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In Defense of Adaptation: Aestheticism versus Functionalism in the Wicked Franchise

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IN DEFENSE OF ADAPTATION: AESTHETICISM VERSUS FUNCTIONALISM IN
THE WICKED FRANCHISE

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

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* * * * *

Western Kentucky University
2012

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ABSTRACT

This project serves as an extended case study on the adaptability of an aesthetic text into a popular text. It focuses on Gregory Maguire's original novel *Wicked*, which drew its inspiration from the universally known land of Oz, and the subsequent stage adaptation by the same name. The first half of the project involves an extensive text-to-stage analysis, delineating the differences between the two mediums. The second half of the project involves an examination of the sequels to the original novel as commodities. Each of the novels is a literary text created for a narrower audience, while the popular text of the musical was created for a wider audience. Each medium of the story, however, functions with its own purpose and can engage in a conversation with the other mediums. The successful transformation of the novel to the musical proves that aesthetic and functional texts can apply to separate yet convergent (or intersecting) audiences, disproving the theory that popular texts are somehow inferior to aesthetic texts.

Keywords: *Wicked*, aestheticism, functionalism, popular culture, commodities, sequels

Dedicated to my friends and family

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This project would not have been possible without the help of my advisors, Dr. Anthony Harkins and Professor Tracey Moore. Their dedication to the project pushed me to exceed my own goals for myself. Their insight and wisdom was endlessly helpful, and because of them I have been able to look at the project from perspectives I never would have thought of.

Thanks also to my friends and family for being a continuous force of support that has sustained me during this oftentimes rigorous process. Your encouragement means everything.

VITA

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Major Field: Popular Culture Studies

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The world of Oz has become such a staple in the realm of common American knowledge. The tradition began with L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the first of a thirteen-book children's series, which was published in 1900. Oz has been recreated and reimagined over and over again since then, most popularly in the 1939 MGM movie *The Wizard of Oz*, and again in other adaptations such as the 1978 movie *The Wiz* and the 2005 movie *The Muppets' Wizard of Oz*. The upcoming 2013 film *Oz the Great and Powerful*, a precursor to *The Wizard of Oz*, reinforces society's recurrent emotional attachment to the franchise. The most notable Oz adaptation of late is Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel *Wicked* and its subsequent 2003 musical adaptation of the same name. Maguire's novel tells the story of Elphaba, otherwise known as the Wicked Witch of the West. The audience witnesses her less-than-perfect childhood, her stint at boarding school, her torrid love affair with a married man, and her questionable political campaigns, which are ultimately the cause of her downfall. The musical, however, markets itself more heavily as the precursor to *The Wizard of Oz* movie; in fact, one of its taglines is "so much happened before Dorothy dropped in. . ." The musical focuses mainly on the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda (the Good Witch of the North), based upon Maguire's pairing of the two as college roommates, and it has a much more

upbeat tone than the novel. Though some fans tout one medium as inherently “better” than the other, I neither had nor have such opinions.

Since I first read Gregory Maguire’s novel *Wicked* as a sophomore in high school, I was hooked. I read the novel in preparation for seeing the musical for the first time on Broadway. As a current fifth-year college senior, I recall at the time having no idea how Maguire’s long-winded, often sexually graphic novel could ever be adapted into an appropriate or “traditional” musical. After both reading the novel and seeing the musical, I fell in love with both mediums of the original text. I enjoyed the novel’s characterization of Elphaba in relation to the Wicked Witch that I knew from the 1939 film. I had always thought her character to be not fully developed, and Maguire’s novel filled in the film’s gaps, explaining the Witch’s motivation behind her hatred for Dorothy. Similarly, the musical’s breathtaking score stole my heart from the first measure, and the focus on Glinda and Elphaba’s friendship reminded me of some of my own friendships. In the time since my sophomore year of high school, I have read the novel countless times and have seen the musical four times—twice in Nashville, once in Chicago, and once in New York City at the Gershwin Theatre, which has been the permanent home of the Broadway production since 2003.

When considering possible Honors capstone projects, however, *Wicked* did not immediately come to mind. I knew that I wanted to combine my two majors in some way, but English Literature and Popular Culture Studies at first did not seem to meld together as much as I would have liked. In an effort to help me narrow my topic, a friend asked me to list my favorite books, and naturally *Wicked* made the top of the list. Of course, I was thrilled at the idea, and after talking to Dr. Harkins, head of the Popular Culture

Studies major, I was convinced that the project was possible. From the beginning, I wanted to complete a text-to-stage analysis of the transformation of the novel to the musical. This would encompass the English aspect of the project, and I could examine each medium's audience to fulfill the Pop Culture aspect. I also wanted to examine Maguire's two sequels to his original novel: *Son of a Witch* and *A Lion Among Men*, which make up the series *The Wicked Years*. Because these novels are vastly different than the musical, I proposed examining them as a means of commodification, or the making and remaking of products for a particular fan base, and as an extension of Maguire's world for avid fans of the first novel.

During the course of the three semesters I have worked on my thesis, I have come to appreciate the disciplines of English and Pop Culture as two different lenses through which I can view my project. In order to record an accurate perception of the adaptation process and how it relates to audience members, I required the close reading skills that I have honed in my English courses. I was able to examine characters and themes within the novels and the musical, and I applied knowledge learned in my Pop Culture courses to examine the reasons for the differences and similarities between each medium's audience reception. This capstone project has also been a component of the senior seminar course for my Popular Culture Studies major. Receiving feedback from my fellow Popular Culture students has been a vital asset to the completion of my project.

The final project evolved into an analysis of a cross-media adaptation that has separate yet convergent¹ audiences. I define the original novel and the successive novels in *The Wicked Years* as examples of aesthetic texts, which have much more structure but

¹ Convergent refers to "intersecting" here. In other words, the audiences of the two mediums have some overlap.

yet less intrinsic commercial appeal. On the other hand, I define the musical as an example of a functional text, which has more room for interpretation and is much more popular among audiences worldwide. In their own way, each medium is a commodity—or anything produced for consumer use—and has an exchange value, or monetary worth, and a use value, or usefulness to the consumer (Strinati 51). I argue that the musical is a successful adaptation and maintains the essence of Maguire’s vision of Oz, refuting the common misconception that popular works are somehow less worthy than aesthetic works.

CHAPTER 2

EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT

When I began entertaining ideas for my capstone project during my junior year, as stated above, I knew that I wanted my project to involve *Wicked* in some capacity. The idea of a text-to-stage analysis appealed to me from the beginning, but I knew that I needed another component to add to my analysis. The classes in my marketing minor made me consider the reasons for the overwhelming success of the musical—what had the creators of the musical done to deserve such success? I then determined to examine the marketing tactics specific to each medium: the novel and the musical. I asked Dr. Allan Hall of the Marketing Department to be my first reader and started making progress on this aspect of the project.

However, along the way, I discovered that I was more interested in the audience's interaction with the texts than the marketers' interaction with the audience. After discussing my proposal with Dr. Harkins, I realized that I wanted to approach the project through a Pop Culture lens. I then revised and resubmitted my proposal to the Honors College. The switch from Marketing to Pop Culture also involved a shift in my second reader; Dr. Harkins became my first reader, and Professor Moore of the theatre department became my second reader. Both of my readers have provided me with extremely beneficial advice. Dr. Harkins pushed me to find the answer to the ever-present

question in academic arguments: “So what?” Professor Moore has provided me with insider information about the theatre industry that an English and Pop Culture double major would not otherwise know.

Reflecting back on the evolution of my project, I realize that my current project still involves marketing, only viewed from a slightly different angle. Though now my project does not involve marketing plans, it does consider how the authors and creators of the musical appealed to their target audiences. Marketers are comparable to the middlemen of the culture industry, but they are only judged successful if the actual final product appeals to its audience. My project essentially argues that the creators of the *Wicked* novels and musical were successful at marketing their own work directly to their audiences.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In order to complete a comprehensive study on both each separate medium and the dynamics of their relationships, I completed in-depth analyses of all four individual texts: Gregory Maguire's *Wicked*, *Son of a Witch*, and *A Lion Among Men*, and the libretto from the musical *Wicked*. I then completed extensive comparisons between the original novel in the series and the musical to develop a text-to-stage analysis. My annotations in each novel and in the libretto helped me organize my thoughts. More often than not, I grouped together *Son of a Witch* and *A Lion Among Men* in my analysis, because they are both sequels and together demonstrate the function of the sequels: to expand the franchise of the original text and broaden the audience's knowledge of a familiar universe. All of these primary sources provided me firsthand examples that I could quote within my paper to illustrate concrete examples of my abstract arguments.

To meet my secondary objective of gaining an industry perspective on the musical adaptation process, I relied on several books that documented the conception and production of the musical. This list of books includes David Cote's *Wicked: The Grimmerie*, which took its name from the book of spells that appears in both the novels and the musical. This book was marketed as a behind-the-scenes look at the musical. Though it was written mainly for curious fans, the book provided insight into the sets,

costumes, and characters of the musical. Paul Laird's book, *Wicked: A Musical Biography*, outlines the creation of the musical, including its adaptation from Maguire's novel and its relationship to the 1939 film. I also used Carol de Giere's book, *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from Godspell to Wicked*, concentrating on the section of the book about his work as the composer for *Wicked*. All of these sources provided excellent background on the adaptation and production of the musical; in fact, most of them quoted directly from those people involved in the process. Quotes from Winnie Holzman and Stephen Schwartz, the show's creators, or even from Gregory Maguire himself, certainly added another dimension to my research. It is one thing to discuss the adaptation process from a removed perspective, but it is quite another to be able to validate your own opinions with the opinions of the creators of each medium.

I was also able to attend the musical for my fourth time while writing my thesis. During this viewing, I was able to pay attention to things I had previously not picked up on. For instance, I realized that the musical had successfully condensed almost one hundred pages of the novel's material concerning Elphaba's childhood into approximately two minutes on stage. I found their method of doing so—through a summarizing scene that borrowed heavily from the novel—to be ingenious. I also considered the relationship between the book and the musical in more detail than I had in the past. I reread the novel right before viewing the musical, so the differences were fresh in my mind. This helped me to write my text-to-stage analysis, bringing to life the differences that previously existed only on paper.

In order to validate my presumptions about the audiences of each medium, I analyzed fan-written discussion boards on Gregory Maguire's website. I used three separate threads that focused on the opinions of fans who had both read the novel and seen the musical. I wanted to use fans' thoughts to validate my own claims about audience behavior. I also wanted to analyze whether there was an overwhelming majority of fans who liked or disliked one particular medium as compared to the other. I found instead that there was an equal distribution of fans in three categories: those who liked the musical and disliked the novel, those who liked the novel and disliked the musical, and those who liked both mediums.

I also relied on writings by cultural and pop culture theorists, including Karl Marx, John Fiske, Theodor Adorno, Paul Willis, and Henry Jenkins, to strengthen my argument as it related to the pop culture aspect of my project. I applied these theorists' works to the behavior of the audience. For example, in my argument about the cyclic relationship between consumer and producer as it relates to control in the use of commodities, I used Karl Marx's ideas on exchange and use value, Paul Willis' idea of audience interpretation, and John Fiske and Henry Jenkins' argument that there exists a constant struggle for power in this relationship. In effect, my thesis includes the application of popular culture theorists as it relates to my own argument.

Once I had finished compiling all of my research, which included other texts and resources not mentioned above, I realized I had a considerable amount of material. In order to better organize my thoughts, I constructed an extensive outline, which helped me tremendously during the writing process. Throughout the writing process, both my first

and second readers, Dr. Harkins and Professor Moore, were endlessly helpful by providing thoughtful insight on various stages of my project.

CHAPTER 4

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Throughout the period of the completion of my capstone project, I faced complications that correlated with the characteristics of my project. Some of the challenges related to the literature aspect of my project, others related to the Popular Culture side of my work, and still more related to the nature of my subject matter.

In regards to the literature aspect, upon researching *Wicked*, I found that not much previous scholarship existed on the themes and issues either the novel or the musical raise. This lack of information is due to the recent nature of each medium—the novel was first published seventeen years ago, and the musical was released nine years ago. This is a short period of time in the realm of academic research, and as a result most of the few articles or information I could find about *Wicked* revolved around one subject: the musical's queer undertones in the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda. I found little to no research on any of the novels in *The Wicked Years*. I was therefore required to analyze the novels' characters, themes, and political and social commentary without significant academic validation. However, I found that not having prior research to go on gave me an unbiased perspective on the arguments I have made.

