BROOMS, BEASTS, AND THE PHALLUS:
IDENTIFYING THE WICKED WITCH THROUGH DICHOTOMOUS BLENDS IN WICKED

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A Thesis Submitted to the
University of North Carolina Wilmington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Department of English
University of North Carolina Wilmington
2011

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION: A WHIRLWIND THROUGH OZ</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INNIE OR OUTTIE?: MALE/FEMALE BLEND</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF I ONLY HAD A—PHALLUS: HEALING THE MIND/BODY SPLIT</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OZ ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK: THE HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRID</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION: FROM OZ TO EARTH</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS CITED</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

In *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, a parallel novel of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Gregory Maguire explores how a little green girl named Elphaba grows up to become the infamous Wicked Witch of the West. Despite a lengthy story that covers the political, religious, educational, and social structures of Oz, Maguire does not definitively illustrate how Elphaba becomes “wicked.” Thus, it is the objective of this thesis to examine how Elphaba becomes the Wicked Witch. To do so, this thesis critically examines how Elphaba functions within Oz’s dichotomous social structure. Through tradition and the Wizard’s oppressive reign, Oz functions by maintaining the divisions of male/female, mind/body, and human/animal. However, by blending these binaries, Elphaba proves to challenge the political and social order of Oz.

Framing this analysis in psychoanalytic and feminist theory, this thesis argues that Elphaba blends the male/female, mind/body, and human/animal dichotomies to fill her phallic lack and assume phallic power in Oz. Specifically, after an involuntary castration, Elphaba tries to reassume her masculinity by becoming sexually ambiguous. Healing the mind/body split Elphaba finds phallic apparatuses to both fill her lack and administer phallic power. Further, this thesis contends that hybridizing human and animal allows Elphaba to create castration anxiety throughout Oz. Lastly, this thesis reexamines the definition of “wicked” to explain how her ambiguity deems her wicked and demands her death. Ultimately, to demonstrate how *Wicked* is a cautionary tale, this analysis is re-appropriated to an example from post-9/11 America.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the faculty of UNCW’s English department for providing me with an education and experiences that have changed my life in unimaginable ways. Specifically, thanks goes to Dr. Mark Boren for teaching me that my ideas might be a little crazy, but they are real. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Janet Ellerby. It was through the theories you taught me that I made the biggest decision I will likely ever make—to be a woman and to be free. And my deepest gratitude is extended to Dr. Tiffany Gilbert. I have known you since day one, and I couldn’t have made this journey without your continuous encouragement. You pushed me past what I thought were my limits and forced me to think in new ways. Thank you for always keeping it real.

My sincerest gratitude also goes to my most intimate friend, Kellie French. Our years together and countless hours of conversation have shaped not only this thesis but also my life. Together, we learned about books, life, and pain. I hope I have contributed to your life and learning as you have to mine.

Special thanks to my family for always allowing me to be a free spirit. Your continuous support and encouragement (and money) have allowed me to achieve any goal I have ever set to obtain. You taught me that education will set me free, and it did. Mom, thank you for teaching me to love the written word. Dad, thank you for passing on your work ethic to me.

And lastly, thanks to my pets Caesar Augustus, Athena Marie, and Ramsey Eugene Benjamin for sacrificing countless hours of sleep, leisure, and play to listen to my drafts.

iv
DEDICATION

For all: “If we...like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others—do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the...nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world. If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of the prophecy, re-created from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!”

-James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time
“In perceiving conflicting information and points of view, she is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable idea out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally...”

-Gloria Anzaldúa, “La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness”
INTRODUCTION:
A WHIRLWIND THROUGH OZ

On May 17, 1900, L. Frank Baum’s legendary and iconic children’s book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was released. Within only a few months, the book was widely read and discussed throughout the United States. Less than four months after the release of the book, on September 8, 1900, the *New York Times* Saturday Review, “A New Book for Children,” highly praised Baum’s work: “Neither the tales of Aesop and other fableists nor the stories as ‘Three Bears’ will ever pass entirely away, but a welcome place remains and will easily be found for stories such as ‘Father Goose: His Story,’ ‘The Songs of Father Goose,’ and now ‘The Wonderful Wizard of Oz’” (BR 13). Following the story of Dorothy, a Kansas native swept away by a tornado and displaced in the strange and colorful world of Oz, Baum’s story transplanted his readers into an unknown universe. That is, a world where monkeys can fly, tin men need hearts, lions crave courage, scarecrows need brains, and everyone needs a fabulous pair of glittering shoes.

Responding to the popularity of Baum’s novel, MGM studios and director Victor Fleming created the 1939 film adaptation, *The Wizard of Oz*. Adapting the novel into a new medium skyrocketed the story into even higher levels of popularity and made the star, Judy Garland, an American icon. Adding color to select scenes, *The Wizard of Oz* not only gave the story vitality, but also introduced the audience to new technology. As a result, the August 18, 1939, *New York Times* “The Screen in Review” praised the film:
Not since Disney's "Snow White" has anything quite so fantastic succeeded half so well. A fairybook tale has been told in the fairybook style, with witches, goblins, pixies and other wondrous things drawn in the brightest colors and set cavorting to a merry little score. It is all so well-intentioned, so genial and so gay that any reviewer who would look down his nose at the fun-making should be spanked and sent off, supperless, to bed. (Nugent)

This sentiment has been carried throughout the generations of Fleming’s viewers. As a result, since the release of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, there have been over 100 professional (re)productions, ranging from the 1976 Australian rock musical, Oz, to Motown’s executive Berry Gordy’s 1978 adaptation, The Wiz, to The Muppets’ 2005 The Wizard of Oz. Through film, television, stage, books, comics, and games, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz has made its presence in the creative genres of performance and entertainment for 111 years.

Most recently, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz has taken new shape under the creative and artistic wing of Gregory Maguire. Paralleling the original novel, Maguire’s 1995 book, Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West, retells the story of Oz in the pre-Dorothy era. Following the life of the protagonist, Elphaba, Wicked narrates how the Witch of the West became known as the infamous Wicked Witch of the West. With subplots that hint at contemporary American culture, Maguire portrays Oz as a politically corrupt nation. Specifically, through the Wizard’s attempt to segregate Animals and humans, Maguire depicts the Land of Oz as a nation in which identity, politics, and society are complicated by the reign of an
oppressive government. Most importantly, Maguire frames Oz as the driving force behind the life and actions of a little green girl gone “wicked.”

Maguire’s Oz is a nation divided by a good/evil dichotomy. Certainly, this does not come as a surprise because one of Baum’s major themes in the original novel is the relationship between good and evil, particularly amongst Glinda, Dorothy, and the Wicked Witch. For example, Baum writes, “There were only four witches in all the Land of Oz, and two of them, those who live in the North and South, are good witches...Those who dwelt in the East and West were, indeed, wicked witches” (Baum 23). Additionally, Baum’s character development of the innocent and good Dorothy contrasts decisively with the sinful and evil Wicked Witch. While Dorothy and the Lion are held captive in the Witch’s castle, Dorothy kindly tends to the Cowardly Lion. Baum writes, “Dorothy carried him food from the cupboard. After he had eaten he would lie down...and Dorothy would lie beside him and put her head on his soft, shaggy mane” (Baum 126). In contrast to Dorothy’s good deeds and gentle demeanor, the Wicked Witch made Dorothy “work hard during the day, and often...[she] threatened to beat her” and she “struck Toto a blow with her umbrella” (Baum 126). With this story, Baum presents the conflict between good and evil. But Baum’s reader never learns how his characters became good or evil. Refocusing the narrative onto the Wicked Witch, Maguire uses Wicked to fill in the gap Baum leaves blank: What exactly makes the Wicked Witch so wicked?

To answer that question, Maguire creates new characters and gives new life to marginal characters from The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. In Wicked, Maguire
refocuses the novel on the development of Elphaba. The novel begins in the days preceding Elphaba’s birth. The reader is introduced to her father, Frex, a Unionist minister,¹ and his promiscuous wife, Melena. Frex ventures off to save his parishioners from the incoming Clock of the Time Dragon, a traveling theatrical troupe whose plays parody the sinful behaviors of its audience. As Maguire writes, it “combined the appeals of ingenuity and magic” to seduce its audience into seeing the world through the perspective of reality, not religion (13). While, Frex is off preaching, Melena goes into labor. After a close encounter with an angry mob (which just so happens to be after her husband), Melena is forced inside the Clock of the Time Dragon where she gives birth to Oz’s first green baby. That is, a green baby who also happens to have a set of razor sharp teeth.

Born a shameful shade of green, from the first moments of her life, Elphaba is partially neglected by her parents and despised by the Ozians. For instance, referring to the green baby, Frex says, “It’s the wrong color…Heaven is not improved by it…and heaven does not approve. What are we to do!” (Maguire 23). Other than the little affection she receives from her grandmother, Nanny, and her parents’ lover, Turtle Heart, Elphaba is cast aside as a byproduct of her parents’ bad behavior. Maguire explains, Frex “had felt the scorn of the people…they had connected the Time Dragon’s slanderous story of a corrupt minister with the arrival of a deformed child” (Maguire 39). Due to her Otherness, Elphaba spends most of her childhood without a comfortable place for her to fit into society.

