New Farmhouses**

Home looks different to Dorothy at the beginning of the film than it does at the end. The physical characteristics of home remain the same from beginning to end of the film; however, in the book, Baum literalizes the transformation. Before the tornado, the farmhouse appears as sun baked and uninviting as the landscape. It “was small....[with] four walls, a floor and a roof....a rusty looking cookstove, a cupboard for the dishes, a table, three or four chairs....a big bed in one corner... and a little bed in another corner....no garret at all, and no cellar—except a small hole dug in the ground....[and] the sun blistered the paint and the rains washed it away, and now the house was as dull and gray as everything else.” Although lacking the specificity of this description, Baum explains that upon Dorothy’s return home, “sitting on the broad Kansas prairie...just before her was the new farmhouse Uncle Henry built after the cyclone had carried away the old one.” Dorothy wakes up in the final scene of the film to a new home in her mind, in fact the same physical structure she left at the beginning, after traveling with companions who resemble her Uncle’s farmhands to no place like home, vowing never “to leave here ever, ever again.” Home, and those who reside there, looks different to Dorothy because she attaches new emotional content to the place at the end of the film (represented as “the new farmhouse” in the book), emotional content

associated with Dorothy's ambiguous relationship to home: both the place to leave and the place never to leave.

Sigmund Freud considers this sort of experience uncanny. In his essay "The Uncanny," Freud describes uncanny experiences as those that produce unfamiliarity, at times frightening, within the context of "something which is secretly familiar" – that is, "which has undergone repression and then returned from it." His examples of this experience emphasize "that an uncanny affect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced," for instance, when events in a dream seem to be really occurring. In addition, uncanny experiences call up "infantile element[s]," typically associated with "the over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with material reality," as when a well-known person, place, or thing seems at once unrecognizable and strangely, or secretly, familiar.<sup>5</sup>

The uncanny, an imprecise English translation of the German *unheimlich*, contains canny (*heimlich*) content. As Freud concludes, following a lengthy analysis of their definitions, "what is *heimlich* (like home) thus comes to be *unheimlich* (not like home)." Consequently, the effaced distinction between imagination and reality means that there is none: as Dorothy insists, "No, Auntie Em – this was a real, truly live place." As well, experience of a familiar, yet strangely unfamiliar or an unfamiliar, yet strangely familiar person, place, or thing produces profound uncertainty about the material status of reality. Dorothy hesitates, although only momentarily, after identifying Professor Marvel, Hunk, Zeke, and Hickory as her companions to Oz: "And you – and you – and you – and you were there. Oh –. But you couldn't have been, could you?" They "couldn't have been" not only because they are now in Kansas but also because they remain behind in Oz, as the Wizard instructs before his departure, to "rule [The Emerald City] in my stead." Dorothy may come to appreciate all the love there is at home after she returns; however, even more importantly, there's no place like home for Dorothy after Oz since she brings enough of The Emerald City back with her to change Kansas forever, make it like new, no place like home (was) ever again.<sup>6</sup>

### **Oz-ing Home**

I have not watched *The Wizard of Oz* since writing this essay. Truthfully, I have not been able to, a resistance I can best attribute to knowing that I will not cry this time

when Glinda waves her magic wand and Dorothy starts to click her heels together. And if not tears, then what?

In her article “Strategic Credulity: Oz as Mass Cultural Parable,” Helen M. Kim, uninterested in viewers’ emotional reactions to *The Wizard of Oz*, argues that viewers – including myself, I assume – return home with Dorothy having learned that home is as constructed as Oz. This pedagogy succeeds, according to Kim, through manipulation “that must provide the means of its own subversion” (231). In other words, the resolution at the end of the film, which Kim claims inaugurates Dorothy’s power to control her own life, occurs as the result of a trick, “the film maker’s art” (225). Subverting such a trick, however – that is, acting with knowledge of the manipulation – empowers viewers only to the extent that they use what they have learned to ““escape from the real world”” (231); viewers do not acquire, as Kim would like them to, the means to change the “givenness” of and “the power at work in the ‘real world’” (230). There is no evidence that Dorothy does either. In fact, she appears more willing to capitulate at the end of the film than at the beginning; hugging Toto, and giving up trying to convince her Aunt and Uncle that Oz “was a real, truly live place,” Dorothy prefaces “there’s no place like home” with “Oh, but anyway, Toto,” a way of communicating exasperation analogous to “you’ll never understand,” or in contemporary parlance, “whatever.”<sup>7</sup>