The bulk of my research consists of primary resources, including four novels, each about four hundred pages long, and the musical's libretto, which is about seventy

pages long. Once I had compiled my annotations, the result was a thirty-page outline. When I started writing my thesis, I found that one page of outlined material equaled three to five typed pages, which would make a ninety- to one-hundred-and-fifty-page project! Furthermore, I realized that a lot of the information I had gathered, though worthy of noting for my own benefit, was not relevant to my argument. To combat this issue, I began eliminating those ideas that did not provide examples for or corroborate my argument. For example, I initially found Maguire's fixation with language and its conventions and limitations to be very intriguing. He wove this theme throughout all three novels. In the third novel, the main character grew up without language; once he learns it, he inserts the word "very" between every other word because he thinks that is proper. The novels also posit on the words "good" and "evil" and all permutations of each word. This carries over to the musical through the song titles, many of which include some variation of the word "good" or "evil." The musical also constructs a new language that uses words like proudlied, disgusticified, demanderating, scandalacious, hideodeous, graditution, Oz-speed, moodified, Ozmopolitan, decipherate, congratulotions, braverism, horrendible, discoverates, desponsdiary, and differentiations. ("Libretto") I quickly realized, however, that anecdotes such as these, though relevant to *Wicked*, were not relevant to my overall argument. I succeeded in condensing my project to roughly fifty pages, which I feel is a length that expresses my argument to its full extent without being overwrought with excessive examples and side notes.

Relating to the other aspect of my project, one of the tricky parts of popular culture studies is its constant changing nature. It seems almost as soon as a scholar examines and records a new popular practice or subculture, the article becomes outdated

even before it is published. This applied to some of my theoretical sources as well. I read Theodor Adorno's book *Aesthetic Theory* and his article "Culture Industry Reconsidered", both of which were written in the 1960s; John Fiske's article "Popular Discrimination," first published in 1989; Henry Jenkins' 2012 blog "If It Doesn't Spread, It's Dead (Part Six): Spreadable Content"; and Paul Willis' article "Symbolic Creativity," which was first published in 1990. Henry Jenkins' recent work notwithstanding, most of the texts I used were at least ten years old. Especially in our media-rich culture, ten years leaves ample room for change. Therefore, I had to interpret older popular culture texts in a way that related to my own research. I took the theorems and practices of these articles and applied them to *Wicked*, its transformation between mediums, and each medium's relationship to its audience.

Another common issue for me when writing about something related to pop culture involves being what theorist Henry Jenkins terms an "aca-fan": an academic fan. Many times, pop culture academics write about a subculture with which they identify or a fandom in which they participate. One of the biggest challenges such a professional faces is the necessity to overcome their own personal investment in their research and analyze the topic at hand from a neutral viewpoint. My own project involved a topic which had permeated my life for years prior to my thesis. I had read the original novel countless times, had seen the musical three times, listened to the soundtrack on a regular basis, and had even purchased *The Grimmerie* before I had any idea I would be writing my thesis on *Wicked*. While writing my thesis, I knew that I had to divorce my fandom from the need to present an unbiased perspective on the topic, and I feel confident that I was able to do this.

After extensive research on one theatrical production, I have much more appreciation for the theatre industry. At the beginning of the project, I aimed to personally interview Winnie Holzman, creator of the musical's libretto, and author Gregory Maguire, to get a first-hand perspective on my research. I first sought out Winnie Holzman via email and was politely rejected by her personal assistant. I did not want any first-hand research to appear one-sided, so I did not pursue an interview with Gregory Maguire. However, both Winnie Holzman's assistant and Professor Moore suggested reading books about the musical's production. I realized that the authors of these books had interviewed not only Gregory Maguire and Winnie Holzman, but also people like Marc Platt, the musical's producer, composer Stephen Schwartz, and director Joe Mantello, to name a few. Most of the questions I would have asked of them were already answered for me, in print and ready to use as quotes to support my arguments. By using these books as the foundation for my research, I overcame the challenge of not being able to personally interview the creators of each text.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTION

Throughout the course of my education at Western Kentucky University, the Honors College has provided me with methods of applying my studies in ways I would have never thought possible. Four years ago, I could never have imagined writing my senior thesis on *Wicked*—frankly, I would have laughed at the idea. But by doing so, I was able to transfer my knowledge of English and Popular Culture Studies into a culminating project that fuses the two together in inseparable ways.

My capstone project will stay with me for the years to come, whatever path I choose to take. My desired career path involves becoming a book editor in a mid-sized publishing house. I strongly believe that my majors will be of equal importance toward this goal: English with the obvious skills of composition, style, and grammar, and Popular Culture with the ability to understand human behavior as it relates to purchasing decisions. My thesis is in effect an extended case study that proves my knowledge of both facets of my degree. If I can explain why the novel is an effective aesthetic text, and why the more commercial musical has continually sold out shows, I would be able to prove to a future supervisor why I stand behind a specific book project that I think our company should commission.

My experiences with this project would also apply to any continued education I may pursue. As it stands now, my thesis explores *Wicked*—both the novel and the musical—as part of the overarching world of Oz, originally created by author L. Frank Baum. However, there are countless other adaptations that take place in this world that is so well-known and beloved. As one of the students in my Pop Culture senior seminar course noted, Oz is a distinctly American story and is permanently ingrained in our culture. *Wicked* is only the tip of the iceberg; there are countless other films, television shows, novels, stage adaptations, games, and comics that occur in Oz. This world is referenced intertextually in even more texts. In the future, I could expand my current research to include these adaptations and intertextuality to determine the lasting hold this magical universe has on society.

My thesis has also prepared me for possible graduate study by acclimating me to the writing and presentation of academic work. Writing a fifty-page thesis is something most college graduates cannot claim to have done. I have succeeded in combining four novels, one libretto, and roughly fifteen sources relating to either the play or popular culture theory, into a work of scholarship on a previously uncharted topic. With my thesis, I have proven that I can engage in a conversation about texts that are relevant to society.

I was also able to further my experience with defending my research by traveling to the Kentucky Honors Roundtable conference in October, which was held at Murray State University. I presented the first part of my thesis to Honors students from across the state. More participants attended my presentation than many other presentations, which substantiates my argument about the curiosity surrounding Oz and everything that relates

to it. The high level of interest reassured me of the relevance of my research.

Furthermore, being able to present my findings in a supportive academic setting gave me the confidence I will need to do the same in graduate school in the future.

Overall, I am proud of my efforts and the final product of my thesis. Not only is this project a testament of my dedication to the furthering of my in-class studies, but I have also learned valuable “real-world” applications along the way. I am confident in my ability to use this project to my advantage in life after graduation, and I am thankful for the opportunity to pursue and complete this project.

CHAPTER 6

ARGUMENT

Adaptations are an unavoidable reality in our modern-day media culture and are the nature of pop culture today. The vast majority of television shows, novels, movies, etc.,² are at the very least loosely based on another text. The hugely successful musical *Wicked* is no exception. With the book by Winnie Holzman and the music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, the production first appeared in 2003 and is based upon the 1939 film *Wizard of Oz* and Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel *Wicked*, which is in turn based upon L. Frank Baum's children's book series of the early 1900s. Linda Hutcheon's article "Beginning to Theorize Adaptation" indicates that the cyclic nature of storytelling is arguably "so much a part of Western culture that . . . [it] affirm[s] Walter Benjamin's insight that 'storytelling is always the art of repeating stories'" (2).

The recurrent popularity of all things Oz is indicative of its widespread appeal to multiple, varied audiences. Most Americans first became familiar with Oz from the 1939 film, and since then, Oz has become a universally known aspect of popular culture. As a testament to its popularity, the musical grosses approximately \$1.6 million per week. (Broadway Grosses)

² Hereafter, all media will be referred to as "texts."

Each retelling or repurposing of the world of Oz appeals to a slightly different audience. Maguire's original novel appeals to a smaller audience that is attracted to Oz's social and political aspects. The novel *Wicked* is the first in a trilogy of novels, which include *Son of a Witch* and *A Lion Among Men*. These successive books continue the *Wicked* franchise as was established with the first novel and appeal to the same audience. The musical, however, appeals to a broader audience that is attracted to the character dynamics and broader themes.

The biggest difference between Gregory Maguire's trilogy of novels and *Wicked* the musical is the maturity level of the content. Maguire's novels incorporate graphic sex scenes, adultery, and murder; the novel's "heroes" must grapple with the human capacity for evil. The musical, on the other hand, is less conflicted and more straightforward; the musical's heroes are inherently good, no matter how society labels them. The reasons for these differences between mediums are multifaceted. Obviously, a novel has a seemingly infinite number of pages, while a musical has to reach its audience within approximately two to two and a half hours, most of which time consists of music. These time constraints force the musical's writers to choose themes and characters carefully—sometimes condensing or even eliminating entire characters or story arcs—and employ scenery and costume choices to emphasize character development and thematic elements.

Furthermore, each type of medium appeals to a slightly different audience. The musical, arguably more commercial and family-friendly than the novel, appeals to a broader audience. The novels, however, appeal to a smaller group of people who are interested in the novel's political and social commentary. Popular culture scholar John Fiske would argue that this disparity is an example of the difference between aestheticism

and functionalism. Aesthetic texts are fixed and unwavering in content; in his article “Popular Discrimination,” Fiske explains that “the reader of the aesthetic text attempts to read it on *its* terms, to subjugate him- or herself to its aesthetic discipline. The reader reveres the text” (217). Aestheticism allows for far less interpretation, and Maguire’s novel leaves little room for an audience’s repurposing; rather, its themes are meant for internal examination only. Aesthetic texts are also much more structured. Even though the novel may be ambiguous in content, the audience’s interpretation is largely influenced by the medium’s limitations on possible outcomes. The musical, on the other hand, is an example of a functional, popular text, which allows the viewer to “[hold] no such reverence for the text, but [to view] it as a resource to be used at will” (Fiske 217). Works such as *Wicked* the musical leave room for interpretation on the part of the creators and the viewers. By the nature of the medium, no performance of the musical is exactly the same. The directors, designers, or choreographers can add their own take on variables such as set design or dance moves, making it so that different audiences can derive different uses and functions from the musical. Not only can they interpret different meanings from different performances, but audiences can also dress up as their favorite characters when they attend the musical. Audiences can also take the musical out of the theatre and into the home by purchasing paraphernalia such as sheet music and cast albums. Consumers have the ability to sing along with the soundtracks they bring into their home, adding a performative element to their interpretation of the text. Either way, popular texts allow their audience to make personal, often tangible meanings out of the text, rather than simply interpreting the words on a page as with the more aesthetic novel.

The audience mobility between the two mediums disproves a common misconception that popular texts are somehow “less worthy” than their aesthetic source texts. When the novel was transposed into musical form, “not only [were] audiences already familiar with the ‘franchise’ . . . attracted to the new ‘repurposing’, but new consumers [were] also . . . created” (Hutcheon 5). Some fans decided to read the novel after watching the musical, and some did the reverse. Though the two mediums are strikingly different, they each serve their own purpose. The creators of the musical bottled the essence of the original novel and thus closed the gap between audiences. In a broader sense, this indicates that, if done correctly, aesthetic and functional texts can overlap, intertwine, and even cause conversations between the texts and their separate and convergent audiences.

Through an extensive text-to-stage analysis of the original novel to the musical and an examination of each medium as commodity, I will argue that the *Wicked* franchise is an example of effectively appealing to both separate and concurrent audiences. The use of the two opposing mediums serves as an example of the successful repurposing of an aesthetic text to create a more popular, accessible text.

CHAPTER 7

TEXT-TO-STAGE ANALYSIS

My text-to-stage analysis of Gregory Maguire's first novel in the series to the musical will compare the two mediums and analyze the reworking of a story for a specific purpose and audience. Maguire's original novel is, I argue, an aesthetic text, which Theodor Adorno defines in his book "Aesthetic Theory" as not measured on likability, but rather by the "correct organization of the whole" (11-12). The novel as a medium has strict structural limitations; once in print, its content cannot change unless it goes through a reprinting. *Wicked* the novel is meant to provoke examination, not interpretation. It was written for a smaller niche group of educated, politically aware readers who would be able to examine the ambiguities inherent within the narrative.

The musical, on the other hand, is a popular text, which Janice Radway in *Reading the Romance* indicates is read "as escape, as something enjoyed but not assumed to have much . . . for you to *use*" (89). Functional texts are more straightforward in their meaning, making the text much more accessible to a wider audience. The musical's audience is indeed much larger than the novel's audience. According to an article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, *Wicked* the novel has sold 4 million copies. However, 3.3 million of those copies were sold after the musical's 2003 debut. Thus, the novel owes its "popularity" to the popular text of the musical, which has been seen by 5.5 million people

on Broadway and an additional 8.6 million people on tour in North America. These numbers do not include the musical's international production, so the total number of viewers is much higher. (Ebersson) The musical's narrative appeals to a range of ages from preteens to the elderly, and as a functional text, it allows for more interpretation than examination. Though the musical contains remnants of the novel's political and social commentary, it instead focuses on the relationships and familiar characters to which its target audience can relate. This analysis will focus on the major characters and themes in each version and how each medium used them for their own specific purpose.