¹ Maguire’s Oz is comprised of three main religions: the traditional religion, Unionism; the pagan religion, Lurlinism; and the Pleasure Faith.
The novel flashes forward to Gillikin, the region of Oz that houses Elphaba’s college, Shiz, where she has a difficult time fitting in with the other students. This is especially true when she meets her roommate, who will become both her closest friend and deepest enemy, Galinda. At Shiz, Elphaba discovers she has a passion for Animal Rights. And after meeting her professor, Doctor Dillamond, she learns that in order to find equality amongst humans and animals, the Wizard’s reign must end. Looking for biological connections, Doctor Dillamond and Elphaba seek to prove animals and humans are genetically the same. Maguire writes, they “did not want to announce any breakthroughs until he had figured out the most politically advantageous way to present them...The Wizard’s right to impose unjust laws may be better challenged if we know how the old codgers explained it to themselves” (114). But before Doctor Dillamond can announce there is scientific evidence that humans and animals are related, he is suspiciously murdered. Out of grief and determination to seek revenge, Elphaba leaves Shiz to begin restructuring Oz—from the top down.

Transitioning into adulthood, Elphaba moves to the Emerald City where she goes underground “to live here like a snail...Hidden and private” as an assassin (Maguire 189). In the midst of an adulterous affair with her former college friend, Fiyero, Elphaba tries to assassinate the Wizard’s pawns; however, after a single botched attempt and the murder of her lover, she vanishes away into the hills of Kiamo Ko. There, she studies spells and learns to live the life of a “witch.” And it is

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2 While at Shiz, Galinda changes her name to Glinda. In this thesis, Galinda/Glinda’s name will be used in accordance with Maguire’s usage.
here the story ends—after a tornado rages through Oz and drops off Dorothy who
drenches and accidentally kills the Wicked Witch with a bucket of water.

Through this story, Maguire makes it clear that there is no definitive cause of
Elphaba’s demonization as wicked. As his text suggests, although she considers
committing violent acts, Elphaba’s wickedness never comes to fruition. This leaves
an open and ambiguous ending that many readers have harshly criticized. As a
result, there is also been a lack of scholarship. To date, there has been very little
scholarship about Maguire’s novel. Mostly, the scholarship that has been published
about Wicked is focused on the 2003 Broadway musical of the same name. In fact,
while researching for this project, only two articles were credible enough to cite as
existing criticism.

Alissa Burger’s article, “Wicked and Wonderful Witches: Narrative and Gender
Negotiations from The Wizard of Oz to Wicked,” examines how the experiences of
Dorothy, Glinda, and the Wicked Witch have evolved through transformations of
gender construction. Specifically, Burger frames this argument through Baum’s
original text, the 1939 film adaptation, Maguire’s novel, and the musical, Wicked.
Burger’s analysis suggests that through the evolving legacy of Oz, “these works
reimagine and reinscribe female experience and expression” (124). Burger argues
that through the different adaptations of Oz, the female characters portray the many
facets of gendered identity:

[I]n The Wizard of Oz film, Dorothy and Glinda are “good girls,”
protected and blessed; conversely, the nameless Witches of the East
and West are feared, despised, and thoroughly evil. Ozians celebrate
the deaths of the Witches, while they revere Dorothy and Glinda. The two versions of *Wicked*, on the other hand, provide a number of flawed, imperfect, and sexual women, disrupting the gendered dichotomy of the earlier versions. (124)

In comparison to the earlier version of *The Wizard of Oz*, Burger emphasizes Maguire’s novel’s uniqueness by underscoring that Elphaba’s identity is relative to her experiences in Oz. Burger’s article is not a failure in terms of a critical approach to the text, but she does negate the idea that *Wicked’s* characters can be analyzed independently of *The Wizard of Oz*.

One article that focuses solely on *Wicked* is Christopher Roman’s “*The Wicked Witch of the West*: Terrorist? Rewriting Evil in Gregory Maguire’s *Wicked*.” This article explores the definition of evil and how (if at all), Elphaba falls under that definition. Presenting interdisciplinary definitions of “terrorism,” Roman deduces that how and why one becomes involved in terrorism cannot be explained. He suggests that metaexplanations of dysfunctional society and life do not conclude with the development of terrorists or terroristic acts (215). As such, Roman suggests that Maguire offers no clear explanation as to how Elphaba becomes “wicked” or in modern language “a terrorist.” He writes, “[T]here is a certain tension that emerges from finding a root cause, such as something in her childhood, her upbringing, or her schooling that would explain Elphaba’s labeling as wicked” (218). But, as Roman continues, “Maguire does not answer this question for us. Within the context of his text, he makes it clear that Elphaba is not wicked...” (218). Roman finally introduces the text into its own critical evaluation, but he fails to
articulate Elphaba’s many complexities and how they may contribute to her misnomer of the Wicked Witch of the West, even if she is not wicked.

“Brooms, Beasts, and the Phallus: identifying the Wicked Witch through dichotomous blends in Wicked” explores Elphaba’s complexities and uncovers how they lead to her demise. It excavates the conversation about Wicked from underneath the shadow of The Wizard of Oz, and hones in on how Elphaba functions within Oz’s rigid dichotomies. To this end, this thesis relies on a framework erected from psychoanalysis and feminist theory.

Chapter one, “Innie or Outtie: Male/Female Blend,” suggests that Elphaba first threatens the divided structure of Oz by blending concepts of male and female sexuality. Situating the text under the theories of Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud, this chapter argues that Elphaba is born as a pseudo-hermaphrodite, or one that appears to be of both sexes. Because of this hermaphroditic appearance, this chapter argues she is involuntarily castrated. Moreover, this chapter contends that after the castration, Elphaba subconsciously seeks to find her penis by becoming sexually ambiguous.

Chapter two, “If I Only had a—Phallus: Healing the Mind/Body Split,” discusses how Elphaba cannot recapture her masculinity simply through blending male and female. Here, I argue that by uniting Oz’s mind/body split, Elphaba is able to simulate the phallus. I explore how Elphaba’s broom and the Grimmerie, Earth’s magic book of spells, act as her penis and allow phallic power. To construct this argument, this chapter employs the critical work of feminist and psychoanalytic
scholars such as Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar.

Chapter three, “Oz on the Chopping Block: The Human/Animal Hybrid,” presents the idea that by representing the phallus, Elphaba creates castration anxiety. This chapter pivots the focus from the mind/body split to explore how Elphaba hybridizes human and animal. Using this angle, it is evident that Elphaba creates castration anxiety throughout Oz. To support this argument, this chapter relies on the theories of ecofeminism and an emerging field of criticism, animal studies.

The conclusion of this thesis explores modern and ancient definitions of the term “wicked.” Looking at these definitions explains how Elphaba’s blending of antithetical ideas indentifies her as the Wicked Witch of the West. I argue, then, that this identification and stigmatization demands the witch must die. Further, I explore why Oz creates Elphaba’s death sentence. To conceptualize this argument, this conclusion provides an example of how this same idea of “wickedness” is present in post-9/11 American culture.
Feminist criticism and gender studies have long explored the difference between male/female and masculine/feminine. In their introduction to *Women: Images and Realities*, Amy Kesselman, Lily D. McNair, and Nancy Schniedewind effectively describe the arguments of classic feminist scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan. Kesselman, McNair, and Schniedewind write, “While gender is a social category, the word ‘sex’ describes the physiological identities of women and men. The distinction between sex and gender enables us to see that the particular expectations for women and men in our culture are neither immutable or reversible” (9-10). In other words, the construction of gender founds itself upon culture’s social demand of sex identity. Culture demands that sex and gender correlate: a man should act “masculine” and a woman should be “feminine.”

In recent years though, the discourse of gender studies has shifted. Instead of arguing there are differences between men and women, scholars such as Judith Butler argue that the cultural representation of women is derived from the male and masculine identity. In this argument, femininity is only comprehensible under the terms of masculinity. That is, to be female is to be not male. To be feminine is to be not masculine. As Butler states in her influential text *Gender Trouble*, “The female sex is thus also the subject that is not one. The relation between masculine and feminine cannot be represented in a signifying economy in which the masculine constitutes the closed circle of signifier and signified” (15). According to theorists
such as Butler, gender identification is based upon masculinity—femininity is diagnosed through the lack of masculinity or the lack of the phallus.

In the opening scene of *Wicked*, the Tin Woodman, Scarecrow, and Lion attempt to identify or classify the Wicked Witch. Accompanying Dorothy down the Yellow Brick Road, the characters converse about the recent events in Oz: the death of the Wicked Witch of the East and their new mission to kill the Witch of the West. Hovering in a tree above, Elphaba hears them slanderously speaking of her. The Lion says, “Of course, to hear them tell it, it is the surviving sister who is the crazy one...What a Witch. Psychologically warped; possessed by demons. Insane. Not a pretty picture” (Maguire 1). However, in accordance with Butler’s theory, as they continue their conversation, they can only refer to the Witch in terms of masculinity. The Tin Woodman says, “She was castrated at birth...She was born hermaphroditic, or maybe entirely male” (Maguire 2). He continues, “She’s the spurned lover of a married man” (Maguire 2). Finally, the Scarecrow interjects, “She *is* a married man” (Maguire 2). Speculating the possibilities, the characters only identify Elphaba through phallic language and signifiers of masculine identity. Still, even though their conversation is demeaning and degrading to Elphaba’s identity, it provides insight to Maguire’s notions of androgyny in the text.

According to Juliet Mitchell, in her introduction to Jacques Lacan’s *Feminine Sexuality*, “Sexual difference can only be the consequence of a division; without division it would cease to exist. But it must exist because no human being can become a subject outside of the division of the two sexes” (6). In this, Mitchell divulges that male and female must be and always are separate; nothing exists
between the opposing poles. For Elphaba, the demand for the male-female division is problematic because, as the Tin Woodman accurately claimed, she is born as a hermaphrodite. Immediately after she is delivered, the fishwife announces, “Another willful boy,” but the crone claims, “it’s a girl” (Maguire 20). Finally, another woman interrupts and says, “Hah...look again, there’s the weather vane” (Maguire 20). Staring down at the naked newborn through the lens of gender dichotomy, the women cannot determine if the baby’s genitals are male or female. This scene suggests that Elphaba enters Oz as a blend of male and female, or an androgyne.