Freud also discusses the manipulative potential of imaginative productions. Fictional stories are, he acknowledges, “a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life” – in other words, there are more possibilities to create the *unheimlich*, places not like home, in fiction – because imaginative work “contains...something that cannot be found in real life.... [but which] depends for its effect on the fact that its content is not submitted to reality-testing.” According to Freud, even fiction that “pretends to move in the world of common reality,” such as the Kansas sequences in *The Wizard of Oz*, “deceives us by promising to give us the sober truth, and then after all overstepping it.”

Audiences respond to deception, Freud concludes, “as we would have reacted to real experiences; by the time we have seen through...[the] trick it is already too late and the author has achieved his [or her] object.” A diluted achievement, however, since “we retain a feeling of dissatisfaction, a kind of grudge against the attempted deceit.” An author can deter this audience reaction, Freud suggests, by “avoid[ing] any definite

information on the point to the last,” that is, by retaining an indistinct boundary between the imaginary and the real, by mapping the *unheimlich* on the *heimlich*, another sort of trick that, because it requires readers or viewers to make their own meaning, potentially entices audiences to act as Kim theorizes, for different reasons, they do. *The Wizard of Oz* is just this sort of text.<sup>8</sup>

If it were not, viewers would resent “the film maker’s art” and “retain...a kind of grudge” against the aesthetic decision for Dorothy to return to Kansas. Instead, the ending of the film produces an uncanny difference evident in the intentional polysemy of Dorothy’s mantra. “There’s no place like home” carries her back to Auntie Em and Uncle Henry’s farm, providing a magical solution to her dislocation in a magical story while also hinging Oz to home. As a result, the transporting language balances fantasy (Oz is *no place like home*) with a Kansas interpolated by Oz (*Oz is no place, there is no place like home, no place is like home, therefore, Oz is like home*). There is nothing to cry about after all; plopped back down in Kansas, Dorothy’s rhetorical skill, a demonstration that a child viewer could surely miss, conveys her successful design of a mediating framework through which to return.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Since I was a child, *The Wizard of Oz* has been my favorite film. So first I must thank L. Frank Baum for writing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and all of the individuals involved with the screenwriting, filming, production, and distribution of the movie. I am also grateful to Terry Hanson and Megan Macomber who read more than one draft of this text and patiently listened to me whine about one thing or another throughout the writing process, always encouraging me to keep on going. Without their nudges, I suspect I might have melted somewhere along the way.

<sup>2</sup> Helen M. Kim points out that the film “grounds Dorothy’s magical adventures in the land of Oz firmly in the context of ‘real’ life,” post-Depression, 1930’s America (221). In “Strategic Credulity: Oz as Mass Cultural Parable,” Kim suggests that the consumerist appeal of fantasy balances “the harsh economic realities of ‘ordinary,’ ‘everyday’ American life” at that time (221). “Nature, as represented by the land and the weather, dictates the limits circumscribing human existence. The Kansas setting represents the extreme of the natural and the unmediated, against which Dorothy’s ‘wild’ flight into the fantastic, utopian, and ultimately mass cultural realm of Oz constitutes an entry into the possibilities of the artificial, mediated, or constructed – possibilities, in other words, which provide the necessary means to critique, contest, and demystify the category of ‘the natural,’ which underpins the power of hegemony” (221). Furthermore, Kim argues that Dorothy’s trip to Oz represents a “dis-place[ment]” to “‘no place,’” offering Dorothy an (uneasy) “antidote to the inadequacies of ‘real life’” (223), inevitably empty of

meaning (229). Although I am sympathetic with Kim's position, I draw a different conclusion. I agree that Oz presents Dorothy with a new conceptual posture from which to experience "the natural;" however, I am not entirely persuaded by Kim's argument that Dorothy returns from Oz with "the necessary means to critique, contest, and demystify" Kansas. In other words, Kim and I disagree about the extent to which Oz is just a dream (Kim) or, for Dorothy, a "real, truly live place."