Both Gregory Maguire's novel and the musical are based upon the story of Oz from the perspective of the "Wicked Witch of the West," as audiences know her from their previous knowledge. The audiences of both the novel and the musical, however, come to know her as "Elphaba", or "Elphie" for short. Each medium deals with her origin in similar yet different ways. In the novel, Elphaba is born in the Clock of the Time Dragon, a mysterious motif throughout the series that seems to have oracle-like abilities. The audience later learns that Elphaba is the product of an affair her mother had with the Wizard. Because the Wizard is from another world, Elphaba has the power to decipher some of the Grimmerie, a complex book of spells that no one else in Oz can read (*Wicked* 266). The Time Dragon's dwarf operator explains that she is "neither this nor that—or shall I say *both* this and that? Both of Oz and of the other world . . . You are a half-breed, you are a new breed, you are a grafted limb, you are a dangerous anomaly. Always you were drawn to the composite creatures, the broken and reassembled, for that is what you are" (*Wicked* 374). The dwarf confirms that Elphaba is half of this world, enhancing the novel's aversion to clear boundaries. With the character of Elphaba, Maguire embodies

his focus on the gray rather than the black and white. Like many literary, aesthetic texts, he leaves it up to the reader to judge Elphaba's merits and flaws.

Both mediums foster different perspectives on Elphaba's childhood in ways that correspond to their medium of text. To further explain Elphaba's origin, the book devotes a significant amount of time to Elphaba's conception and childhood. The musical, on the other hand, uses the following passage from the book as inspiration:

Lights came up on another little stage. . . . All through the rest of the scene [Frex] was off to one side . . . Melena, at home, yawned and waited, and teased her pretty hair. Along came a man who . . . had a small black bag and from it he extracted a green glass bottle. He gave it to Melena to drink, and when she had, she fell into his arms, either stupefied and drunk . . . or liberated. (*Wicked* 374-375)

In the book, Elphaba watched this scene performed by puppets on the stage of the Clock of the Time Dragon. However, the musical condensed the first one hundred or so pages of the book and instead substituted the above scene that, in her book *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from Godspell to Wicked*, Carol de Giere explains "equal[ed] a few minutes on stage" (282). This is one example of how the musical deals with strict time constraints; its creators condensed Elphaba's childhood and focused instead on the relationship between Elphaba and the Wizard. In the musical, unlike in the novel, the audience finds out the truth about Elphaba's parentage in the very beginning (Cote 143). In his book *The Grimmerie*, David Cote indicates that the Wizard, on the other hand, does not find out Elphaba is his daughter until the end of the musical, at which point "it's so devastating to him, he's willing to pack it in and leave Oz" (80). The musical ultimately focuses on the Wizard's desire to be a father, choosing to capitalize on the commercial appeal of family drama rather than detail the minutia of Elphaba's childhood as the novel does.

As with most stories, the main character must have a purpose or a “project” that is directly proportional to their self-identity as well as their social identity. In Maguire’s novel, Elphaba engages in a political revolution in which “there is a campaign but no agents, there is a game but no players. [She] has no colleagues. [She] has no self. [She] is just a muscular twitch in the larger organism” (*Wicked* 198). The novel portrays her cause as simply against the Wizard and everything he stands for. She begins to justify her anger and seeks vengeance at all costs, saying, “Sometimes I think vengeance is habit-forming too . . . I keep hoping that the Wizard will be toppled in my lifetime, and this aim seems to be at odds with happiness” (*Wicked* 343). The reader also witnesses Elphaba’s descent into madness, which Maguire portrays as a process greatly influenced by Elphaba’s lack of sleep and impending stress. Though she never commits murder, she finds that Madame Morrible, the right-hand woman of the Wizard, has already died before Elphaba can complete the task (*Wicked* 365). Though Elphaba was too late, she had already justified the murder and was fully prepared to commit the crime. News breaks throughout Oz that Elphaba killed Madame Morrible, and Elphaba feels “flattered . . . By now she was sure she *had* killed Madame Morrible. It only made sense that she had” (*Wicked* 385). Maguire thus comments on the difference—or lack thereof—of evil and the intent of evil, leaving a capable audience to weigh the causes and implications of both. Similar homicidal thoughts, however, would not work in the musical. Though the musical’s audience detests Madame Morrible, they could not justify murder, especially in the context of an essentially uplifting musical. This suggests that readers of aesthetic texts are more open to ambiguity, while popular readers are more prone to traditionality.

On the other hand, the musical condenses Elphaba's project and relative identity into a fight for Animal rights, which Maguire only touches on briefly. In the musical, she begins by rescuing a caged Lion cub and goes on to blaze her own trail in the name of speaking for those who are being stripped of the right to speak for themselves. The musical version of Elphaba is much more trusting of the Wizard than the novel version; she does not truly grasp his capacity for evil until she discovers the Wizard rendered her professor Doctor Dillamond unable to speak (Cote 167). The musical therefore essentially gives Elphaba a singular purpose because the character in the novel is too ambiguous for a two-hour stage production. Elphaba's ambiguity is instead represented in the costume that she wears in the Broadway production—a black cape and black hat that make her appear dark and drab. Though some naysayers might say the musical concedes too much of the novel's ambiguity, the musical maintained the essence of the aesthetic source text in a way that fit the constraints of its medium and appealed to a wider audience.

The novel portrays a much grittier perspective on Elphaba's role in the Oz story. Not only does the novel's version of Elphaba not achieve her primary goal of political revolution, but neither does she achieve her secondary goal of forgiveness. Elphaba's torrid romance with the character Fiyero is clouded by his marriage. While the reader originally sees only Elphaba and Fiyero and wants them to be together, they are also later introduced to his wife, Sarima, and see her side of the story. Upon Fiyero's death at the hands of political assassins, Elphaba feels responsible and embarks on an odyssey to "retire from the world after making sure of the safety of the survivors of [her] lover. To face his widow, Sarima, in guilt and responsibility, and then to remove [her]self from the

darkening world” (*Wicked* 238). Elphaba stays with her lover’s family for years upon end but never receives Sarima’s forgiveness and must learn to live with her guilt. Maguire’s novel therefore confronts controversial topics like illicit affairs and their consequences, forcing readers to look at the situation from every angle and evaluate right and wrong.

The musical, on the other hand, portrays a much more heroic version of Elphaba, who is portrayed as a self-proclaimed martyr. Unlike the Elphaba at the end of the novel, she does not go crazy or try to kill anyone. Rather, she accepts that she must leave Oz with her name tarnished. Upon departing Oz, she makes Glinda promise not to try to clear her name (Cote 175), sacrificing a good reputation to become a scapegoat. Elphaba realizes people need someone against whom they can rally, someone who will unite them in their anger. In that vein, the musical begins and ends with the song “No One Mourns the Wicked,” which spurns those “who spurn what goodnesses they are shown” (“Libretto”). Like in the novel, her death “became a celebrated event” (*Wicked* 405), and provides commentary on society’s hunger for blame. The musical, however, explains away her capacity for evil, because such ambiguity would not appeal to a wide audience. Both preteens and elderly audience members want a happy ending—to be able to decisively split good and evil. David Steffen, a fan of the musical, indicated on his blog that he “still rooted for Elphaba because she was clearly a good person with a good heart” (Steffen). Most audience members want such goodness to be rewarded rather than punished. By ridding the musical of the novel’s ambiguity, the musical appeals to its broader target audience, suggesting that popular texts must do so to succeed. Though some would argue that this “dumbs down” the text, popular texts are simply coded differently than aesthetic texts, and each text effectively relates to its audience.

Much of the novel focuses on Elphaba's unfair branding as the Wicked Witch. Not only is the novel's version of Elphaba slighted by Sarima, but she is also a lifelong outcast from society and her family mainly because of her differences in appearance: she was born with green skin. Because society labels her a witch, she begins to accept the reputation that is thrust upon her. When shown her room while visiting at Kiamo Ko, Fiyero's castle, "as far as Elphaba was concerned, it was a witch's room, and she reveled in it" (*Wicked* 256). In fact, the final section of the book, "The Murder and Its Afterlife," refers to Elphaba only as "the Witch" as a reflection of her newfound status in society. Elphaba later commiserates with a caged Cow³, who tells her, "'I've given up using my name in public . . . It's not afforded me any individual rights to have an individual name. I reserve it for my private use,'" to which Elphaba replies, 'I understand that . . . I feel the same. I'm just the Witch now'" (*Wicked* 315). Elphaba, along with many Animals, refuses to assert her identity and individuality, allowing herself to become what society deems her. Elphaba elaborates on her reasoning by commenting on the nature of the human tendency toward gossip:

People always did like to talk, didn't they? That's why I call myself a witch now: the Wicked Witch of the West, if you want the full glory of it. As long as people are going to call you a lunatic anyway, why not get the benefit of it? It liberates you from convention. (*Wicked* 357)

In effect, Elphaba allows herself to become that which society has branded her, adjusting her identity to fit society's need to maintain the status quo. Maguire's use of such social commentary appeals to those readers who are interested in examining the human condition through literature.

³ Maguire uses capitalization to distinguish between animals as we know them and the talking, human-esque Animals that inhabit Oz.

The musical's version of Elphaba must also deal with an infamous label thrust on her by society. In the musical, Elphaba becomes known as the Wicked Witch when Madame Morrible broadcasts to all of Oz the following message:

Citizens of Oz, there is an enemy that must be found and captured!
Believe nothing she says. She's evil. Responsible for the mutilation of
these poor, innocent monkeys! Her green skin is but an outward
manifestation of her twisted nature! This distortion . . . this repulsion . . .
this . . . Wicked Witch! ("Libretto")

Elphaba does not seem to accept this identity until the second act of the musical during the song "No Good Deed," which declares: "Sure, I meant well— / Well, look at what "well-meant" did . . . / Let all of Oz be agreed: / I'm Wicked through and through . . . / I promise no good deed / will I attempt to do again" (Cote 171). The musical emphasizes Elphaba's good deeds prior to this song, and with this song acknowledges Elphaba's struggle with evil. The musical's conflict with evil is an external issue; she fights against the Wizard, Madame Morrible and their regime. The novel, on the other hand, focuses on Elphaba's internal conflict—whether she is inherently good or evil, and whether or not she possesses a soul. Once again, the musical simplifies the novel to eliminate the ambiguity associated with the original novel. Popular, functional texts are more concerned with relating to their audience at large, and to do that they must streamline themes and characters as much as possible.

Overall, the inhabitants of both the musical's and the novel's version of Oz accept Elphaba's label of the "Wicked Witch." However, both readers of the novel and viewers of the musical have a slightly different perception. Both audiences approach the story with a skewed vision of Elphaba; they know her simply as the Wicked Witch. The musical's creators relied on that popular opinion, most of which was based upon the

ubiquity of the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. Stephen Schwartz indicates that the creators recognized that with the opening song they “needed to start with an extremely black and white point of view—she’s bad, she’s dead—and then by the time we get to the celebration the second time, we have an entirely different perspective on what is happening and how we feel about her” (de Giere 303). In effect, both the novel and the musical identify the black and white of the situation, and then seek to analyze the gray and turn the audience’s collective opinion on its head. By the end of each medium, however, the overwhelming majority of the audience—“anyone who is an artist . . . anyone who is of an ethnic minority, who is black or Jewish or gay, or a woman feeling she grew up in a man’s world, or anyone who grew up feeling a dissonance between who they are inside and the world around them” (de Giere 275)—can identify with Elphaba. Anyone who has ever felt lost, disenfranchised, or simply different falls under the spell of Elphaba’s appeal, both in the novel and musical. Thus, the popular text gleaned the most important aspect of its aesthetic source text, knowing that it would appeal to both kinds of audiences.

Elphaba is not the only character that is treated differently in the novel and musical. Both mediums also draw upon the character of the original “Good Witch of the North,” Glinda. The novel puts less emphasis on her character, while the musical focuses more on the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda, which naturally gives Glinda more attention. Their friendship is purposefully the focus of the musical to relate to a popular audience, who puts stock in human relationships and relates to the backstory from the 1939 film.

Both mediums start by portraying Glinda as the audience will perceive her—vain and vapid—but seek to prove her actual depth. In the beginning of the novel, Glinda seems to be the perfect pawn for Madame Morrible. She herself assumes that “she [was] meant to be a sort of living marble bust: This is Youthful Intelligence; admire her. Isn’t she lovely?” (*Wicked* 75) She begins to accept this identity and even plays up the image—at a lecture led by Madame Morrible, “she arrived early to lay claim to the upholstered chair that would best set off her own attire, and she dragged the chair over to the bookshelves so that the light from library tapers would gently fall on her” (*Wicked* 82). By accentuating her features, Glinda seems to resign herself to the idea that they are her only redeeming attribute. It’s not until she rooms with Elphaba, who pushes her to think for herself, that she discovers that she has her own opinions.