Based on the cultural requirement that one must be either male or female, Elphaba’s hermaphroditic appearance must be resolved to reveal either one sex or other. Lacan argues in Feminine Sexuality, that identity is created “in the fissure of a radical split” (Mitchell 5). Accordingly, if baby Elphaba is to be identified under the male-female conditions of Oz, her genital androgyny must be resolved. As Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty suggests, in Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts, the androgyne must yield to “some sort of operation to resolve the ambiguity” (292). Accordingly, Elphaba undergoes a castration. Maguire writes, “Only after a second and third rub was it clear the child was indeed feminine. Perhaps in labor some bit of organic effluvia had become caught and quickly dried in the cloven place” (20). Even though this is not a literal castration of male genitals, by rubbing the effluvia off, the women remove the apparatus that signifies the penis. As a result, Elphaba’s gender is no longer ambiguous; they confirm her gender for her. For that reason,
this “split” or castration abolishes Elphaba’s choice to construct her own identity and forces her to impersonate the identity of a female.

According to Lacanian theory, when an object is removed from an individual, it becomes the signifier of loss and desire. In other words, that which is taken away will have a permanent mark of loss. Even after Elphaba enters adulthood, her body maintains the mark of loss. Gazing at Elphaba’s unclothed body, her lover and college friend, Fiyero, notices “an odd shadow near the groin—for a sleepy moment he wondered if some of his blue diamonds had, in the heat of sex, been steamed onto her own skin—or was it a scar?” (Maguire 197). This shadowy scar on Elphaba’s groin is an apparition of permanent lack; it resembles the object she lost at birth. As a result, Elphaba tries to ameliorate that scar, her lack, by replacing it with something else. Lacan supports this idea when he writes, lack is “inscribed at the root of the structure...[and] has to resurface in the desire...” (116). Because Elphaba lost her masculinity, masculinity becomes the object of her demands and desires. Despite her corporeal femaleness, trying to fill this lack and desire, Elphaba blends Oz’s gender roles.

To conceptualize this argument, it is necessary to momentarily divert this discussion to frame the gender contexts in Oz. In short, The Land of Oz maintains traditional gender roles. As Elphaba recalls, “women wore cologne, men wore proofs: to secure their own sense of themselves” (Maguire 231). This passage suggests that Oz’s women conform to beauty and superficiality, while the men concentrate on intelligence and success. Moreover, the education structure of Oz reinforces gender traditionalism. For example, as Maguire details, Galinda did not
go to “one of the better colleges—those were still closed to female students” (Maguire 65). These examples suggest that women serve as secondary citizens in Oz. They have no cultural impact and little opportunity for upward mobility. This is why, as Elphaba confesses, in Oz, “Women are weaker...their arena is smaller” and “their capacity...is less alarming” (Maguire 197). As this passage suggests, Maguire constructs Oz as a land that (re)confirms gender traditionalism. With no concept of resistance in Oz, women are obedient and claim satisfaction with their predestined lives of subjectivity.

Thus, gender cannot be individually reconfigured in Oz. According to Sarima, the wife of Elphaba’s slain lover, Fiyero, gender is never a choice in Oz. In a conversation with Elphaba, Sarima narrates how the formation of gender was established through tradition and history:

[D]on’t you know that distinction? Tribal mothers always tell their children that there are two kinds of anger: hot and cold. Boys and girls experience both, but as they grow up the angers separate according to the sex. Boys need hot anger to survive. They need the inclination to fight, the drive to sink the knife into the flesh, the energy and initiative of fury...And girls need cold anger. They need cold simmer, the ceaseless grudge, the talent to avoid forgiveness, the sidestepping of compromise. (Maguire 285-86)

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3 A number of women in the text are shown to move through the ranks of Oz. However, it must be noted that their mobility is derived from the power of a man (i.e. Glinda’s social climb comes from her husband’s social position, and Nessarose’s magical and powerful shoes are made by her father).
Sarima’s description clearly demonstrates that there are distinct differences in masculine and feminine behavior passed through the generations and implanted during childhood. As Butler argues, “The limits of the discursive analysis of gender...preempt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture” (12). As Sarima explains, the construction of gender is not an individualistic process. It is a formulaic process rooted in Oz’s tradition and history.

With the gender context of Oz unfolded, it is possible to examine how Elphaba defies this notion of gender and begins to construct her own gender identity. After this conversation with Sarima, late in the novel, Elphaba begins to contemplate the possibility of re-constructing or re-configuring her own gender. Butler contends, “identifications are the consequence of loss, gender identification is a kind of melancholia, in which the ...prohibited object is internalized” (85). To fill the lack caused by her castration, Elphaba must not just desire masculinity; she must demand it, or as Butler suggests, internalize it. Maguire writes, “She thought about hot anger and cold anger, and if it divided the sexes, and which she felt, if either, if ever...She watched the sun bleed ice water out of the icicle. Warm and cold working together...” (286). Using Sarima’s gendered framework, Elphaba realizes that to “be successful, one would need both sorts” (Maguire 286). Unlike Sarima, Elphaba believes gender characteristics can be chosen. However, Elphaba does not realize that she has already been unconsciously constructing her gender by trying to regain the maleness and masculinity she lost at birth.
For example, Elphaba tries to become masculine by being sexually ambiguous. Butler writes, “The institution of a compulsory and naturalized heterosexuality requires and regulates gender as a binary relation in which the masculine term is differentiated from a feminine term, and this differentiation is accomplished through the practices of heterosexual desire” (31). In some ways, Elphaba fulfills the cultural demand of heterosexual desire. Her sexual encounters with Fiyero in the Emerald City show that she is attracted to and capable of heterosexual intercourse. However, while they are classmates and roommates at Shiz University, Elphaba and Galinda travel to the Emerald City to meet the Wizard. During this trek to question the Wizard about the murder of their professor, Doctor Dillamond, Elphaba presents moments of sexual ambiguity. Maguire writes, “[L]ike other third-class travelers, in the back rooms above inns” Elphaba and Glinda, “[i]n a single lumpy bed...huddled together for warmth and encouragement and, Glinda told herself, protection...Glinda would start as if from a frightful dream, and nestle nearer to Elphaba” (169). Even though this scene depicts a homosocial relationship between two women, it suggests that Elphaba assumes a masculine role of the protector in what can be perceived as a homosexual experience. In this, she acts as the masculine, dominating figure that shields Glinda from emotional and physical harm.

Elphaba’s masculinity is heightened not only by her own masculine behavior but also by Glinda’s femininity. Maguire writes, Glinda “could recall far more clearly how she and Elphie had shared a bed...How brave that had made her feel, and how vulnerable too” (Maguire 344). By emphasizing Glinda’s need for Elphaba to make
her feel brave and how Elphaba’s presence made her feel vulnerable, Glinda reinforces her femininity. Galinda is female because she is not inherently brave and she assumes the sexually vulnerable role. And it is Elphaba who inspires these feelings. She perpetuates Glinda’s femininity, and, as a result, that reinforces Elphaba’s own masculinity. In other words, by making Glinda feel more feminine, Elphaba becomes more masculine.

This masculinity or sexual ambiguity extends into her heterosexual relationship with Fiyero. While living underground in the Emerald City, Elphaba is discovered by her former Shiz classmate, Fiyero. Looking at a portrait of Saint Glinda, Fiyero “saw, in the underwatery shadows, that the oratory was inhabited by a penitent. The head was bowed in prayer, and he was about to move away when it struck him that he knew who it was” (Maguire 180). At this moment, he realizes the penitent is Elphaba. At first, she tries to avoid him, for she is afraid he will expose that she has been living secretly in the Emerald City. But after a few encounters, Elphaba and Fiyero engage in an illicit affair, despite that Fiyero has a wife living in a neighboring region called the Vinkus. Through this affair, Elphaba blends Oz’s ideas of male and female through her sexual behavior. She assumes the dominant, and even violent masculine role in heterosexual intercourse. For instance, when Fiyero sexually provokes her, Elphaba initially responds with timid femininity. She cries, “No...no, no, I'm not a harem” (Maguire 191). But just as quickly as she says no, Elphaba states, “I’m not a woman...” and “her arms wheeled of their own accord, like windmill sails...not to kill him, but to pin him with love, to mount him against the wall” (Maguire 191). In this scene, Elphaba abruptly transitions from a shy female
to a sexualized, dominating, male-like creature. O'Flaherty contends that “her erotic freedom...makes her a phallic woman” and, because of this, she “follows the pattern of exchange in sex roles” (300). Thus, by not playing the part of the timid and victimized female in sex, Elphaba incorporates masculinity into her behavior. She fills the lack and makes it visible that she is not just a disempowered woman of Oz.

According to O'Flaherty, “the androgyne begins as a creature who is destined to become truly bisexual but appears to be either male or female” (293). An androgynous being is a blend of male and female but prominently displays the characteristics of one sex or the other. Even though she displays male behavior, the Ozians still see Elphaba as a woman. For instance, Maguire writes, “And Elphie wasn’t just a different (not to say novel) provincial type—she seemed an advance on the gender” (207). Singularizing “gender,” Maguire still suggests that the culture of Oz will only allow her to be and will only see her as one sex and gender. And, as explained in the introduction of this chapter, that which is not male and masculine must be and can only be female and feminine. Bearing that shadowy scar of castration, Elphaba demands she fills her loss. Consequently, Elphaba seeks to fill the lack another way—to find the phallus by uniting the mind/body split.
IF I ONLY HAD A—PHALLUS:

HEALING THE MIND/BODY SPLIT

The largest section of *Wicked* takes place during Elphaba’s formative college years at Shiz University. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the structure of Shiz because it plays an integral role in the development of Elphaba and her cultural milieu. Before Shiz, Maguire uses the text to focus on the physical and social development of Elphaba. But at Shiz, the mind becomes the center of attention. As a result, it is here that the idea of Oz’s mind/body split is revealed.