<sup>3</sup> Megan Macomber guided me to the connection between Baum's instruction to readers and Mark Twain's "Notice," which precedes the first chapter of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In that "Notice," Twain "orders" readers not to construct a moral; those who do so "will be banished." Baum read and admired Twain and, Macomber suspects, may have responded to Twain's writing in his series of books about Oz.

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy's trip to Oz can be interpreted as an attempt at obedience; her Aunt asks her to "find yourself a place where you won't get into any trouble," and Dorothy "finds" Oz. Leaving Kansas, then, exemplifies her good girl motives and willingness to submit to adult authority. Huck Finn, one of Dorothy's male literary precedents, informs readers at the end of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that he "reckon[s] I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest" for precisely the opposite (and gender-meaningful) reason: "because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it."

<sup>5</sup> Reference to Freud's essay is not frivolous. Published in 1925, "The Uncanny" appeared in between the publication of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and the premier of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). In other words, the essay raises issues important for understanding cultural practices and motives at that time for translation – and transformation – of book to film. Finally, Freud's first venture into literary criticism, "The Uncanny" specifically addresses the status of fairy tales, their cultural (domesticating) and psychic uses, as well as interrogates authors' ability to create or replicate "real life" experiences for readers (i.e., to produce uncanny effects).

<sup>6</sup> In her article "Strategic Credulity: Oz as Mass Cultural Parable," Kim argues that Dorothy's compulsion to return home follows from "know[ing] that as marvelous as Oz is, she, as a 'real person,' does not belong there and cannot really remain there" (225). This message, Kim insists, "registers the audience's own awareness that the marvels of Oz have been purchased entirely conditionally on the film maker's art" (225). Dorothy's return to Kansas, though, "by no means a return to the status quo or a choice of the stable 'real' over the paradoxical 'fantastic,'" resolves the film's initial conflict between Dorothy and Miss Gulch (230). According to Kim, Dorothy realizes that "the power at work in the 'real world' is...constructed, opposable, and not natural" by the end of the film (230). And viewers, who see themselves in Dorothy's position, also "learn to subvert the 'givenness' of the discourses which control their own lives" as a result of their exposure to forms of mediation (230). I am not convinced that the film teaches viewers this lesson. Nor am I convinced that the film maintains the categorical distinctions "real" and "fantastic" throughout.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy passes into Oz with her three male friends, all transients from elsewhere, looking for a place to be, untroubled by social conventions with which all of the four are uncomfortable. In *The Empress is a Man: Stories from the Life of Jose Sarria*, Michael Robert Gorman explains that this friendship appeals to gay men: "Most of us little gay boys felt as if we were growing up in black and white Kansas, when what we really

wanted was to live in that Technicolor place where people wear funny hats and pink taffeta and burst into song and dance whenever they wanted without anyone thinking it was weird or sissy” (255). The appeal of Dorothy and Oz in gay male culture is also historical since Judy Garland’s death coincided with the riot at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, the event that has come to signify the beginning of the gay rights movement in the United States. Furthermore, the use of “friend of Dorothy” to signal homosexuality embeds a rhetorical connection between gay culture and the character Garland played in the film. A friend of Dorothy, never at home in a MidWest like that depicted in the film, according to Gorman, imagines a home like Oz to replace a Kansas just as soon forgotten and left behind forever. Dorothy’s resolution, conceptual layering that invests “there’s no place like home” with more than one meaning, enables her return, however, does not facilitate her friends’ return to a MidWestern home. However, her friends employ the same rhetorical logic that informs Dorothy’s return to create another home. “Friend of Dorothy” works by the same layering mechanism that, in this case, instantiates agency in the speaker and marks the audience as friend or not friend. A friend will read “friend of Dorothy” as disclosure of homosexuality, bonding speaker and audience through language. However, an audience that does not understand the reference will also, presumably, not read the disclosure. In this case, the language operates as a form of rhetorical prophylaxis: an audience that doesn’t “get it” will not know enough to threaten, to physically harm, or to slander the speaker. Ultimately, “friend of Dorothy” is intended to forestall gay bashing; an audience that doesn’t recognize Dorothy’s friends will, therefore, leave them alone. But no figure of speech perfectly predicts audience behavior; an audience that doesn’t “get it” could still engage in gay bashing. Finally, “friend of Dorothy,” can be read as a vexing or unsettling rhetorical marker since it constructs a female child as the protector of adult gay men. Just this implication, though, furthers success of the rhetoric in dangerous social situations, the type of situations that might erupt in Kansas but that would definitely not, in Oz. Dorothy’s resolution, therefore, which does not enable her friends’ transport back to Kansas, where they would continue to need her aid, fixes their place in Oz where her protection is not necessary, where her friends can rule in the Wizard’s place after her departure. Dorothy’s insistence to Auntie Em that Oz is a “real, truly live place” carries crucial social meaning in this context. Dorothy’s resolution permits her to remake Kansas, after experiencing Oz, as her (new) home. Her friends, though, who are not similarly compelled to return, find in Oz an opportunity to create new homes that offer what Kansas does not, safety – once the Wicked Witch is dead, of course – and a place where they fit in. Clearly, this topic deserves more substantial critical treatment than I can offer here. I anticipate that Dee Michel’s book-in-progress on the appeal of *The Wizard of Oz* for gay boys and men (see <http://www.umass.edu/umhome/events/articles/22379.php>) will contain additional insights into the issues that I have raised.