Similarly, the musical version of Glinda seems to be preoccupied with materialistic goals. A prime example is the makeover she forces upon Elphaba, instructing her as per the lyrics of the song “Popular”:

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

You’ll hang with the right cohorts
You’ll be good at sports
Know the slang you’ve got to know. (Cote 152)

It is clear where Glinda’s priorities lie in the beginning of the musical: boys, clothes, and popularity are at the top of the list. The musical accentuates her materialistic persona through costuming and scenery; her costume is pink and frilly (yet stylish), and she frequently arrives by mechanical bubble. In contrast to Elphaba’s dark, billowing cape,

designer Susan Hilferty indicates that “she thought of the two female lead characters as iconic representations of the heavens [Glinda] and earth [Elphaba]” (de Giere 332). However, the musical also acknowledges a different side of Glinda through changes in her vocal range. When Glinda is the fluffy, peppy cheerleader we all know, she sings in a soprano voice; when she is simply herself, she sings in a lower range, closer to speech. The songwriters indicate that “beneath a cheery veneer is a more complex layer of personality” (de Giere 318) by using different ranges as manifestations of Glinda’s looking-glass self. Glinda’s behavior throughout the rest of the musical will reflect her greater depth as well.

Both the novel and the musical allude to Glinda’s future; in both mediums, Glinda is left to pick up the pieces Elphaba leaves behind in Oz. In the novel, Glinda marries Sir Chuffrey and begins to work for the government, as the second book in the trilogy, *Son of a Witch*, will elaborate upon. The audience learns that Glinda means well in her leadership role but is ultimately an ineffective leader. Furthermore, Maguire provides little hope for a change in her materialistic ways:

Behind her starry-eyed love of herself there is a mind struggling to work. She does think about things . . . But when she slides back into herself, I mean into the girl who spends two hours a day curling that beautiful hair, it’s as if the thinking [Glinda] goes into some internal closet and shuts the door. (*Wicked* 109)

Glinda thus seems capable of change in the short term, but the audience of the novel is led to believe that she will revert to her old ways in the long term.

The musical, on the other hand, follows Glinda’s transition into the role that Elphaba left open for her. After Elphaba’s departure, Glinda speaks to the mob of villagers in a manner not unlike a politician: “Fellow Ozians, friends, we have been

through a frightening time. There will be other times and other things that frighten us. But if you let me, I'd like to try to help. I'd like to try to be . . . Glinda the Good" (Cote 176). At this point in the musical, she becomes defined by the title "Glinda the Good," which she accepts only because Elphaba could not remain in Oz and achieve the same aims. Thus we see Glinda, who at first "crave[d] the attention of her peers, Fiyero, and the Oz citizenry," come to "value true goodness over popularity" (de Giere 297). I would argue that the musical empowers Glinda much more so than does the novel; it gives her a purpose in life and focuses her attention on the immaterial rather than the material. Glinda's transformation in the musical provides much more hope to an audience in comparison to her static character in the novel. Glinda's overall characterization is an example of the ability of popular adaptations to expand upon their aesthetic source texts, and negates the common assumption that they detract from their source texts.

The most important aspect of Glinda's characterization, however, is her relationship with Elphaba, which also has a stronger foundation in the musical than in the novel. In the novel, Maguire hints at lesbian tendencies through subtle remarks in his prose, such as when Glinda reminisces about her collegiate days:

The Witch in fact alarmed her a little. It was not just the novelty of seeing her again, but the strange charisma Elphaba possessed, which had always puts Glinda in the shade. Also there was the thrill, basis indeterminable, which made Glinda shy, and caused her to rush her words, and to speak in a false high voice like an adolescent . . . She could recall . . . how she and Elphie had shared a bed on the road to the Emerald City. How brave that had made her feel, and how vulnerable too. (*Wicked* 344)

Because Maguire can get inside Glinda's head, readers are privy to Glinda's innermost thoughts. The novel can skirt that line in a much more socially acceptable way than a popular musical could, because its audience is not as varied as the musical's audience.

Thus, aesthetic works generally have more artistic license due to their limited and less pervasive reach.

The musical, on the other hand, makes light of any suggestions of homosexual tendencies between Elphaba and Glinda. A first-act song titled “What is This Feeling?” suggests the tension of attraction between the two roommates:

GLINDA:
What is this feeling
So sudden and new?

ELPHABA:
I felt the moment
I laid eyes on you!

GLINDA:
My pulse is rushing . . .

ELPHABA:
My head is reeling . . .

GLINDA:
My face is flushing . . .

BOTH:
What is this feeling?
Fervid as a flame,
Does it have a name?
Yes!:
Loathing! (Cote 146)

The whole song is a play on words and is meant to mimic the feeling of a high school crush, complete with a red face and a sudden drop in the stomach. However, such banter only alludes to the idea of a lesbian relationship, and viewers who had also read the novel would be more apt to notice it. In reality, the musical glosses over the queer undertones of the book, focusing instead on their friendship and a love triangle between Elphaba, Fiyero, and Glinda. Popular texts such as those in the musical theatre realm cannot do

more than to joke about homosexuality if they want to appeal to modern family-friendly audiences. The musical's quasi-queer undertones are an example of a popular text watering down what its counterpart is not required to tone down.

The same song also foreshadows the rest of the musical and mirrors the dynamics of Elphaba and Glinda's relationship as it relates to woman's role in society. The song follows both girls' reactions to learning they will be living together. Elphaba, secluded, writes to her father, while Glinda writes to her "Momsie and Popsicle," with "a wedge of college coeds . . . danc[ing] zippily behind [her], visually implying their support for her" (de Giere 379). In his book *Wicked: A Musical Biography*, Paul Laird describes each girl's fan base—or lack thereof—as an indication of their character: "Elphaba has the spirit to fight on alone" (195), while Glinda craves attention. This alludes to the end of the musical, when Elphaba will leave Oz with no supporters, and Glinda will be left to lead the citizens of Oz. Either way, each character learns to stand on her own two feet, whether they must forge on alone or lead the masses. Laird cites such strong characters as one of the varied appeals of the musical, saying:

Teenaged fans are unlikely to name "female empowerment" as one of the reasons that they like *Wicked*, but it is difficult to cite another Broadway show where two female characters have such important roles . . . The entire show revolves around Elphaba and Glinda . . . and almost every action by the less important characters in some way involves one or both of the women. (297)

More so than the novel does, the musical's story of two witches-in-training emphasizes the role of women and their authority within the political realm, appealing to the modern women of its audience.

The bookends of the musical are defining moments for the two main characters and capitalize on the audience's emotions. The first, as mentioned above, involves their

initial encounter during the song “What is This Feeling?,” which establishes the groundwork for their relationship. The song “For Good” completes the second act of the musical, providing a dramatic farewell common to musicals. A song about Glinda and Elphaba’s friendship, “For Good,” “carries multiple levels or meaning” (Laird 164). On one level, it establishes an identity for each character in relation to the other character, as both admit that “I know I’m who I am today because I knew you” (Cote 175). Both Elphaba and Glinda find who they are together and who they must be when they are apart from one another. The title “For Good” also suggests that their separation is necessary for the greater good of Oz. Each character has undergone a transformation, arguably because they each wanted to be like the other. Ultimately, Glinda and Elphaba’s relationship is relatable to real-life friendship, and the musical capitalizes on its popular audience’s fixation on human connection. The song “For Good” elicits emotional responses for that reason.

The pair’s last meeting in the novel is much more anti-climactic than the musical. The two come across one another at Colwen Grounds, Elphaba’s family’s estate, and at first ignore one another but then “Glinda wheeled about, and cried out, ‘Oh Elphie!’ The Witch did not turn. They never saw each other again” (*Wicked* 355). The musical essentially “winnow[s] down Maguire’s tale to focus on the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda—from being thrown together as college roommates . . . to becoming best friends and worst enemies” (de Giere 394). Dramatics are important to popular audiences, especially within the musical theatre realm. The focus on Glinda and Elphaba’s relationship transforms Maguire’s deliberations on good and evil into a more concrete and accessible work.

The character of Fiyero can also be compared across mediums: though he does not receive much attention in the novel, the musical elaborates on his character in a way that corresponds with the function of the medium. In the novel, his character is relatively flat. All the audience really knows about him is that he is a married prince who appears at Shiz University during the middle of the semester. Our first impression of him occurs during a lecture, when “the Vinkus student had slumped down and was volubly weeping behind his blue-diamonded hands” (*Wicked* 142). His character in the novel is defined almost solely by his relationship with Elphaba; he even dies at the hands of political radicals who are searching for Elphaba. Maguire’s Fiyero is not emphasized throughout the book, and he is portrayed as weak, one-dimensional, and bait for political assassins.

The musical version of Fiyero, however, can be defined by one sentence in the novel: “He knew he was in lazy doubt about *everything*; doubt was much more energy efficient than conviction” (*Wicked* 213). On stage, his character makes a grand, showy entrance, complete with song lyrics that mirror his seemingly careless philosophy:

Dancing through life
Skimming the surface
Gliding where turf is smooth
Life is painless for the brainless
Why think too hard?
When it’s so soothing
Dancing through life
No need to tough it
When you can slough it off as I do
Nothing matters
But knowing nothing matters
It’s just life, so keep dancing through. (Cote 147)

Fiyero seems to be your average musical hero: attractive, yet lacking any real substance. The writers of the musical, however, “gave Fiyero the slightest trace of a conscience, a longing that something more important was to be gotten out of life” (Cote 46). The

audience sees Elphaba pinpoint his unhappiness, and then witnesses his transformation into someone who cares about things of substance like the green girl and her pro-Animal rights agenda. The musical ultimately gives Fiyero a more complete character arc than he has in the novel, allowing him to change and grow. The musical ends on a happier note for the two lovers, concluding with the surprise that “Elphaba has faked her death so that she can escape the Wizard’s regime . . . Fiyero finds his way to the Badlands, where he and Elphaba reunite and sing a reprise of a song that might be called, “As Long As You’re Mine” (de Giere 284). The musical essentially lightens the dark tones of Maguire’s Oz, providing the audience with more hope for the characters. The musical’s audience can invest in the characters long after the musical is over. In the novel, on the other hand, both Elphaba and Fiyero have untimely deaths, ruining the audience’s ability to invest in their imaginative futures.

The presence or absence of a love triangle, in the musical and the novel respectively, is indicative of the function of each specific medium. The novel does not establish a love triangle between Elphaba, Fiyero, and Glinda; the only mention of the three stems from Sarima’s suspicions that “Fiyero [was] having an affair with an old college chum named Glinda, a Gillikenese girl of legendary beauty” (*Wicked* 261). There is a kind of love triangle between Elphaba, Fiyero, and Sarima, but Fiyero’s marriage is almost an afterthought that bears no real consequence to the plot. When creating the love triangle in the musical, the creators used the following logic:

Winnie felt it was very important that Elphaba do something wicked, so she really wanted Elphaba to commit adultery or the equivalent thereof. But we realized . . . it would be much stronger if Elphaba’s betrayal was of somebody she actually knew and cared about, so Fiyero’s wife went and Glinda came in instead as his pre-Elphaba love interest. (de Giere 296)

Ultimately, the love triangle establishes the right amount of drama needed for a musical, while relating to the broader purpose of the story. The newfound love triangle revolves around Elphaba and Glinda—who, as mentioned above, are the most important characters. Thus, the musical chooses one important aspect of the aesthetic source text to relate to the popular audience, which is the mark of a successful intertextual transformation.

The other characters Maguire incorporates in his novel are handpicked based upon readers' prior knowledge; the audience has at least a cursory knowledge of the novel's central characters. Oz is an infamous world in the realm of American popular culture, and both mediums use that to their advantage. The novel acknowledges the familiar storyline from the very beginning, when the reader gets a birds-eye view of a familiar scene from the new perspective of Elphaba's broom:

Below, the Yellow Brick Road looped back on itself, like a relaxed noose. . . The Witch could see the companions trudging along, maneuvering around the buckled sections, skirting trenches, skipping when the way was clear. They seemed oblivious of their fate. But it was not up to the Witch to enlighten them. (*Wicked* 1)

By starting off the novel with the familiar faces of the “Wicked Witch,” Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion, and the Tin Man, the novel has the reader's attention. They likely come into the novel knowing it will break the conventions of Baum's original novels and the 1939 movie. However, they want to know “the real story” of Oz. The audience learns that the Tin Man's real name is Nick Chopper, “a tiktok cipher, or an eviscerated human under a spell” (*Wicked* 389). Elphaba suspects that Fiyero has been turned into a Scarecrow, but the audience later learns that “there was nothing but straw and air inside the Scarecrow's clothes. No hidden lover returning, no lost hope of

salvation” (*Wicked* 392). The third member of the trio from the movie, the Lion, is the same Lion Cub Elphaba makes a scene about in a lecture at Shiz University. The novel explores every possible avenue, explaining characters and events the reader might not have known existed. In this way, aesthetic texts, especially novels, have ample ability to define and redefine all the parameters of a specific world.