Shiz University is located in the Gillikin region of Oz. Although the Gillikin region is rural, it houses the largest urban areas in Oz, Shiz and the Emerald City. Shiz is initially introduced through the lens of Galinda. Maguire writes, “Galinda’s family continued to prefer rural Gillikin, with its fox haunts, its dripping dells, its secluded ancient pagan temples to Lurline. To them, Shiz was a distant urban threat, and even the convenience of rail transportation hadn’t tempted them to risk all its complications, curiosities, and evil ways” (64). As displayed here, the idea of Shiz is intimidating to the rural areas that dominate the Land of Oz. In spite of the Shiz’s inauspicious disposition, students from across Oz’s regions attend Shiz University and learn to become educated and productive citizens. It is at Shiz that Elphaba meets Galinda, her future confidant and enemy. And it is at Shiz that Elphaba learns to resist ideas of Animal segregation. But most importantly, I argue, it is here that Elphaba learns to heal the mind/body split.

In his theoretical essay criticizing contemporary teaching pedagogies, Paulo Freire argues in “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education” that education is the
foundation for oppressive politics. In other words, the banking system of education is a hyper-conscious, methodical pedagogy that aims to suppress and control. He writes, “the oppressors use the banking concept of education in conjunction with a paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of ‘welfare recipients’” (Freire 258). In connection to *Wicked*, this idea of the banking system is applicable to the pedagogy at Shiz. This system only reaffirms the Wizard’s oppressive code of thought because Madame Morrible, the headmistress of Shiz, uses pedagogy to “obey the Wizard absolutely” (Maguire 155).

By institutionalizing the Wizard’s authority, Madame Morrible uses the banking praxis to train her students in the Wizard’s oppressive politics. Freire would maintain by doing this, the students at Shiz unknowingly become “depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communication, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive…” (257). For example, while Madame Morrible recites her Quells or poems for the students, she says, “We celebrate authority/ Fraternity, Sorority/ United, pressing onward we/ Restrict the ills of liberty” (Maguire 84). This propagandic poem suggests that Madame Morrible’s teachings purposefully reinforce the Wizard’s oppression. Madame Morrible continues, “Let your especial history./ Be built upon sorority/ Whose Virtues do exemplify,/ And Social Good thus multiply./ *Animals should be seen and not heard*” (Maguire 84). Again, her pedagogy is propaganda used to support the Wizard. This time, it is to fortify his ideas of Animal
Freire argues this type of pedagogy negates the body from learning because learning becomes “a hollow...alienating verbosity. The outstanding characteristic of this...education, then, is the sonority of words, not their transforming power” (257). This pedagogical praxis reinforces the mind/body split because it does not permit student reaction to learning. For example, the girls in Doctor Dillamond’s class are prompted to respond to Madame Morrible’s earlier Quells. However, the girls “didn’t understand what a biological response to poetry might be and sat silent at...questions” (Maguire 88). This example suggests the girls’ minds are disconnected from their bodies. Instead of working through the ideas of the Quells and finding a passionate response in their bodies, they sit silently and take the Quells at face value. Additionally, after conversing with Madame Morrible about the future of her education, Galinda “struggled with unnamed conflicts within her” (Maguire 92). Like the other girls, Galinda proves that she cannot recognize or utilize a physiological response to intellectual information.

In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, bell hooks writes, “To call attention to the body is to betray the legacy of repression and denial that has been handed down to us...where the body had to be erased, go unnoticed” (191). Accordingly, by alienating the students from their own bodies, Madame Morrible is able to maintain a lack of critical consciousness. For as hooks would suggest, if Madame Morrible allowed the students’ minds and bodies to connect,

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4 One of the main objectives of the Wizard is to segregate humans and animals. Maguire establishes a distinction between animals with intellect and moral spirit with regular animals through the use of capitalization, as in Animals vs. animals. I discuss this distinction more thoroughly in chapter three.
they would “use such energy...in ways that invigorate discussion and excite the critical imagination” (195). And of course, this could lead to a critical evaluation of the Wizard’s rule.

The mind/body split is not localized to Shiz. In fact, it transcends into Oz’s popular culture. Perhaps the most explicit example of the mind/body divide outside of Shiz is evident at the Philosophy Club, a popular social scene at Shiz.

Traditionally, a philosophy club would be assumed to promote thinking, scholarship, and academic discourse. As Boq, Elphaba’s college friend, explains, a philosophy club is even a place where people go to find a discourse that may unite the mind and body. He says, “I always think, I never feel” and decides to rectify this disconnect at the Philosophy Club (Maguire 164). Many other Ozians feel this way. In fact, the Philosophy Club is so popular in Oz that it draws in members from all walks of Ozian life. Maguire writes, “The crowd was the most mixed Boq had seen in some time. There were Animals, humans, dwarfs, elves, and several tiktok things” (165). Attracting a large, diverse crowd, the Philosophy Club demonstrates the collective cultural psyche of Oz.

This proves to be problematic though, for the Philosophy Club does not promote philosophy or any pragmatic use of the mind. As Elphaba suggests, this is really a place where people go to waste time on sex (Maguire 164). Even though she refuses to go to the club, Elphaba proves to be correct. The events there substantiate that the most carnal and vulgar acts of sex take place at the Philosophy Club, particularly bestiality. Tibbett, the friend accompanying Boq to the Philosophy Club, is forced into having sex with a tiger. Maguire writes, “Tibbett...was made to
lie on his back on the floor of the stage. The Tiger strode over him and stood still while the dwarf and his assistants lifted Tibbett...so [he] hung beneath the Tiger’s belly, like a trussed pig...Then the dwarf pointed to Tibbett, who was beginning to moan into the Tiger’s chest” (168). As this passage suggests, in reality, the Philosophy Club negates the use of the mind and condenses all attention toward the body. In spite of its misleading name, “The Philosophy Club” deceptively suggests that the power of the mind can be achieved through sex. In reality, at the Philosophy Club, the mind is not being used at all.

This idea can be further elucidated through Boq’s experiences at the Philosophy Club. While watching the act between Tibbett and the Tiger unfold, Boq feels his mind separating from his body as his body becomes the locus of attention. Maguire writes, “It seemed to make Boq’s mind split in half, like a husk, and allow a tenderer, complacent mind to emerge. The softer, more bruisable aspect, the private intention, the surrendering of self” (167). In this, Boq’s mind becomes less cognizant. In fact, Maguire states that Boq “was knowing less and less, and it was more and more beautiful to do so” (167). As the idea of the mind becomes replaced with a “gingery appetite between heart and stomach and the resulting stiffening apparatus below that,” Boq’s body becomes the centralized focus (Maguire 167). And as this occurs, a dwarf states, “So now, let the true, clandestine study of knowledge begin” (Maguire 169). Boq learns that “knowledge,” in Oz’s fallacious way, is discovered through the body not the mind. And Maguire contextualizes Oz as place that focuses on the phallus as the driving force of knowledge.
In “The Laugh of the Medusa,” Helene Cixous states, “Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth. Our naphtha will spread throughout the world, without dollar—black or gold—nonassessed values that will change the rules of the old game” (1646-47). In other words, she argues that one must use the body to dismantle the cultural and political institutions that lead to oppression. Unfortunately, as Maguire illustrates, in Oz, the body can only be used for salubrious acts of desire, not for social change stemming from a critical mind. As such, the mind and body remained divided as a method of political control. However, Elphaba senses a disconnect, and dares to coalesce the mind and body. In the process, she finds this healing of the mind/body split allows her to regain the phallus she lost a birth.

To begin uniting the mind and body, Elphaba starts with Galinda. As a byproduct of the Wizard’s reign, Galinda is solely attuned to her body. In “Bodies of Knowledge,” Gloria Steinem argues that in a context like Oz, people are judged by “how we [look] instead of what [is] in our heads” (234). Steinem’s sentiments correlate with Galinda’s concept of self. As Maguire details, Galinda “reasoned that because she was beautiful she was significant” (65). Maguire continues his description of Galinda to sketch a girl who equates her intellect with her beauty:

Galinda was slow coming to terms with actual learning. She had considered her admission into Shiz University as a sort of testimony to her brilliance, and believed she would adorn the halls of learning with her beauty and occasional clever sayings. She supposed, glumly, that she had meant to be a sort of living marble bust: This Youthful
Intelligence; admire Her. Isn’t She lovely? It hadn’t actually dawned on Galinda that there was more to learn. (Maguire 75)

As Maguire’s passage illustrates, Galinda’s central focus is on the body—being smart means being beautiful. Galinda’s body overshadows her mind.

Cixous explains that, in a dichotomous culture, “there are no grounds for establishing a discourse” outside of the binaries (1643). Accordingly, because there is no concept of a mind and body blended in Oz, Elphaba does not have the language or preexisting discourse to explain the problematic nature of the mind/body split to Galinda. Nonetheless, she tries to destroy the Wizard’s idea of the divided mind and body. Once they establish themselves as roommates, Elphaba takes an ontological approach and probes Galinda with questions. She asks, “do you think evil really exists?” (Maguire 79). At first, Galinda can only respond in terms of the body. She answers, “Well, how do I know what I think? I dress to kill, though” (Maguire 79-80). Deriving from a political and cultural system that disengages the mind, Galinda struggles to think past the body.