<sup>8</sup> Salman Rushdie explains in *The Wizard of Oz*, that the film appeals to cultural migrants and those, like him, in forcible exile. Dorothy creates an Oz-ic lens for Kansas and, in Rushdie’s reading, shows up the adults in her life. She takes control of her destiny and, consequently, upon returning, remakes home, by reimagining Kansas. Her experience, therefore, supports Rushdie’s nuanced interpretation (“there is no longer any such place as home: except, of course, for the home we make”) of what she actually says.

---

Furthermore, my contention that Dorothy deploys Oz to mediate Kansas offers a general mechanism for Rushdie's recontextualized one. To Rushdie, Dorothy represents exilicity, and as a result, the experience of this cipher for all forms of difference models migrants' both in and outside their homelands not only because Mumbai is not London, for example, but also because an exile's home is not fully London, or Mumbai, either. Rushdie's specific use of the film to metaphorize this uncanny effect of migrancy, an effect exceeding the explanatory reach of cultural hybridity, suggests that the homes exiles "make for [them]selves" alter areas larger than the individual residential spaces they call home. Similarly, because Kansas appears as homely as it does unhomely, America too, after Dorothy returns from Oz, she might have uttered the line marking her arrival in Oz at the end of the film: "Toto – I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." If the final scene is read as Rushdie encourages, "there's no place like home" translates Kansas, through its uncanny double, as "the home we make...in Oz," which he emphasizes "is anywhere, and everywhere, except the place from which we began" (57).

### **Bibliography**

- Baum, L. Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Chicago, 1900. Project Gutenberg. 29 Mar. 2004. 3 May 2007 <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext93/wizoz10h.htm>.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." 1925. Trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth, 1953. Laurel Amtower: Professor of English and Comparative Literature at San Diego State University Website. 27 Apr. 2007 <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/uncanny.html>.
- Gorman, Michael Robert. *The Empress is a Man: Stories from the Life of Jose Sarria*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1998.
- Kim, Helen M. "Strategic Credulity: Oz as Mass Cultural Parable." *Cultural Critique* 33 (1996): 213-233. JSTOR. The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Lib., Pomona, NJ. 12 May 2007 <http://www.jstor.org>.
- Langley, Noel, Florence Ryerson, and Edgar Allen Woolf. *The Wizard of Oz*. 3 May 2007 [http://www.un-official.com/The\\_Daily\\_Script/ms\\_wizoz.htm](http://www.un-official.com/The_Daily_Script/ms_wizoz.htm).
- Rushdie, Salman. *The Wizard of Oz*. London: British Film Institute, 1992.
- Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. NY: Webster, 1885. Project Gutenberg. 20 Aug. 2006. 3 June 2007 <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/76/76-h/76-h.htm>.
- University of Massachusetts Library. "Oz Books, the Movie, Gay Men, Oh My!: Aspects of Oz from the Collection of Dee Michel." University of Massachusetts Library News 29 Sept. 2005. 3 Aug. 2007 <http://www.umass.edu/umhome/events/articles/22379.php>.