The musical also involves many characters that would be familiar to its audience. In fact, the creators of the musicals will admit that “it might seem like the events of the movie *The Wizard of Oz* [are] all transpiring in the nearby environment off-stage” (de Giere 281). For example, when Elphaba comes on stage to learn that Dorothy has her sister’s shoes, Glinda is simultaneously waving as though Dorothy had just left the stage. Though the audience never sees Dorothy, they imagine she is just behind the curtain. While the novel draws heavily from the original L. Frank Baum Oz books, the musical was created to be “a prequel to *The Wizard of Oz* people know best—the film” (de Giere 383). The musical emphasizes the trio of Dorothy’s followers and their stories, working its story to fit around the movie’s plotline. Elphaba transforms the munchkin Boq into the Tin Man in order to save his life after Nessarose shrinks his heart (Cote 166). In the musical, Fiyero does in fact become the Scarecrow. Like in the novel, Elphaba rescues the Lion Cub from the university class, but in the end he “blames her for the fact that he has no courage” (Cote 87). The musical essentially draws upon another popular text, the movie, because they are similar mediums and have similar audiences. The novel draws upon another aesthetic text, Baum’s original novels, for the same reasons. Thus, though popular texts can adapt aesthetic texts, each kind of text maintains uniquely separate presentations of similar themes and ideas.

Both mediums make careful choices concerning whether to include or exclude characters, and the novel does so in a way that sets itself up for a sequel. The novel adds a character previously unheard of in the world of Oz—Liiir, the boy we come to believe is the product of Elphaba and Fiyero’s affair. Maguire neither confirms nor denies Liiir’s parentage, but instead he shows Elphaba’s transition into something resembling a mother to Liiir. She at first ignores the boy, who seems to follow her everywhere she goes, but she slowly begins to “[yearn] toward Liiir, a strange, unhappy compulsion. Who was this boy who lived in her life? Oh, she knew more or less where he came from, but who he *was*—it seemed to make a difference, for the first time in her life” (*Wicked* 289). Maguire sets the novel up for a sequel through the characterization of Liiir, who at the end of the novel “disappear[s] in to the sea of humanity in the Emerald City, to hunt for his half-sister, Nor” (*Wicked* 406). The second novel in the series, *Son of a Witch*, follows Liiir’s search for Nor as well as his search for self-discovery.

The musical, on the other hand, does not include Liiir’s character, and thus it does not set itself up for a sequel. Arguably, not many musicals spin off into sequels or series; musicals are by nature more self-contained products rather than part of a series. But, moreover, the musical aims to tie up the loose ends of the Oz the audience knows, and Liiir does not fit into that realm of knowledge. Furthermore, the musical cuts a number of characters from the novel because “Maguire’s story is too long and complicated for a musical, with more characters than could be developed effectively” (Laird 5). The musical must deal with the medium’s natural time constraints and parameters of production, while also choosing characters its audience will recognize. In this manner,

popular texts have much less free reign than aesthetic texts due to the audience's level of interest.

Both the novel and the musical offer political commentary in their own right, though I would argue that the novel is more blatant with its viewpoints. The novel confronts the issue of race and racism head on. Within Maguire's Oz, there is a clear totem pole of society, on which "a Quadling⁴ ranked about as low . . . as it was possible to get and still be human" (*Wicked* 40). Glinda's rejection of her admirer, Boq, indicates that the social hierarchy is widely accepted; she explains that "there is the issue of different cultures, to start . . . I know you are a Munchkinlander. I am a Gillikinese. I will need to marry one of my own" (*Wicked* 100). Oz's social norms are second nature, and there is little to no deviation from them. Maguire draws a parallel between Oz's bigotry and similarly pressing social issues in our society.

The novel identifies social norms only to subvert them, further complicating the novel's political commentary. Maguire begins his plight for Animal rights by asserting the similarities between talking Animals and humans:

Doctor Dillamond work[s] in natural essences, trying to determine by scientific method what the real differences [are] between animal and Animal tissue, and between Animal and human tissue . . . If he can isolate some bit of the biological architecture to prove that there *isn't any difference*, deep down in the invisible pockets of human and Animal flesh—that there's no difference between us—or even among us, if you take in animal flesh too. (*Wicked* 110)

Doctor Dillamond exists on the periphery of society, and his work represents a minority that believes there is no innate difference in creatures based on their appearance.

However, Doctor Dillamond is eventually stifled by the government, and it seems that

⁴ A Quadling resides in Quadling Country, the most southern region of Oz. The area is made up of mostly marshes and receives a bad reputation throughout the land.

Elphaba is one of the only people to notice. Maguire portrays the gradual disappearance of all Animals in Oz; one morning, while Boq is at a café, he “realized, slowly but thoroughly, that this morning there were no Animals taking their tea [there]. No Animals at all” (*Wicked* 112). Disenfranchisement happens so gradually, yet right in front of people’s eyes, and they don’t seem to notice, or perhaps even care. Aesthetic readers of the novel can interpret who the Animals may or may not symbolize in modern society, whether it may be immigrants, gays, or a certain minority group. Once again, Maguire’s ambiguity leaves much up to the reader, as opposed to the musical, which is more straightforward in its meaning.

The musical condenses the novel’s more complex political commentary by using Doctor Dillamond to symbolize the Animal Rights struggle found in the novel. The novel actually does not indicate that Elphaba and Dillamond interact at all, but the musical version of Elphaba is portrayed as Dillamond’s close friend. The musical focuses on Doctor Dillamond’s gradual loss of speech, as is portrayed in the song “Something Bad,” when he accentuates the “aah” sound like a goat would. Though his character dies in the novel, “you could almost argue that what happens to him [in the musical] . . . is a fate worse than death: He has to go on living but loses his power of speech and reasoning and becomes just an animal” (Cote 49). The creators of the musical realized they could not omit the Animal issue from the screenplay; it was simply too prevalent in the novel (de Giere 322). The musical’s creators also leave it up to the audience to determine what person or cause Doctor Dillamond symbolizes. Viewers could relate Animal rights to a gamut of current civil rights issues, including but not limited to gay rights, immigrants’ rights, and women’s reproductive rights. Thus, the musical appeals to its audience

through veiled references to current issues, transforming Maguire's interpretive complexities into recognizable simplicities.

Though both mediums question political leaders, the novel is more ambiguous in its efforts, suggesting that political leaders are simply figureheads, and the real power lies with someone in a supporting role. In the novel, Maguire never indicates whether the Wizard is all-powerful or controlled by outside forces, only that his power is in question. Elphaba finds herself wondering if "the Wizard [was] a charlatan, a fraud, a despot of merely human power and failure? Did he control the Adepts . . . or was it only put to him . . . that he did, to assuage his obvious ego, his appetite for the semblance of power?" (*Wicked* 326). Maguire's political commentary suggests that political leaders like to think they are in control, when in reality they are so far removed from the sphere of influence and are manipulated by their staff. While Elphaba, Glinda, and Nessarose are at Shiz University, Madame Morrible gathers the trio in the hopes of "baptiz[ing] you as it were, as a trio of Adepts. In the long run I would like to assign you behind-the-scenes ministerial duties in different parts of the country" (*Wicked* 158-159). Though neither of the girls agrees to this request, Elphaba finds herself wondering throughout the novel whether it did not actually happen. Each of the girls ends up in different areas of Oz: Elphaba at Kiamo Ko in the West, Nessarose a religious-minded leader in the East, and Glinda "a sorceress for the public good" (*Wicked* 323) in the North. Maguire suggests that Madame Morrible is the driving force behind the Wizard, who only thinks he has any real authority. Later, Maguire allows us a glance into the Wizard's head. The Wizard realizes he is near the end of his reign, and, sleepless, he "wonder[s] how long his luck [will] hold out. He had been wondering the same thing for forty years, and he had hoped

that luck would begin to seem habitual, deserved. But he [can] hear the very mice chewing away at the foundations of his Palace” (*Wicked* 405). The audience sees that political leaders are in constant fear of losing their role, and it becomes easy to imagine that their role in government is easily influenced by their own survival. Such political commentary examines both the external and internal, picking apart the situation as only a novel of four hundred pages can afford to do.

Rather than condensing the political agenda of the novel due to time constraints or the controversial nature of the topic, I would argue that the musical elaborated on one particular issue due to the political context surrounding the musical’s original release.

The creators of the musical describe the evolution of the Wizard’s character as such:

We ended up talking about the Wizard a little bit like Clinton, somebody who had these weaknesses. Then, while we were developing the script, George W. Bush took power. And the Wizard changed. He became more dangerous . . . In the middle of writing, New York City was attacked on September 11. (Cote 36)

The musical offers no ambiguity—the audience does not question the intelligence of the Wizard because they know he is dangerously unintelligent. But the musical suggests that “politicians and heads of state get by not because they’re particularly smart, but because people would like to hang out with them” (Cote 79). The Wizard himself says that:

I never asked for this
Or planned it in advance
I was merely blown here
By the winds of chance
I never saw myself as a Solomon or Socrates
I knew who I was:
One of your dime-a-dozen
mediocrities
Then suddenly I’m here
Respected—worshipped even
Just because the folks in Oz
Needed someone to believe in. (Cote 167)

Though the musical cannot get inside the Wizard's head like the novel does, this profession is a close second. The musical suggests that the masses need someone to believe in, and they put their trust in someone like George W. Bush because they can relate to him. Once in office, political leaders question their ability and must cling to any semblance of power. By associating the Wizard with President Bush, the musical appealed to a wide range of people who experienced similar disappointment in a leader in whom they placed their trust.

To further relate to the current political atmosphere, the musical comments on the government's use of media and propaganda to cover up political agendas. The Wizard has his own musical, "Wizomania," which includes the lyrics "Who's the mage / Whose major itinerary / Is making all Oz merrier?" (Cote 159). In the musical's Oz, happiness is a substitute for any real substance. The political leaders gloss over troubling issues; for example, when Oz is in an uproar over Elphaba's "terrorism," Glinda soothes the citizenry, saying, "As terrifying as terror is, let us put aside our panic for this one day . . . and celebrate!" (Cote 164). They then burst into song and forget their fear, suggesting that American citizens are also easily distracted and manipulated. The musical's politicians also encourage rallying against that which we fear. Madame Morrible rages a campaign against the "Wicked Witch" (as Morrible refers to Elphaba), and Ozians respond with made-up rumors such as, "I hear she has an extra eye / That always remains awake!" or "I hear her soul is so unclean / Pure water can melt her!" (Cote 164-165). Cote suggests that "people need to look at things in black and white, to label one person a hero and another a villain," (85) and in this case Elphaba is the chosen villain. By making the audience sympathize with Elphaba, the creators of the musical allude to the prevailing

post-9/11 sentiments: Americans were blinded by patriotism and easily manipulated into supporting a rash war on terrorism. The musical, therefore, emphasizes certain portions of Maguire's political commentary—political leaders, their significance, and their use of propaganda—in the context of the current political situation. In her article "Reflection to Refraction: Adaptation Studies Then and Now," Mireia Aragay suggests that "adaptation . . . is a cultural practice; specific adaptations need to be approached as acts of discourse partaking of a particular era's cultural and aesthetic needs and pressures" (19). Aesthetic texts can certainly relate to current events as well, but they were created to withstand the test of time. Popular texts are often created to relate to current events, and because of this, their views are more obvious and pervasive.

The novel's commentary on modern religion and other political issues, which the musical eliminates, adds to its complexity. The religious commentary within the novel explores an apathetic perspective on religion. Most Ozians are either Unionists, Lurlinists, or subscribers to the "pleasure faith." Unionism is the predominant faith, but no one seems to take it completely seriously. It symbolizes modern-day Christianity and strongly resembles the Southern Baptist domination, fire and brimstone speeches included; for example, Elphaba's Unionist minister father, Frex, asks his audience, "If you died in the next sixty seconds, would you want to spend eternity in the suffocating depths reserved for idolators?" (*Wicked* 16) Lurlinism is a form of paganism and is almost a laughing matter to the majority of Oz. Its origin traces back to "Lurline, . . . the Fairy Queen who flew over the sandy wastes, and spotted the green and lovely land of Oz below. She left her daughter Ozma to rule the country in her absence and she promised to return to Oz in its darkest hour" (*Wicked* 42). Their holiday Lurlinemas bears a striking

resemblance to Christmas, suggesting Christianity is a religion whose foundation has crumbled like the Lurlinist faith. The pleasure faith, also referred to as Tiktokism, can be likened to the media's hold on today's America. Upon his Unionist missionary work, Frex realizes that many Ozians "were humble. Their lives were hard and their hopes few. As the drought dragged on, their traditional unionist faith was eroding" (*Wicked* 13). The pleasure faith advertises its supposed ability to find meaning in the apparent hopelessness and sameness—its icon, the Clock of the Time Dragon, "sees before and beyond and within the truth of your sorry span of years here!" (*Wicked* 17) Both Unionist and Lurlinist believers seem to be turning to the pleasure faith due to a disillusionment of and antagonistic view of religion.