Eventually, through Elphaba’s influence, Galinda begins to look beyond the body and recognize the value of a critical and discerning mind. For example, after the murder of Doctor Dillamond, the Goat professor at Shiz who is seeking proof of a biological connection between humans and Animals, Glinda pays tribute to him. In respect to his research, which she once protested, and in memory of his frequent mispronunciation of her name, she changes her name from Galinda to Glinda. Even more, Maguire writes, “Glinda was changed. She knew it herself. She had come to Shiz a vain, silly thing, and she now found herself in a coven of vipers” (133).
Responding to her newfound knowledge and activism, Galinda/Glinda redefines who she is and what she believes. As Maguire states, once Glinda changes her name, she “didn’t trust Madame Morrible either” (133). Cixous argues, “It is...by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm...in a place other than that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is, in a place other than silence” (1647). Cixous argues here that speech has been governed by male dominance. That is, women have no voice that can overpower patriarchy or patriarchal influence. Glinda may not use spoken language to resist authority, but her actions suggest that she is no longer silent. Teaching Galinda/Glinda how to use her mind, Elphaba begins to take back the phallus by giving Glinda a newfound voice—a method of challenging authority.

However, Galinda proves that despite her newfound voice, she cannot fully connect the mind and body. Ultimately, her mind and body work independently of each other. Elphaba remarks, “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 Galinda goes into some internal closet and shuts the door” (109). As Maguire details, Galinda/Glinda learns to use her mind, but she is not able to use the mind in conjunction with the body. As a result, Galinda does not act upon her thoughts because the body has been colonized by the lure of beauty. She uses her body in frivolous ways that minimize the power of both the mind and a passionate body. Elphaba, on the other hand, is the only character whose mind and body can work passionately, in unity.
For instance, Fiyero and Elphaba’s encounter in the Emerald City first suggests that Elphaba’s body reacts to her mind. Maguire writes, “She waited for him on appointed evenings, sitting naked under the blanket, reading essays on political theory or moral philosophy...She always brought his hands to her thin, expressive breasts...They moved together, blue diamonds on a green field” (191-92). Like the many times they meet for sex, Elphaba and Fiyero combine intellectual conversation with sexual experimentation. As they discuss the difference between ideas and acts of suppression in Oz, Elphaba concludes the conversation “to simulate sex against him” (Maguire 200). Cixous would argue that Elphaba is in a “world of searching, the elaboration of knowledge, on the basis of a systematic experimentation with the bodily functions, a passionate and precise interrogation of her erotogeneity” (1644). The mind and sexual pleasure become a dual process working together to create a fusion of the mind/body split. Using the mind, Elphaba also stimulates the body. Unlike Boq’s experiences at the Philosophy Club or the girls in Dillamond’s class, Elphaba finds that her body’s arousal comes with the stimulation of the mind.

This connection between the mind and body is also present in Elphaba’s interactions with her broom. After the Wizard’s army discovers that Elphaba is an underground assassin, Fiyero is murdered because of his connection to her. Heeding the warning, Elphaba wanders away into a remote region in the Vinkus called Kiamo Ko. And here Elphaba learns to do what all good witches can do—fly on a broom. In learning to fly, Elphaba’s intellect also acts as the body’s erotic stimulant. For instance, trying to learn how to fly on the broom, Elphaba uses her
mind to deduce how the broom works. She contemplates, "Was the broom magicked by Mother Yackle, with a vestige of some Kubrical instinct?" (Maguire 304). She also considers if Sarima and Fiyero’s daughter, Nor, who was caught flying on the broom, has a magical incantation over the boom. Maguire writes, “Or did Nor have a power developing in her, and did she bring it out in the senseless broom” (Maguire 304). Finally, she deliberates, “[M]aybe the broom was waiting to be believed in” (Maguire 304). As she engages in this thought and crouches over the broom, it “twitched back and forth in a naughty way, enough to raise welts in her inner thighs” (Maguire 304). Again, by engaging the mind, Elphaba encounters a sexualized reaction with the body.

Cixous argues that phallic power can be achieved through interactions of the mind and body. Using the body gives “her access to her native strength; it will give her back her good, her pleasures...Inscribe the breath of the whole woman...To become at will the taker and initiator, for her own right, in every symbolic system, in every political process” (1647). Thus, learning to fly brings Elphaba back to the phallus. Specifically, the broom becomes Elphaba’s phallic apparatus. Maguire most explicitly details how the broom becomes a phallic symbol through Nor’s experiences with the broom. After Nor steals the broom, she discovers that it can fly. Through this, Maguire describes a symbolic penis. He writes, “The thing rose...The top of the handle tilted farther up...as if it were a saddle of sorts. She held on tightly; her legs, especially in the upper thigh, felt as if they were swelling, the better to clench the handle between them” (Maguire 302). In this, Maguire
describes an elongated object that projects from between Nor’s legs. Like it does for Nor, the broom becomes Elphaba’s symbolic phallus.

Through the broom, Elphaba regains what she lost through castration: her penis. Accordingly, by reassuming a symbolic phallus, she acquires power. In “Medusa’s Head,” Sigmund Freud states, “To display the penis (or any of its surrogates) is to say: ‘I am not afraid of you. I defy you. I have a penis.’ Here, then, is another way of intimidating the Evil Spirit” (533). As a result, the effect of uniting the mind and body, for Elphaba, is the construction of a phallic apparatus, which transforms into phallic power that she uses to intimidate her enemies. For example, once she learns to use the broom, she renews her hatred for the Wizard and his Animal segregation policies. Maguire writes, “But now that the broom seemed able to carry her...her old contempt for the Wizard flare[d] up” (305). Additionally, this sense of power is what also leads her to strike (the already dead) Madame Morrible in the head and face with her broom (Maguire 365). Even more, it is her broom she victoriously raises while threatening Dorothy: “The Witch...stuck the end of her broom in a torch fire...The Witch held the burning broom even higher” (Maguire 401-02). In a sort of exhibitionism, by using the broom against the Wizard, Madame Morrible, and Dorothy, Elphaba exposes her renewed phallic power.

For Elphaba, finding the phallus is not always as literal as using a device that looks like a penis. This becomes evident when she finds the Grimmerie, the Wizard’s book of spells. In a balloon, the Wizard journeyed from Earth to Oz in search of the Grimmerie, Earth’s “ancient manuscript of magic” (Maguire 352). Sketching out ideas of occupation and warfare, the book can help the Wizard further
dictate Oz. Describing the book, Elphaba says, it is “a sort of encyclopedia of things numinous. Magic; and of the spirit world; and of things seen and unseen; and of things once and future...I can only make out a line here or there. Look how it scrambles as you watch” (265). As Elphaba details, the book is illegible to the Ozians. Because it is from Earth, it is a foreign language that cannot be deciphered in Oz. The Wizard believes that being from Earth and having the unique ability to read the Grimmerie will help him reinforce his power.

Upon finding the Grimmerie though, Elphaba discovers she has a unique capability to decode portions of it. Maguire writes, “Though her skill at reading was minimal, she gaped at what she saw,” and as Elphaba explains, “I can only make out a line here or there” (265). Though her skill is feeble, Elphaba continues to study the book. She believes that eventually “meaning might emerge on a page that a day earlier had been illegible chicken scratches” (337). Constantly honing her mind’s ability, Elphaba learns to read portions of the Grimmerie. For example, she utilizes the book to help create flying monkeys: “Also the Grimmerie had helped, if she was reading it correctly: She had found spells to convince the axial nerves to think skyward instead of treeward” (Maguire 334). Through learning to read the book of spells, Elphaba uses the mind to gain access into the Wizard’s world.

By doing so, Elphaba learns a language that does not exist in her culture. Possessing that skill gives Elphaba a newfound power. Cixous would contend that having this linguistic ability allows Elphaba to make the power “hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of...And...with what ease she will spring forth from
the ‘within’—the ‘within’ where she once so drowsily crouched” (1651). In other words, by learning this new language—a language of power—Elphaba breaks free of a system that long attempted to suppress and dominate. Even though the language of the Grimmerie is not new in the sense of creation, it is new to Elphaba and Oz. Therefore, she has the ability to penetrate the Wizard’s shield of language and has the capacity to assume his power. The Grimmerie becomes the signifier of the phallic power—physical authority charged by the power of her mind.

This idea can be seen in Elphaba’s interaction with the Wizard after learning to read the Grimmerie. In Madwoman in the Attic, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar suggest, a woman’s “wish to be wise is not only a wish to be equal to her husband but also a wish to penetrate those forbidden, ‘provinces of masculine knowledge...from which all truth could be seen more truly,’ it is a longing for...self reliance” (216). Here, as Gilbert and Gubar contend, learning “forbidden” knowledge allows one to see both the truth and the self with a greater sense of clarity. Likewise, by learning the language of the Wizard, Oz’s power structure and her position within that structure, Elphaba gains lucidity. Elphaba recognizes she has the same capabilities as the Wizard. After she is summoned by the Wizard to appear in his palace, Maguire writes, “She considered how she might use this command audience to her own advantage” (349). And for the first time in the novel, she claims her royal lineage. Elphaba says, “By my bloodlines, I can reinstate the

5 Royal lineage is a large part of Oz’s social structure. Elphaba’s mother is a descendent of the Eminent Thropp—the leader of Colwen Grounds in the Munchkinland region. Elphaba’s mother dies “off-stage,” which makes Elphaba next in line for the position. However, she denies the role, and Nessarose, the younger sister, assumes the position of Eminent Thropp.
office of the Eminent Thropp tonight and have your leader [the Wizard] arrested...Do not tell me what I can and cannot do in this house” (Maguire 349). The authoritative tone here suggests that the Grimmerie gives Elphaba the realization that she has the same ammunition as the Wizard. In one way, Elphaba uses the Grimmerie to assume the role of the phallus because she allows her newfound knowledge to assert the confidence of her physical equality.