Maguire's political commentary seeps into the musical via the musical's presentation of ineffective politicians like the Wizard. However, the novel elaborates on modern politics by hinting at more than just the corrupt individuals, but the corrupt system under their control. Though Doctor Dillamond was killed by the government, the citizenry was told that "the doctor had broken a magnifying lens and stumbled against it, cutting an artery in the process—but nobody believed it" (*Wicked* 130). Furthermore, Glinda's nanny, Ama Clutch, ends up in the hospital after witnessing Dillamond's death. Previously a very composed character, "Ama Clutch merely smiled . . . with handfuls of pretty yellowing leaves or a plate of late pertha grapes. She devoured the grapes and chatted with the leaves" (*Wicked* 130). The audience infers that Ama Clutch was silenced by a corrupt government wishing to cover their tracks. Maguire can broach such controversial topics like religion and politics because of the work's aesthetic nature. The musical meets its quota of controversial topics through the Wizard's corruption and

Animal rights; any more controversy would not attract as many popular—there’s no such thing as a lighthearted religious or political debate.

The producers’ perspective on the adaptation process is worth analyzing as well.

Gregory Maguire himself speaks to the differences between the two mediums:

I knew that people would be coming to my novel remembering the 1939 movie. I didn’t even need to refer to it much. I could evoke the film with very slender, oblique comments. But I wasn’t beholden to it. And why should *Wicked* the musical slavishly conform to my novel, when my novel itself was a playful deviation of the original Baum novel, with glancing references to the movie? I had no problem with Stephen and Winnie taking the material and making it their own. I have a big ego, but it’s not *that* big: Let *Wicked* the musical be different than *Wicked* the novel. (Cote 35)

In this way, the book was merely a jumping-off point for the musical. Each medium intertextually engages with other works in the Oz canon, picking and choosing its influences and how it will influence future works about Oz. In a sense, adaptation becomes less of a cycle and more of an interwoven web of texts that are irrevocably linked. Not only does Maguire accept the differences in influences on each work, but he also “intentionally left trails open, allowing readers to imagine possibilities. Schwartz, as dramatist and creative puzzle-solver, wanted to complete them” (de Giere 279). Thus, the two mediums—one an aesthetic, literary text and the other a more functionally accessible, popular text—can intertwine and work together, creating similar yet different messages that reach both separate and convergent audiences.

Producers of both mediums arguably propagated this convergence of media. After the musical was released, the novel’s cover was changed to the same picture used for the musical’s poster. The musical also used sets and wardrobes that were inspired by the novel. The set is at all times framed by a “prominent dragon jutting out above the

proscenium and the main stage setting that makes it appear that the show takes place within the Clock of the Time Dragon” (Laird 38), which is an important motif throughout the novel. The musical’s costume designer, Susan Hilferty, discussing one of the costuming choices she made, said that “many of the [humans’] costumes have fur and feathers. Thematically, I thought it was important to show how people in the Emerald City, who have money and live the high life, have animal remnants in their couture. It’s despicable, like having somebody’s scalps on your sleeves” (Cote 120). Thus, both forms of media harken back to the other, and Adorno would likely apply the following perspective, found in his article “Culture Industry Reconsidered,” to the cyclic relationship between the novel and the musical:

The culture industry turns into public relations, the manufacturing of ‘goodwill’ per se, without regard for particular firms or saleable objects. Brought to bear is a general uncritical consensus, advertisements produced for the world, so that each product of the culture industry becomes its own advertisement. (104)

In ways both noticeable and less obvious, the musical and play sell one another, blurring the line between the two mediums and, more broadly, between aesthetic and functional texts.

The relationship between the novel and the musical can also be discussed in the audience’s arena, and their interpretations are vital to understanding the success of the producers’ efforts. de Giere indicates that “only a small percentage of viewers had read Maguire’s book” (315) and thus the musical’s creators could make so many changes because not many would be the wiser. Knowing that information, the musical was essentially marketed on its own terms. However, those people who both read the musical and watched the movie have expressed their opinions on the differences between the two

mediums. After looking at the fan-written discussion forums on Gregory Maguire's website, I found three distinct categories of fans of those who had read the novel and seen the musical: those that liked the book but hated the musical, those that liked the musical but hated the book, and those that liked both mediums.

Those that liked the book but hated the musical cited a lack of credibility or any real content in the musical. Jerome Stueart thought that the "musical is a watered down story for an audience who really doesn't want the kind of rich complexity you find in the book" (Steffen). Another user, who identifies herself as "thegreengirl", did not like the musical's cookie-cutter happy ending, saying, "We all know what happens to the witch at the end of the story. Her story is a bit of a tragedy. You cant [*sic*] turn around and make it all happy" (Steffen). These fans cling to the supremacy of aesthetic texts, propagating the myth that the literary text is "better" than the popular text.

Oppositely, those fans that liked the musical but hated the book mainly cited the book's complexity as the root of their disdain. David Steffen defends his predilection toward the musical, saying, "Instead of being a meandering, slow-moving plot about a despicable character [like the book], [the musical] tells us about an Elphaba that I can actually relate to" (Steffen). Furthermore, just as those fans who hated the musical said its ending was "too happy," those fans that liked the musical cite "leav[ing] you feeling happier" ("musical vs. book") as one of the musical's merits. The musical version of Elphaba is brought back to life, giving her the second chance she does not receive in the musical. In this way, the musical provides an alternative realm for audiences to rewrite what they perceive to be the novel's weaknesses.

Those who liked both mediums of the story were able to reconcile the differences between the two, chalking them up to differences of necessity. One user, identified only as “Dan,” indicates that, “particularly in light of the Bush Administration and the ‘War on Terror,’” the musical is “a clever re-writing of Oz . . . [and] does a good job of preserving the spirit of the book” (Steffen). Another user recognizes the differing target audiences, in that “the novel was written for adults, not children. The tone of the book is very dark & not for everyone. Politics can be very messy & I think that is at the heart of the novel” (“musical vs. book”). These fans acknowledge the proper use of aesthetic texts and functional texts within their own specific functions and audience arenas. The third fan type is indicative of audience mobility, or the appeal of both mediums to one fan.

Ultimately, each text relates to its own audience and can also engage in a conversation with the other text and its audience. As Maguire himself says at the end of *Wicked*, “the story is told in so many ways, depending on who is doing the telling, and what needs to be heard at the time” (406). Both separate and convergent audiences can benefit from aesthetic and functional texts. The repurposing of *Wicked* is an example of a successful transformation of an aesthetic text to a popular, functional text. The musical maintains the essence of its source text, and the novel and the musical can be examined as separate yet convergent media.

CHAPTER 8

SEQUELS AS COMMODITIES

Popular culture theorist John Frow defines commodities as “anything produced for exchange and thus embodying value” (62) in the collection *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity*. Commodities are essentially the unit of cultural exchange and consist of anything a consumer can use or partake in. Both the original novel and the musical are examples of commodities. Their audiences can either purchase the novel, the tickets to the stage performance, or the vast array of products sold at the theatre, such as t-shirts, key chains, and soundtracks. Audiences can also use these texts as discussed in the previous chapter: through interpreting the literary merits of the aesthetic text, or through reimagining the functional text. One can even argue that adaptations commodify their source texts, and by that definition, the musical is a commodification of the novel.

This section will focus on the second and third novels in Gregory Maguire’s series, which are commodifications of the original novel. There are now a total of four books in *The Wicked Years* series: *Wicked*, *Son of a Witch*, *A Lion Among Men*, and *Out of Oz*. At the time I proposed my project, the final installment had not been published yet; therefore, I will only discuss the first three books in the series.

Both successive novels commodify the original novel by adhering to the same structure as the original novel and expanding the story for the fans. Like the original novel, the books in the trilogy are also aesthetic texts. They were tailored to appeal to the same audience as the original novel: the educated, politically and socially aware public.

Although the successive books were produced for audiences to process and possibly interpret, they also have a clear meaning and function of their own. The second book in the series, *Son of a Witch*, focuses on Elphaba's son Liir's journey to find his half-sister, Nor. Like most adventure tales, though the main character may not succeed in his mission, he discovers more about his own identity in the process. The third novel, *A Lion Among Men*, is told from the perspective of Brrr, who the audience knows better as the Cowardly Lion. Brrr has been commissioned by the government to find out everything he can about the Grimmerie, the book of spells that only Elphaba could even partially decipher.

A major issue surrounding commodities is the question of control: who claims the power in the relationship, producers or consumers of commodities?

Karl Marx argues in favor of the former, using the difference between exchange value and use value to validate his argument:

Exchange value refers to the money that a commodity can command on the market, the price it can be bought and sold for, while use value refers to the usefulness of the good for the consumer, its practical value or utility as a commodity . . . Exchange value will always dominate use value in capitalism because the production, marketing, and consumption of commodities will always take precedence over people's real needs. (Strinati 51)

Marx believes that producers always have the upper hand, which he argues is proven by the consumers' mindless consumption of carefully recycled commodities. If one were to

apply Marx's theory to the example of the *Wicked* trilogy, it would inevitably give all the power to the publishing company that produced the novels. Radway corroborates this suggestion, saying,

This new idea of a book as a salable commodity gradually began to alter the organization of the editorial process and eventually the conception of publishing itself . . . It became clear that readers could be induced to buy quite similar books again and again. (22)

In other words, this faction of theorists would argue that the publishing company and/or author produces a formulaic novel that is proven to appeal to readers simply because consumers are not intelligent enough to know the difference.

However, other pop culture theorists, such as Paul Willis, argue that consumers have the upper hand in the battle between producers and consumers. In his essay "Symbolic Creativity," Willis argues that "viewers, listeners, and readers do their own symbolic work on a text and create their own relationships to technical means of reproduction and transfer. There is a kind of cultural production all within consumption" (243). If Willis were to apply his theory to the *Wicked* trilogy, he would likely argue that the familiar characters and themes inherent in the successive novels further the relationship between the characters' imaginations and the Oz that began with the original *Wicked* novel.

Those theorists that take the middle-of-the-road approach, such as John Fiske and Henry Jenkins, have a much better grasp on the issue of commodities within a modern culture perspective. In Jenkins' blog series titled "If It Doesn't Spread, It's Dead," he describes his agreement with Fiske on the issue:

We cannot think of popular culture as a top-down process of mass marketing, but a bottom-up process of creative interaction with cultural

commodities, a relationship with media that is neither simply consumption nor production, but an active negotiation between the two.

Thus, there exists a constant tug of war between producers and consumers for control.

The trilogy's texts are symbolic and invoke themes and characters from the original *Wicked* novel. The producers capitalize on that recurring symbolism to appeal to a recurring audience, but the audience members can also make their own connections to the works as well as expand their knowledge of the text. In this section, I will focus on the familiar themes and characters that allow audience members to renew their passion for the series and the new characters and themes that expand the audience's knowledge of Oz and tie together the series. Within a broader perspective, this example will illustrate the purpose and function of sequels as commodities and their relationship to producers and consumers.

Many of the characters introduced in the novel *Wicked* reappear throughout the trilogy. Maguire took a risk by penning the demise of Elphaba at the end of *Wicked*, as most audiences would expect the successive novels to follow Elphaba's storyline. In a sense, the trilogy does revolve around the axis of Elphaba's world, filling in the gaps of Elphaba's life that *Wicked* left open. For example, in the third novel, *A Lion Among Men*, Brrr reflects on the scene at Kiamo Ko when Dorothy and her three friends confronted Elphaba:

Had she recognized him as the Lion cub in the laboratory back in Shiz? He didn't know. . . "You!" she'd cried again, and this time he quailed more deeply, thinking she meant *You traitor! How can you, a Lion, come against me, when I have fought for your weal since before you were born!*

In this way, Maguire structured the plot so that everything either directly or indirectly relates to Elphaba's story, because he realizes an audience will become attached to the

first novel's main character. The audience, on the other hand, can appreciate Maguire's endeavor, reading the novels like working and reworking a puzzle. Thus, readers' attachment to an original text not only provides consumers with emotional fulfillment, but it also provides producers with the monetary incentive to foster such attachment in successive texts.

Liir, who was mentioned only marginally in the first novel, is given a much bigger role in the following novels. *Son of a Witch* revolves around Liir's search for his half-sister, Nor, including some inevitable mishaps along the way. Although Liir has reason to believe he is Elphaba's son, he can never truly accept that fact. Like Elphaba, he is stubborn and takes up the plight of others; for example, he attends a conference for the protection of Animals in Elphaba's stead, saying, "I may not have her blood, but I have her broom. I'm all there is" (199). Liir transforms from a gawky, needy boy to a man who can and must fend for himself. He eventually comes to terms with his parentage, even signing a letter as "Liir, Son of Elphaba" (265). With the Conference of Birds, he helps start a coalition—named Witch Nation after Elphaba—for the protection of Animals. One of their first rallies takes place at Oz's prison, Southstairs, where "six thousand strong, they cried in unison, hoping that the echo of their message would be heard in the darkest, most cloistered cell in Southstairs as well as the highest office in the Palace of the Emperor. 'Elphaba lives! Elphaba lives! Elphaba lives!'" (305). Thus, Maguire purposefully intertwines Elphaba and Liir's character arcs, allowing Elphaba to continue living through Liir. The audience only cares about Liir because he is Elphaba's son, and they foster their connection to Elphaba through him. By weaving together two

character arcs, the producers simultaneously provide an indirect attachment to the original character and foster a connection with a new character.

Other characters familiar to the audience that are used in the trilogy include Dorothy and her trio of followers. Maguire provides a sketch of each character's whereabouts and occurrences in their lives, but he focuses mainly on the Cowardly Lion, especially in *A Lion Among Men*. Maguire writes from Brrr's perspective to allow the reader access to his thoughts and perceptions of how others treat him. The reader can draw many similarities between Elphaba, Liir, and the Cowardly Lion. The Lion struggles to find his identity in a world that does not accept him for his differences; the government at first accuses him of collaborating with the Wizard, and then the same corrupt government commissions him for a special mission. He refuses to acknowledge that he is an Animal in a mostly human world until he attends a lecture in Shiz, looks around the room, and "at last it dawn[s] on him that he [is] the only Animal in the room" (122). Finally, he realizes that he "ha[s] nothing left to be, to become but himself" (194). Brrr does not care to embrace his identity; he feels uncomfortable in his own skin, and his relationships with others are hindered by his avoidance and cynicism. When he has the opportunity to take Liir under his wing, he thinks, "Better that Liir should get on in his life without being shackled with a big burly Lion for a sidekick" (160). Here Maguire parallels Elphaba's lack of a relationship with her own son, Liir. Furthermore, Brrr's plotline is tethered to Elphaba through his similarities to her and his mission to find the Grimmerie and unearth the secrets of Elphaba's life. This provides an example of the tug of war between producers and consumers: while the producers can create formulaic

characters and events, the audience can draw their own conclusions and meanings from these similarities in an effort to maintain their own sense of authority.

The second and third novels in the trilogy also invoke many of the same themes and issues as the first novel, such as religion, political commentary, and social commentary. The trilogy resumes a discussion on religion that originated in the original novel. Maguire reintroduces each religion in Oz—the pleasure faith, Lurlinism, and Unionism—but delves into a deeper examination of how the three intertwine. At some points, the text deviates from the narrative, and Maguire divulges in what feels almost like religious tracts. The following is an example of one such occurrence:

It seems hardly to matter when and how we become ourselves—or even what we become. Theory chases theory about how we are composed. The only constant: the abjuration of personal responsibility.

We are the next thing the Time Dragon is dreaming, and nothing to be done about it.

We are the fanciful sketch of wry Lurline, we are droll and ornamental, and no more culpable than a sprig of lavender or a sprig of lightning, and nothing to be done about it.

We are an experiment in situation ethics set by the Unnamed God, which in keeping its identity secret also cloaks the scope of the experiment and our chances of success or failure at it—and nothing to be done about it.

We are loping sequences of chemical conversions, acting ourselves converted. We are twists of genes acting ourselves twisted; we are wicks of burning neuroses acting ourselves wicked. And nothing to be done about it. And nothing to be done about it. (127-128)

In this way, Maguire pinpoints the progression of religion: much like in the real world, Ozians have fluctuated between religions. The majority of society progressed from Lurlinism to Unionism and now to the pleasure faith. While each older religion lingers, society chooses a prevailing religion, Maguire purports, because it does not particularly matter which one they choose. He indicates that at their core, all religions are similar. By harkening back to the religions mentioned in the original novel, Maguire continues the

religious commentary that appealed to his original audience. However, he repurposes the issue, elaborating on the interconnectedness of religion to keep the conversation with his audience alive. In turn, the audience can use his discussion of religion to analyze how religion fits into their society and culture.

The novels' political commentary both suggests similar opinions as those found in *Wicked* and introduces new political issues. *Son of a Witch* follows the government's progression into what is supposed to be a more efficient government as opposed to the Wizard's regime, but the new government is essentially more of the same. The Scarecrow advises Liir about the reality of the situation:

Lady Glinda doesn't confide in me. I've heard she intends to rule for six months or so, and then abdicate in favor of a straw man. Who?—well, as I've admitted, one scarecrow is as good as another. Do you think anyone would notice the difference? When a scarecrow blows apart in a gale wind, the farmer just props up another one. It's the job to be done that's important, not who does it. (66)

Not only is the Scarecrow disposable, but so is Glinda, who realizes she must abdicate before she is overthrown. Maguire suggests that just like the Wizard in the original novel, one figure head is as good as the next. Furthermore, the citizenry of Oz blindly accept such political corruption; for example, Liir “read[s] about the Scarecrow's unfortunate accident involving that beaker of lighter fluid—what a horrible twist of fate, that it was *right there!*—and the subsequent elevation of the Emperor” (168). Maguire's flippant tone suggests that although Liir recognizes the government's ability to assassinate their own leader, the rest of Oz does not. The producers thus acknowledge that such political corruption related well to *Wicked's* audience and have recycled it throughout the rest of the series to appeal to the same audience.

However, the trilogy also raises new political issues as the series continues. *A Lion Among Men*, which was released in 2008, takes place during a homeland war that pits the Munchkins against the Emperor's soldiers. The mauntery where Elphaba lived for many years finds itself in the midst of the fighting, and none of the maunts are "sure of anything. Is the army constructing an underground canal into Munchkinland . . . ? Is a new weapon being perfected upriver that will make an invading army invincible? Or are these maneuvers merely war games to intimidate the Munchkinlanders into making concessions?" (7-8) The social context of the publication date is vital to understanding such war references. North Korea tested nuclear devices in 2006, and remained under a "nuclear veil" until 2008 when they underwent nuclear disarmament negotiations with the United States (Amanpour). Maguire harkens to that two-year time span when American paranoia about nuclear war was never far from the surface.

Furthermore, he hints at the isolation that can result from such paranoia, describing the mauntery's state of affairs during wartime:

Sister Laundry would no longer dry the sheets in the sun, for they looked like white flags of surrender and no one wanted soldiers garrisoned in the mauntery. Sister Hospitality began refusing shelter to wanderers through these isolated reaches, lest they turn out to be secret agents . . . "The cost of war," she murmured, her voice trailing off. (9)

Maguire describes not only a nuclear arms race, but wars in general: countries and peoples isolate themselves from others and avoid common human kindnesses in the name of their own survival. This human behavior could be applied not only to the modern political sphere, but relates to wars in the past and future as well. Maguire's audience is well-informed and well-educated, and they can interpret his veiled satires for what they are: reflections on the societal implications of war. Because the producers are confident

of previous audience satisfaction, they can allow authors to take liberties and discuss more controversial issues.

Maguire pushes limits the most with his use of social commentary in the successive novels in the trilogy. The plot of *Wicked* has much to do with Animal rights, and the trilogy expounds upon the repercussions of the Wizard's regime. In *Son of a Witch*, two traveling maunts come across a Water Buffalo, and they later reflect that "he'd survived, a talking Animal in the wild . . . It can't have been easy. After the Wizard's banishment, the Animals didn't rush for reassimilation. Who could blame them, with all they'd been through" (73). Maguire thus explores the effects of the Wizard's tirade against Animals; they are still beaten down and refuse to unite even though they now have the freedom to do so. The audience can once again infer whom the Animals represent in modern society; it could be a racial or socioeconomical group, or another subculture. This continues a puzzle that originated in the first novel and maintains the audience's connection to the continuation of a particular storyline.

The rest of Maguire's social commentary, however, strays from the specificities of Animal rights and focuses instead on broader reflections on human behavior. Discussing Brrr's naiveté in *A Lion Among Men*, Maguire says, "He hadn't yet had enough experience with humans to know that the thing they hold dearest to their hearts, the last thing they relinquish when all else is fading, is the consoling belief in the inferiority of others" (79). Though this statement relates to the tense relationship between humans and Animals, the social commentary within the original novel was hidden beneath specific situations. An example of more of Maguire's blunt observations comments on Brrr's apathy:

One may, oh, cook poorly, or be socially graceless, or invest unwisely, or fail to achieve the best of personal hygiene. But one doesn't want to live wrong—from breath to breath, from start to finish, to get it wrong, so wrong, so fully wrong, that one has never had the glimmer of an idea that it might be better. Or does one? Maybe if you're going to get it that wrong, it's better to get it all wrong. The proverbial stupid ant crawling on the hat brim of the prophet, eager only for the shade behind the prophet's left ear, and ignorant of the civilization-altering sermon it is witnessing. (194-195)

Brrr's inability to fit in with society makes him question his ability to live and function correctly. Such social commentary is extremely blunt, and the writing style makes it seem as though Maguire is not narrating the story but is talking directly to the readers. Both of the above examples are proof that Maguire established enough credibility with *Wicked* that he was able to push boundaries and use *Son of a Witch* and *A Lion Among Men* as a vehicle to express his deeper opinions on social issues. In this way, the author felt confident that he had conditioned his audience to be more accepting of social commentary. Maguire could express more controversial viewpoints without sanctions, allowing the producers to regain control in the cyclic authority of the relationship between producer and consumer.

The two successive novels also tie together the series, giving the audience a more complete picture of the Oz in which the stories take place. One example occurs in *Son of a Witch*, which provides a backstory to Liir's childhood. One day Liir was playing with Nor and her brothers at Kiamo Ko, and

They had persuaded Liir to sit on one end of a timber that they intended to pivot out over a pile of hay below. He could jump to his safety! It would be fun, they said. And so it would have been, had not one of them—Manek, probably—leaped off the balanced end before Liir was fully positioned. Afraid of smashing himself on the stone floor of the barn, Liir had lurched to safety across the edge of the cart. The falling beam failed to kill him. (55)

Though this story coincides with the time of *Wicked*, it was not included in *Wicked*'s narrative. Its narrative purpose in *Son of a Witch* is to provide insight into Liir's dreams while in a coma. However, it also serves the purpose of linking together the narratives, naturally weaving an audience's internal connection to not just one specific book, but the series as a whole.

A Lion Among Men wraps up the elements of the previous two novels, tying together the loose ends of the trilogy. The third novel begins with a preface titled "A Brief Outline of the Throne Ministers of Oz," which outlines the history of Oz from "The Ozma Years" (the beginning of Oz) to "The Wizardic Years" (the time of *Wicked*) to "The Twin Interregnums" (the time of *Son of a Witch*) and finally to "The Empower Apostle" (the current regime). It then devotes one page to an excerpt taken verbatim from *Wicked* that describes Brrr's appearance as the Lion Cub in Elphaba's science class at Shiz University. (xv-xix) From the beginning, the audience realizes that the tiniest thread of *Wicked*'s narrative is the basis for the entire third novel.

However, as opposed to *Son of a Witch*, which takes place after *Wicked*, the majority of *A Lion Among Men* takes place concurrently to the first novel. Maguire mentions many anecdotes that the reader will pick up on, such as during Brrr's cultural experiences in Shiz:

The lecturer, a Madame Morrible from Crag Hall, was treating the audience to the benefit of her impression of—what was it?—the Animal Adverse laws (or the Animal Courtesy acts if you used the jargon of punditry)—as they pertained to higher education at Shiz. (121)

Brrr's temporary involvement in the upper echelon of Shiz society occurs during the beginning of the Wizard's persecution of Animals, giving the audience an Animal's perspective on events from the first novel. The entire series is a chain of events that do

not make complete sense until the end of the third novel. For example, the reader discovers that the page from the Grimmerie that Elphaba gave the Wizard in the first novel “was responsible for the knowledge of how to train dragons for use in military maneuvers” (189). The audience is not introduced to dragon warfare until the third novel. This circular writing style adds a dimension to the circular struggle for power in the relationship between producers and consumers: not only does its mystery appeal to readers, but the eventual resolution also increases the readers’ knowledge of the world of Oz. By connecting all three narratives, the producers justify the existence of a trilogy; just one novel would not be enough.

Maguire also accounts for any discrepancies between his series and any other versions of the Oz story. Upon meeting Dorothy, Brrr worried about revealing his backstory to Dorothy; he “steeled himself for the inevitable interview, and wondered how much of his sorry history he could gloss over . . . Dorothy, though, was not riven with wild curiosity. She seemed to take his bowdlerized biography at face value. She asked no probing questions” (151). Dorothy blindly accepts his identity as simply the Cowardly Lion and does not seem to care about his past. In this way, although Maguire explains what is purportedly the “real” Oz, he maintains a fidelity to the source texts his audience knows and loves. They can accept both Dorothy’s *and* Brrr’s sides of the story, the latter enriching the former. Not only does this technique give Maguire more artistic license, but it also establishes his credibility to the audience, who can appreciate the series within their own predetermined perspectives.

Not many other sequels are as well planned out as Maguire’s *The Wicked Years* series. By focusing on one character in the original novel, and focusing on peripheral

characters and events in the successive novels, Maguire creates not a story but a world. The publishing company allows him more artistic license because they believe in his appeal to an established audience base. The literary, educated audience is attracted to an interesting storyline that has a deeper, interconnected meaning, and they are granted an interactive connection with the Oz they thought they knew. Because of a reciprocal relationship between producers and consumers of the series, the commodities are equal in their exchange value for producers and their use value for consumers. In this way, the *Wicked* series is an example of an effective execution of sequels as commodities.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The *Wicked* franchise includes the distinctly different mediums of literary and theatrical productions. Its success as a whole is due to the successful implementation of applicable appeals to each medium's target audience. The cyclical relationship between producers and consumers can be defined by the fact that "'meanings' and 'effects' can change quite decisively according to the social contexts of 'consumption', to different kinds of 'de-coding' and worked on by different forms of symbolic work and creativity" (Willis 243). Producers and consumers both create and redefine meanings in their own contexts.