Gilbert and Gubar write, “the woman, that is, who teaches herself the language of myth, the tongue of power, so that she can reinvent herself and her own experience...may express her anger more openly” (220). For that reason, learning to read the Grimmerie’s language and spells gives Elphaba the autonomy to physically express her disillusionment with the Wizard. By entering into the linguistic realm of the Wizard, she learns how to mimic the spells of his world:

She found much on power and damage....The Grimmerie describes poisoning the lips of goblets, charming the steps of a staircase to buckle, agitating a monarch's favorite lapdog to make a fatal bite in an unwelcome direction. It suggested the nocturnal insertion, through a convenient orifice, of a fiendish invention, a thread like piano wire, part tapeworm and part burning fuse, for a particularly painful demise. (Maguire 293).

Through the Grimmerie, Elphaba's mind and body blend because these spells make her capable of transposing her emotions into physical action. Consequently, this replaces Elphaba’s phallic lack with phallic power.
But the Grimmerie takes on a larger role. In one way, it becomes a phallic extension of her body. Unbeknowst to her, Elphaba is the Wizard’s daughter. Maguire does not blatantly confess that Elphaba is the Wizard’s daughter, but he does imply so. In the beginning of the novel, when Nanny questions Melena about her infidelity, Melena says, “I remember once when a tinker with a funny accent gave me a draft of some heady brew from a green glass bottle. And I had rare expansive dreams...of the Other World—cities of glass and smoke—noise and color” (Maguire 29). But still, she cannot remember if she had sex with him. After killing the Witch, Dorothy “brought the green bottle that said MIRICAL ELI- on the paper glued front” to the Wizard (Maguire 405). Upon seeing it, “the Wizard saw the glass bottle...gasped, and clutched his heart...shortly thereafter, the Wizard absconded from the Palace” (Maguire 406). His shocked and panicked reaction suggests he realizes at that moment that he set out to have his own daughter murdered.

With this idea in mind, learning to read the Grimmerie blends the mind/body split because it unites Elphaba’s mind with the origins of her body. In “This Sex Which is Not One,” Luce Irigaray states, “The organ which has nothing to show for itself also lacks a form which allows her organ to touch itself over and over again, indefinitely, by itself” (365). Using the metaphor of the vagina, Irigaray underscores the idea that women are divided and have a multifaceted identity. In one way, Elphaba’s identity is similar to Irigaray’s metaphor. Elphaba’s body is divided and multi-faceted because it is from two separate worlds. However, like a phallus, the Grimmerie unites Elphaba’s two divided parts “of Oz and of the other world” (Maguire 374). Elphaba may not know her body’s origins, but her quick connection
to the Grimmerie suggests that the book unites both sides of her. Irigaray explains, rediscovering the body is “[a] sort of expanding universe to which no limits could be fixed and which would not be incoherence nonetheless—nor that polymorphous perversion...in which the erogenous zones would lie waiting to be regrouped under the primacy of the phallus” (367). In accordance with Elphaba, rather than discovering her self under the rule of the Wizard, through learning the Grimmerie, she unites her mind with both sides of her body. Symbolically then, the Grimmerie acts as the phallus because it connects her split and divided bodily parts.

Examining how Elphaba incorporates Earth's language into her Ozian vernacular shows how the Grimmerie connects both parts of her body. For instance, she begins to use language that is unique to Earth. After Dorothy and her trio of friends arrive, Elphaba tries to convince the Lion to be her guard. Elphaba says, “You can protect me when I go out of here with my Grimmerie, my book of magicks, my Malleus Maleficarum, my mesmerizing incunabulum, my codex of scarabee, fylfot and gammadion” (Maguire 398). The term malleus maleficarum refers to the Medieval European witch trials. Hans Peter Brodel writes in “The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft,” the Malleus Maleficarum or “Hammer of Witches,” was a document spread widely throughout Germany between 1486 and 1520 and then again between 1569 and 1699. As Brodel explains, the Malleus Maleficarum was used to “combine popular ideas of harmful sorcery with a theologically plausible model of the Devil’s activity on earth” and to “campaign against witchcraft” (43). Additionally, “scarabee” is a reference to the ancient Egyptian artifact of the scarab (“scarab”). Lastly, “fylfot” and “gammadion” are
synonyms for the swastika ("fylfot," “gammadion”). Using this language, Elphaba references events, ideas, and objects that are solely unique to Earth’s history, not Oz’s. Thus, the mind and body are united because the mind begins to work through the language of her body’s dual origins. Although this only manifests in language, the Grimmerie proves, like a phallus, to connect Elphaba’s split parts.

Finally, after an involuntary castration at birth, Elphaba discovers a way to fill her demand and desire. Through Galinda, Elphaba explores the possibility of a disconnect between the mind and body. However, it is through learning to fly the broom and reading the Grimmerie that Elphaba becomes the singular character in all of Oz to unite the mind and body. As a result, she regains the phallus. Yet, she complicates her position in Oz because, once she has the phallus, she becomes a threat to political structure.
To demonstrate how Elphaba begins to threaten Oz, it is necessary to shift the argument from the mind/body to Elphaba’s hybridization of human and animal. Doing so more clearly demonstrates how Elphaba inspires castration anxiety. Freud states, “The terror of Medusa is thus a terror of castration that is linked to the sight of something...This is a confirmation of the technical rule according to which a multiplication of penis symbols signifies castration” (533). With a head of slithering snakes, the Greek mythological monster, Medusa, personifies the phallic woman. According to Freud, fear of her is a result of snakes’ symbolic representation of the phallus. In other words, if a woman has a symbolic phallus, she induces an unconscious fear of castration. In connection to Wicked, by regaining the phallus through blending the mind and body, Elphaba induces castration anxiety amongst the Wizard and his pawns, Madame Morrible and Dorothy. However, rather than invoking a fear of literal castration, Elphaba engenders fear of castrating phallic power. And Elphaba most explicitly does this by fusing the politically developed gap between human and Animal.

Ruling as a dictator, the Wizard entrusts all power to himself. As the novel begins, his current power struggle is with Oz’s animals. In Oz, there are two sets of animals: the animals, which are like regular animals, and the Animals, which are a learned sect of animals. The Animals are those with a spirit and have human-like qualities that define them as moral beings in the intellectual sphere of Oz. However, because their corporeal characteristics are genetically rooted in animal, the Wizard
refuses to acknowledge their humanness or contributions to society. As Doctor Dillamond, the Goat/professor explains, “the Wizard of Oz had proclaimed Banns on Animal mobility...This meant not only that Animals were restricted in their access to travel conveyances, lodging, and public service. That Mobility referred to was also professional...They were, effectively, to be herded back to the farmland and wilds...” (Maguire 88-89). Consequently, the Wizard’s policy of segregation establishes a clear, cultural dichotomy between human and Animal. In this social structure, humans are the hegemonic forces dominating the Animals.

Elphaba refuses to agree to this power structure and the idea that humans and Animals are different. Defiant of the Wizard’s discriminatory politics, Elphaba is determined, with the help of Doctor Dillamond, to prove there is an interconnection between humans and Animals and that the Animals should be reintegrated into the public sphere:

She told [Boq] about Doctor Dillamond’s work in natural essences, trying to determine by scientific method what the real differences were between animals 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—well, you see the implications. (Maguire 110)

These implications Elphaba refers to have the potential to disrupt the social hierarchy that distinguishes animals from Animals and humans from Animals. Even
more, the implications of Elphaba’s and Doctor Dillamond’s research threaten to dismantle the Wizard’s oppressive power.

Elphaba is not the only character whose ideologies threaten the Wizard. For instance, her parents’ friend and lover, Turtle Heart, refers to the Wizard when he says, “The danger is a foreigner...not a home-grown king or queen. The old women, and the shamans, and the dying: They to see a stranger king, and cruel and mighty” (Maguire 57). In this, Turtle Heart explains that he is also apprehensive and critical of the Wizard’s politics. Even more, Turtle Heart wants to create change. He says of himself, “Turtle Heart was on his way to the Emerald City...To talk of it brings duties back out of the pain and past. Turtle Heart to forget. But when words are to speak in the air, actions must to follow” (Maguire 57). What complicates the idea of resistance in Oz is that Maguire does not use the text to identify Turtle Heart’s wickedness or the wickedness of any other characters that desire to challenge the Wizard. As a character among an entire nation that detests and opposes the Wizard, Elphaba is the only one who becomes stigmatized as a phallic threat. Looking at how Elphaba narrows the boundaries of human and animal, this chapter suggests her human-animal hybridity causes castration anxiety.

Before the ways in which Elphaba creates castration anxiety can be discussed, it is important to revisit her birth scene. To do so, it is necessary to contextualize the events leading up to her birth. One of the more puzzling aspects of Maguire’s novel is the arrival and events of The Clock of the Time Dragon. The Clock of the Time Dragon is mechanical and theatrical device that travels across Oz and presents plays that represent the moral sins and failures of its audience. For
example, Maguire writes, “[T]he Dragon turned on its base, and pointed its talons into the crowd, indicating—without a doubt—a humble well digger named Grine...Then the dragon reared back and stretched two fingers in a come-hither gesture, isolating a widow named Letta and her snaggle-toothed maiden daughter” (12). After the Clock picks its audience members, it acts out their sins:

   Along came a puppet widow...The widow kissed the puppet husband, and pulled off his leather trousers. He was equipped with two full sets of male goods, one in the front and another hanging off the base of his spine. The widow positioned her daughter on the abbreviated prong in the front, and herself took advantage of the more menacing arrangement in the rear. The three puppets bucked and rocked, emitting squeals of glee. (Maguire 12-13)

Maguire does not clearly divulge if the Clock of the Time Dragon’s plays are an accurate indicator of the audience members’ sins or failures. But the members of the audience approach the Time Dragon with certainty that its reenactments are true stories of sin. Anything that comes from the Time Dragon is likely to be feared—including Elphaba, who is born inside of the Time Dragon.

   With this in mind, the fact that Elphaba is born inside of the Time Dragon initially creates a sense of trepidation because the Time Dragon seems to only produce ideas and images of sin. But there is an even greater negative effect from being born inside of the Clock of the Time Dragon. Maguire describes the Time Dragon as animalistic. It has “green painted leather, silvery claws, ruby jeweled eyes. Its skin is made of hundreds of overlapping discs of copper, bronze, and iron.
Beneath the flexible folds of its scales [are]...narrow leathery wings” (11). As such, the Time Dragon resembles an Animal, a despised being in Oz. Being born inside of the animalistic clock suggests that Elphaba is born as a human-animal hybrid. That is, she comes from the womb of her mother and the womb of the Time Dragon.

While in Melena’s womb, Elphaba maintains a human identity. But once Melena gives birth in the clock, Elphaba leaves the fixed point of the human boundary and enters into the gestational development of the animal. At this point, anthropologist Victor Turner would suggest, in “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage,” individuals like Elphaba begin to develop an ambiguous persona. He writes, “[D]uring the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject (the ‘passenger’) is ambiguous” (94). For Elphaba, this is the brief moment before she is delivered from the womb of the clock. When Elphaba is received from the hollow chamber of the animalistic and beastly Time Dragon, she is reborn into the world as a fusion of human and animal or, as Maguire writes, a “beast of unrecognizable species” (Maguire 124).

Turner states, images of human-animal liminality are cultural “representations of monsters” (104). He underscores the idea that cultural contexts such as Oz “are inclined to regard bizarre and monstrous masks and figures, such as frequently appear in the liminal period of initiation, as the product of...human and animal together” (104-5). History supports this idea; the original definition of a monster is any creature that is a human-animal hybrid. More modern definitions also include that a monster is a threat to safety and society (“monster”). Elphaba’s blend of human and animal is indeed monstrous, and this is most clearly illustrated
after she exits the womb of Melena and the Time Dragon. Describing the sweet characteristics commonly associated with a human baby, Maguire writes, “[S]he was observed to be prettily formed, with a long elegant head, forearms turned out, clever pinching buttocks, cunning fingers with scratchy little nails” (20). However, at the same time, Elphaba acts more like a wild beast than a human baby: “The child yawned, and the fishwife absentmindedly gave it a finger to nurse on, and the child bit the finger off at the second knuckle” (Maguire 20). As a result, from her first moments of life, Elphaba becomes a fearsome creature, an untamed animal. Or, as Melena describes, “a little monster” (Maguire 25). This idea of how Elphaba is born as a liminal, monstrous creature is necessary to understand because it is through this beastly blend that Elphaba proves she can castrate.

For that reason, Elphaba’s birth scene draws a curious connection to the myth of the vagina dentata, or the toothed vagina. Historically, the vagina dentata symbolizes the fear of castration. Likewise, Elphaba’s birth scene proves she is capable of such by biting the townswoman’s finger off. In fact, referring to the detached finger, the women bawdily say, “It’s a cock, she just realized she didn’t have one...Oh, beware the stupid boy first tries to please himself with her! She’ll snip his young sprout off for a souvenir” (Maguire 20-21). Thus, Elphaba’s anthropomorphic development enables her to physically castrate. In “Medieval Bestiaries and Modern Beasts—The Making of Beast Fables in Contemporary Literature,” Anna Warmuz states that this sort of behavior “reveal[s] the truth about the elements of the beast in human nature” (194). However, in Oz, humans and animals are separate both ideologically and physically. The biting of the finger does
not represent the collective ability to castrate; it represents Elphaba’s unique, foreign, and animalistic castrating ability.

The vagina dentata does not always demand a literal reading. In fact, the vagina dentata was coined as a symbol of castration through the Surrealists’ image of the praying mantis. Ruth Markus writes, in “Surrealism’s Praying Mantis and Castrating Woman,” “the Surrealists were captivated almost exclusively by the mantis because of her many ambivalent attributes. To them she embodied the most negative female archetype, the ‘castrating women’” (33). In this sense though, castration becomes symbolic for the dismemberment of power. Markus writes, “Her anthropomorphic appearance contributes to her symbolic image” (33). With this in mind, Elphaba also becomes a threat of symbolic castration.

This idea of symbolic castration is illustrated through Elphaba’s position within Oz’s predator-prey structure. In Oz, there is the assumption that power struggles exist under the function of predator and prey; humans are the hunter and animals are the prey. As Lori Gruen states in “Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals,” “the hunter’s destructive, competitive, and violent activity directed towards his prey is what originally distinguished man from animal” (62). This function is omnipresent in Oz. For instance, speaking to Elphaba, a Cow explains how the humans are preying upon the Animals:

[M]y udder is sore from their daily yanking...my children have been fattened on milk and slaughtered for veal...My silken flanks tартed up with garlands or the like. And we all know what happens next...This is
an exercise in your education, not ours. Mark my words, my rump’ll be served up rare on your finest Dixxi House porcelain dinner plate before the year is out. (Maguire 316-7)

This passage suggests that tyrannical figures such as the Wizard, Madame Morrible, and Nessarose, the Wicked Witch of the East, reinforce the traditional predator-prey power structure. That is, they support the oppression and even sometimes even the slaughtering of Animals. Even though Elphaba is human, the fact she has anthropomorphic behavior classifies her as an animal. Therefore, under the traditional order of Oz, Elphaba is prey. Still, with those same animalistic qualities that deem her prey, Elphaba challenges the conventional predator-prey paradigm.

To demonstrate the predator-prey reversal, Maguire, on one hand, illustrates Elphaba as prey. For example, the Wizard admits he voyeuristically preyed upon her. He confesses, “Madame Morrible...It was she who warned me about you...She was the one who advised me to have you watched” (354). Additionally, Madame Morrible attempts to dominate Elphaba by binding her to the Wizard’s “master plans” (Maguire 160). Justifying her plan to forcibly recruit Elphaba as one of the Wizard’s pawns, Madame Morrible says, “You mustn’t think of it as a prison sentence, though but an opportunity...bound as you are to an oath of silence” (Maguire 160). And ultimately, Elphaba succumbs as the prey when Dorothy “grabbed at a bucket for collecting rainwater...and hurled the water at the Witch” (Maguire 402). What these examples demonstrate is that Elphaba is the target of Oz’s predatory characters. At first glance, it seems as if Elphaba only fills the animal role of prey.
But examining her role in the predator-prey structure from another angle, Elphaba appears to also be a predator. Following Gruen’s logic, by retaliating, Elphaba imitates “the emergence of hunting behavior” in power struggles (Gruen 62). In accordance with Gruen, by challenging her predators, Elphaba intimidates the phallic power of the Wizard. For instance, Elphaba threatens to publicly expose the deceptiveness of the Wizard’s politics. She says, “[I]t may be reversible. Or it may be perceived as reversible, which is just as bad. In the interim...the Animals lose their rights, one by one. Just slowly enough so that it’s hard to see as a coherent political campaign” (Maguire 116). By being defiantly outspoken, she hunts the Wizard’s power. This becomes symbolically castrating, for it reverses phallic power. In her epilogue to *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, ecofeminist Carol J. Adams expresses that by disconnecting the traditional predator-prey archetype, a shift in power occurs. As a result, Elphaba “destabilizes patriarchal consumption” (Adams 242). Adams suggests that by altering the systems between human and animal, the foundation of patriarchal and dominant hunting behavior becomes a capricious function. As such, Elphaba has the capability of usurping the Wizard’s power. In other words, if the hunter becomes the hunted, the power structure is susceptible to reversal. Thus, like the symbolic vagina dentata or the Surrealists’ praying mantis, Elphaba threatens to castrate the Wizard’s dominance.

Elphaba also vicariously dismembers the Wizard’s power by preying upon Madame Morrible. After years of living underground and unexposed in the Emerald City, Elphaba focuses her crosshairs on Madame Morrible. Maguire writes, “This was the target...Madame Morrible...this was the one she must kill” (217). After this
assassination attempt goes unexecuted, Elphaba preys on her again: “The Witch struck Madame Morrible with the flat of the broom, on the side of the head and face...The Witch searched the mantelpiece for the testimonial trophy with the biggest marble base, and she bashed Madame Morrible’s skull with it...” (365). The violent motives against Madame Morrible reverse the original relationship in which Madame Morrible preyed upon Elphaba. At the same time, this is predatory in the notions of symbolic castration, for Madame Morrible is “someone with authority” who supports and enforces the Wizard’s politics (Maguire 217).

Sent by the Wizard to kill the Witch, Dorothy also appears to be preying upon Elphaba. Her reaction to Dorothy delineates Elphaba as a predator in a peculiar way. Reacting to the Wizard’s demand for Dorothy to kill the Witch, Elphaba retaliates with an arsenal of animals. On one hand, this simple retaliation is predatory because she tries to attack Dorothy. However, this situation has a more complex predatory function. Like the traditional human predator, Elphaba victimizes other animals:

[T]he Witch was deep in an operation of sorts, stitching the wings of a white-crested male roc into the back muscles of one of her current crop of snow monkeys. She had more or less perfected the procedure, after years of botched and hideous failures...She had yet to see a female monkey in her population produce a winged baby, but she still had hopes. (Maguire 333-4)

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6 Elphaba is not privy to the fact that Dorothy does not intend to kill her.
7 It is important to note that Elphaba is only concerned about equality amongst Animals, not animals.
She manipulates and objectives the bodies of the monkeys to suit her needs. As Elizabeth Fisher states, in *Woman’s Creation: Sexual Evolution and the Shaping of Society*, “humans violated animals by making them their slaves...When they began manipulating...animals, they were even more personally involved in practices” of hunting behavior (197). Even more, Elphaba employs these animals to act as huntsmen to kill Dorothy on her behalf. And as a result, the animals die. As her canine companions charge Dorothy, the Tin Woodman, the Scarecrow, and the Cowardly Lion, Maguire writes, “the Tin Woodman struck the heads of her beasts one after the other with his axe. Killyjoy and his wolfy relations lay scattered like dead soldiers” (390). As Elphaba attempts to kill Dorothy, Elphaba becomes both the predator of Dorothy and other animals. She replaces the Wizard as the abuser of animals. And in the process, she attempts to castrate his power by also preying upon Dorothy.