Both the original novel and the successive two books in *The Wicked Years* series are examples of aesthetic texts. They appeal to the same audience, one that can be characterized as educated and socially and politically conscious. The sequels arguably delve into deeper and more controversial topics, and have the freedom to do so because of the original novel's critical acclaim. They also have a firm foundation in the world established in the original novel. As Raiford Guins and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz state in "Commodifying: The Commodity, Culture and Social Life,"

To understand popular culture it is necessary to contend with the interconnection of both its material and ideological capacities. Because the commodity . . . is the site where value and meaning cohere and are

contested, it bears upon how we understand the objects that surround us and through which we negotiate our relationship to the culture that surrounds us. (83)

The trilogy of novels are irrevocably interlinked; Gregory Maguire created a world in which his audience can invest their imaginations. His world also adheres to the fidelity of the source texts upon which the book was based.

The musical, an example of a popular, functional text, appeals to a much wider target audience through the means of commodification as well. Janice Radway would argue that the producers of the musical “designed their product to appeal to a huge audience by meeting the few preferences that all individuals within the group have in common, . . . creat[ing] texts that are minimally acceptable” (49-50). While her writing style is pointed, the core of her argument is correct: *Wicked* the musical picks and chooses aspects of its source texts that will relate to all parts of a broader audience spectrum. In doing so, however, the musical retains the essence of Maguire’s original novel within the framework of a new medium, without losing the integrity of the source text. This is the definition of a successful adaptation.

Though the popular text of the musical is essentially an adaptation of Maguire’s aesthetic novel, it is also crucial to consider the interconnectedness of every depiction of the world of Oz. The novel is a direct descendant of Baum’s children’s series, which is also an aesthetic text. The musical was strongly influenced by the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*, another commercial, functional text. Both the novel and the musical rely on the formats of these similar texts. It is the interconnectedness between current and older mediums that speaks to the adaptability of literature across multiple mediums. The producers of the novel and musical helped create not just stories that make sense in the

confines of each specific text, but they also created a world that consumers can interpret and relate to their own lives.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adorno, Theodor W. "Culture Industry Reconsidered." *Popular Culture: A Reader*. London: SAGE Publications, 2005. 103-108. Print.

This article is based upon Adorno's definition of culture as a mechanical process. He argues that any ability society thinks they have to resist the producers is an illusion. His discussion of commodity theory in relation to the culture industry relates to my paper, which discusses the *Wicked* trilogy as commodity. I will use this source to verify my assertions about *Wicked*'s role as commodity.

---. "Aesthetic Theory." Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Print.

This book is essentially Theodor Adorno's manifesto; it discusses the relationship between art and society. He focuses especially on the aesthetic beauty of art. My project is an extended case study of the novel *Wicked* as an example of an aesthetic work. I will use this source to help verify my position that the novel is in fact aesthetic in the way consumers view and use it.

Amanpour, Christiane. "North Korea Lifts Nuclear Veil." *Cnn.com* 26 February 2008. Web.

This article relays historical evidence of the popular issue surrounding North Korean nuclear weapons around 2008. I used this article as it related to Gregory Maguire's *A Lion Among Men*, and the widespread paranoia surrounding the threat of nuclear war to which he alludes in that work.

Aragay, Mireia. "Reflection to Refraction: Adaptation Studies Then and Now." *Books in Motion: Adaptation, Intertextuality, Authorship*. Ed. Mireia Aragay. New York: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2005. 11-31. Print.

This source is an essay from a book on adaptation studies, and the essay discusses the progression of the study of adaptation. This relates to my project because *Wicked* the musical is an adaptation of Gregory Maguire's novel *Wicked*. Furthermore, Maguire's novel is an adaptation of Frank L. Baum's original *Wizard of Oz* novels. This article will help me define adaptation and its norms so I can understand how the cyclic nature of the world of Oz fits into or challenges those norms.

"Broadway Grosses—Wicked." *Broadwayworld.com*, 2012. Web. 30 October 2012.

This source details the amount of money *Wicked* the musical grosses per week. I will use this source to verify the popularity of all things Oz. The musical's monetary success is indicative of its critical success.

- Cote, David. *Wicked: The Grimmerie*. New York: Metcher Media, 2005. Print.
 This coffee-table book was written as a “behind-the-scenes look” into the musical and was written for diehard fans that wanted to pick apart the musical, from sets to costumes to dialogue. It discusses the entire creation process of the musical, quoting directly from interviews with the original novel’s author Gregory Maguire, producer Marc Platt, composer Stephen Schwartz, and book writer Winnie Holzman. This relates to my project as I am analyzing the relationship between two mediums of novel and musical. I will be able to quote directly from those who had a hand in adapting the musical from the novel.
- de Giere, Carol. *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from Godspell to Wicked*. Milwaukee: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books, 2008. Print.
 This book was completed through extensive interviews with composer Stephen Schwartz, and it chronicles his career from its beginning to his current works. I will of course focus on those sections that detail his work on *Wicked*. This relates to my project as I am analyzing the relationship between the two mediums of novel and musical. de Giere completed extensive interviews with both Stephen Schwartz and Gregory Maguire, providing credibility for my assertions about why something was adapted in a certain way.
- Eberson, Sharon. “‘Wicked’ world: Composer-lyricist Stephen Schwartz reflects on his Oz with a twist show.” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* 30 March 2012. Web.
 This newspaper article serves as the information on both the original novel’s readers and the musical’s viewers up to the year 2012. This information upholds my argument that the musical appeals to a much broader audience—5.5 million people have read the novel, whereas a total of 14.1 million people have seen the musical in North America alone.
- Fiske, John. “Popular Discrimination.” *Popular Culture: A Reader*. London: SAGE Publications, 2005. 215-221. Print.
 This essay counters Theodor Adorno’s idea of the culture industry. Fiske argues that instead of being mindless consumers, consumers can interpret their own meanings from texts and products. He also discusses the difference between aesthetic and popular texts, which was the basis for the thesis of my text-to-stage analysis. I used this source as the jumping-off point for the idea of the novel *Wicked* as aesthetic text and the musical as popular text.
- Frow, John. *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Web. 1 Sept. 2012.
 This collection of essays covers postmodernity and its cultural meanings. I will mainly use its essay on commodity exchange, which discusses the commodification of culture in contemporary society. Part of my project involves the use of sequels as commodities. This source will provide me with the theory that I can then apply to the specific example of the *Wicked* trilogy as commodity.
- Guins, Raiford and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz. “Commodifying: The Commodity, Culture

and Social Life.” *Popular Culture: A Reader*. London: SAGE Publications, 2005. 83-87. Print.

This source is the introduction for section two of the textbook *Popular Culture: A Reader*. It functions as an overview of commodities, describing what they are in the context of popular culture. Part of my project involves the use of sequels as commodities. I will use this source to help me define what commodities are before I can analyze the *Wicked* trilogy as commodity.

Hutcheon, Linda. “Beginning to Theorize Adaptation.” *A Theory of Adaptation*. Ed. Linda Hutcheon. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006. 1-32. Web. 27 Aug. 2012.

This source is an essay from a book on adaptation studies that focuses particularly on theory. This relates to my project because *Wicked* the musical is an adaptation of Gregory Maguire’s novel *Wicked*. Furthermore, Maguire’s novel is an adaptation of Frank L. Baum’s original *Wizard of Oz* novels. This article will help me define adaptation and its norms so I can understand how the cyclic nature of the world of Oz fits into or challenges those norms.

Jenkins, Henry. “If It Doesn’t Spread, It’s Dead (Part Six): Spreadable Content.” *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*. Henry Jenkins, 23 February 2009. Web. 1 Sept. 2012.

This source comes from Henry Jenkins’s blog and is part of a series that seeks to understand what makes media “spreadable.” It relates to my project through its discussion of advertisements as commodities. Part of my project discusses the use of sequels as commodities. I will use this source as evidence that an ambiguous advertisement like the one used for *Wicked* the musical is “producerly.”

Laird, Paul R. *Wicked: A Musical Biography*. Plymouth, United Kingdom: Scarecrow Press, 2011. Print.

This book explores the creation of the stage musical through its adaptation process and creation. This relates to my project as I am analyzing the relationship between the two mediums of novel and musical. I can use this source to get into the minds of the creators of the musical. Not only will I be able to guess how and/or why something was changed, but I will be able to quote from someone who has completed extensive interviews with the creators of the musical.

“Libretto.” *Musicorld*. n.p., n.d. Web. 23 June 2012.

This website contained the entire libretto, or musical script, for *Wicked* the musical. This contains lyrics, dialogue, and stage directions for the musical. This source relates to the text-to-stage component of my paper. I relied heavily on this source to help transcribe the differences between the novel and the musical.

Maguire, Gregory. *A Lion Among Men*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008. Print.

This novel is the third in the *Wicked* series by Gregory Maguire, which chronicles life in the world of Oz from the point of view of characters that previously were not given their own voice. *A Lion Among Men* is told from the perspective of Brrr, also known as the Cowardly Lion, who is being paid by the government to learn everything about

the Grimmerie, the spell book only Elphaba could decipher. One aspect of my paper is to analyze the use of sequels as commodities. In order to prove that this was the case with the *Wicked* trilogy, I utilize this book to examine the common themes and ideas that continue throughout the series and appeal to the same audience as the first book.

Maguire, Gregory. *Son of a Witch*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005. Print.

This novel is the second in the *Wicked* series by Gregory Maguire, which chronicles life in the world of Oz from the point of view of characters that previously were not given their own voice. *Son of a Witch* is told from the perspective of Liir, Elphaba's child, who is on a mission to find his long-lost half-sister, Nor. One aspect of my paper is to analyze the use of sequels as commodities. In order to prove that this was the case with the *Wicked* trilogy, I utilize this book to examine the common themes and ideas that continue throughout the series and appeal to the same audience as the first book.

Maguire, Gregory. *Wicked*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. Print.

This novel is the first in the *Wicked* series by Gregory Maguire, which chronicles life in the world of Oz from the point of view of characters that previously were not given their own voice. *Wicked* is told from Elphaba (the "Wicked Witch")'s point of view. The novel is the basis for my entire project, and I decided to use it because of its success in both novel and musical form. I completed an extensive text-to-stage analysis of the novel's transformation into a musical, so I relied heavily on the novel to transcribe that transformation.

"musical vs. book." Gregory Maguire Discussion Board, gregorymaguire.com, 10 June 2012. Web. 30 Aug. 2012.

<http://www.gregorymaguire.com/discussion/ubb/Forum5/HTML/001256.html>

This source is a public discussion board on Gregory Maguire's website. This particular forum was started by a poster asking other fans how they felt about the book versus the musical. This relates to the consumer aspect of my project and lets me see firsthand how audiences reacted to either medium of the story. I want to include audience opinion and discover the inherent differences between the audience of an aesthetic text and the audience of a popular text.

Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. Print.

This book analyzes the romance novel from a reader's perspective. It also looks at the production of books and the publishing industry. This source relates to my project in that it describes the formulaic quality of literature since the beginning of the publishing industry. I can relate this to the commodity aspect of my paper; why people repeatedly buy similar products is vital for me to grasp. This source will allow me to analyze not just the producer's perspective, but also the consumer's perspective.

Steffen, David. "Wicked—Novel vs. Musical." *Fantasy*. Fantasy Magazine, July 2009. Web. 30 Aug. 2012.

This source is an example of the blog of a devoted fan to the *Wicked* texts. This

particular blog discusses his disdain for the novel and his love for the musical; he argues that the musical was the only good thing to come from the novel. This relates to the consumer aspect of my project and lets me see firsthand how audiences reacted to either medium of the story. I want to include audience opinion and discover the inherent differences between the audience of an aesthetic text and the audience of a popular text.

Strinati, Dominic. *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Web. 1 Sept. 2012.

This book is an introductory pop culture textbook, including essays on mass culture, the culture industry, Marxism, feminism, postmodernism, etc. I used Strinati's definition of exchange value as it refers to commodities. Part of my project involves the use of sequels as commodities. This source will provide me with the theory behind exchange value that I can then apply to the specific example of the *Wicked* trilogy as commodity.

Willis, Paul. "Symbolic Creativity." *Popular Culture: A Reader*. London: SAGE Publications, 2005. 241-248. Print.

This article discusses the consumer's penchant for associating meanings with commodities. Consumers use symbolism to make their own meanings out of mass-produced products. This relates to the commodity aspect of my project. Not only will I be able to analyze commodities from the producer's point of view, but I will also be able to identify how consumers use commodities and make them their own.