In regards to the Wizard, Madame Morrible, and Dorothy, it is important to note that Elphaba never succeeds as a predator. She only instills castration anxiety—not castration. For instance, despite her lifelong attempt to castrate the Wizard’s power, his policies never change. Further, her first assassination attempt upon Madame Morrible is never carried out, and she discovers that Madame Morrible was already dead when she finally had the chance to kill. And ultimately, despite any predatory attempts and animal armies, Dorothy kills the Witch. The fact that she does not convert to the predator brings back the idea that Elphaba is both a human and animal. Turner would suggest that if she had usurped the Wizard’s power, she would have undergone a *rite de passage* (93-94). However, because she
does not succeed, she never transforms from prey to predator. Elphaba’s behavior arbitrarily delegates her between the boundaries of human and animal.

Elphaba’s unique intimacy with the Animals challenges the human-Animal dichotomy. In “Humans, Horses, and Hormones: (Trans)Gendering Cross-Species Relationships,” Natalie Corinne Hansen writes, “the idea of both [animal] and human bodies as mutually domesticating devices suggests new ways to conceptualize and enact...cross-species relationalities” (100). In this, Hansen explains that a positive relationship with the animal world allows both human and animal to become mutually affectionate for each other. Likewise, rather than viewing each other as enemies or Others, Elphaba and the Animals coexist and collaborate. For example, when baby Elphaba strays from her parents, they find her with “the beast from the hills” (Maguire 61). Maguire writes, “Behind her was a low growl. There was a beast, a felltop tiger, or some strange hybrid of tiger and dragon, with glowing orange eyes. Elphaba was sitting in its folded arms as if on a throne” (62). This closeness between Elphaba and the beast indicates that Elphaba is capable of blending the separate spheres of existence between human and animal.

This idea can be more fully examined through Elphaba’s relationship with the Goat/professor, Doctor Dillamond. Working closely with him, Elphaba discovers that she is not just helping the oppressed; she is the oppressed. By interacting with the professor, she “engender[s] mutual understanding” with the Animals (Hansen 91). For example, Elphaba says, “I know I am not traditionally presented...but I believe on the grounds of being a girl I am excluded from the Briscoe Hall library. And on the grounds of being an Animal so too...is Doctor Dillamond” (Maguire 111).
Here, Elphaba recognizes that she and Doctor Dillamond are denied access into the library because of Oz’s body politics. This is why she hopes Doctor Dillamond will “apply the same argument [of human-animal connections] to the differences between the sexes” (Maguire 111). In her relationship with Doctor Dillamond, Elphaba understands her existence through the Animals’ needs, not the Wizard’s political veils. Her identity and motive are born from the oppressed rather than the oppressor. This self-discovery and critical awareness has the capability of contesting the Wizard’s iron fisted ideology that humans and animals are fundamentally Other.

Perhaps the relationship that most fully connects Elphaba to the Animals is her brief but emotional encounter with the Elephant, Princess Nastoya. As Elphaba is traveling to the Vinkus, she meets Princess Nastoya. Elphaba closely identifies with the Elephant because they both exist in some form of human-animal liminality. For instance, Princess Nastoya says, “An Elephant is a hunted thing in these times...I am a beast who chooses magical incarcerations as a human over the dangerous liberty of my own powerful form” (Maguire 238). In this, Princess Nastoya explains that although she is an Animal, she lives as a human for her own safety. As a human that finds more similarities with the animal world than the human, Elphaba senses a deep-rooted connection with Princess Nastoya. Turner explains that among liminal beings “[d]eep friendships...linked by special ties persist...into old age” (101). Elphaba and Princess Nastoya share this bond. Elphaba commits to the Elephant and says, “I would like to stay here with you” (Maguire 239). And Princess Nastoya tenderly vows that if she is “still alive as an old matriarch monarch, or as a free
Elephant, I’ll come to your aid” (Maguire 238). This bond reconnects the divide the Wizard has established. By vowing solidarity and commitment, Elphaba and Princess Nastoya break the dichotomy and eradicate the Wizard’s notion that humans and Animals cannot coexist.

It is also necessary to briefly examine Elphaba’s own language, for it expresses that she ultimately views herself as an animal.⁸ Mikahil Bakhtin states, in Rabelais and His World, language “ignores the impenetrable surface that closes and limits the body as separate and completed phenomenon” (234). He continues, language “displays not only outward but also the inner features of the body...The outward and inward features are often merged into one” (234). Describing herself to Fiyero, Elphaba uses language that suggests she considers herself an animal:

What you call conscience I prefer to call instinct. Birds feed their young without understanding why, without weeping about how all that is born must die, sob sob. I do my work with a similar motivation: the movement in the gut towards food, fairness, and safety. I am a pack animal wheeling with the herd. (Maguire 199)

By using animal-related diction and referencing her self as an animal in the herd, Elphaba suggests that she is a hybrid. Establishing this identity, Elphaba threatens to dismember the balance of the Wizard’s human/animal dichotomy. As a result, this self-identification circumvents the Wizard’s pre-established boundaries of human and animal.

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⁸ This use of “animal” does not reference Maguire’s distinction of sentient or non-sentient animal. In this case, I am using “animal” under its most basic concept.
Born from the womb of a human and animal, Elphaba represents the ability to challenge the Wizard’s constructed human-Animal dichotomy. However, it is her symbolic power of castration that threatens the Wizard. Like the vagina dentata, she threatens the phallic power of Oz. In the process, she blends the traditional structure of the predator-prey paradigm, develops a relationship with the forbidden Animals, and ultimately concludes that she herself is part both. Ultimately, this physical and symbolic hybridization threatens to castrate the Wizard’s power because it defies his rule.

However, her wickedness never moves beyond causing castration anxiety. Even though the blending of male-female, mind-body, and human-animal, Elphaba never commits a single wicked act. Thus, this analysis suggests that it is not what Elphaba does through this blending that makes her wicked—it is what these dichotomous blends represent that makes Elphaba the Wicked Witch of the West. And, ultimately, these amalgamations of binaries demand the Witch must die.
CONCLUSION:
FROM OZ TO EARTH

So why does Elphaba become wicked after all? Maguire writes, “One never learns how the witch became wicked, or whether that was the right choice for her—is it ever the right choice?” (231). As suggested here and in the introduction, Maguire does not articulate how Elphaba becomes wicked. However, the definition of wicked must be reexamined in order to fully understand how Elphaba becomes the legendary Wicked Witch. Answering Maguire’s question if her wickedness “is ever the right choice,” I venture to argue that this is not a debate of right or wrong choices. This is a situation in which there is no choice.

Elphaba repeatedly proves that she exists as a blend of Oz’s binary structures. First, from birth, Elphaba represents the fusion of a dichotomous idea in Oz. Born as a pseudo-hermaphrodite, Elphaba signifies a blend between Oz’s concept of male and female. Such a being cannot exist in her culture; therefore, she is castrated. After her involuntary castration, Elphaba seeks to regain the phallus she lost at birth. To do so, she heals the mind/body split. Learning to fly, Elphaba regains her phallus through the broom. The broom symbolically represents a penis and induces a sense of phallic power. The Grimmerie also impersonates a symbolic phallus because it unites her mind with both sides of her body’s origins and teaches her the language of her oppressor. Finally, existing as a hybrid of human and animal, Elphaba inspires castration anxiety amongst the Wizard and his pawns. Delivered from the womb of human and animal, Elphaba is signified as the dangerous beast capable of physical castration. As she disrupts the role of predator
and prey, develops intimate friendships with Animals, and uses language that identifies her as an animal, Elphaba represents the phallus and induces symbolic castration anxiety. These fusions combined, Elphaba demonstrates that she does not exist as one idea in Oz. She slides along the continuum of this or that, one or the other.

To understand how this makes her wicked, it is imperative to reexamine the definition of “wicked.” In contemporary Western culture, “wicked” means that which is deviant in the most pernicious sense. Wicked is an adjective used to describe anything cruel, severe, or fierce (“wicked”). It has been established though that Elphaba does not fit that definition because she commits no violent or terroristic acts. Unlike the West’s modern definition, in ancient Hebrew, “wicked” is not something bad in moral conduct; instead, wicked now a verb, means “to break.” Specifically, “wicked” means to destroy purpose or function (“Ra”). With this definition, Elphaba is most certainly “wicked.” She breaks the most established and normalized binaries in all the Land of Oz.

Thus, Elphaba is not wicked because her blending causes wicked acts. Elphaba is wicked because of what that blending stands for—the threat of penetration, a break in Oz’s ideology. For forty years, the Wizard maintained order by keeping Oz’s culture dichotomous. However, through her blended identity, Elphaba breaks that order. By gaining and representing the phallus, she becomes the apparatus that penetrates between. Avaric, the Witch’s college friend even says,

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9 In Classical Hebrew, the actual word for “wicked” is “Ra.” “Ra” means to break or to destroy, such as to break or destroy God’s plan. Through many centuries of translation, “Ra” has become “wicked” in the English lexicon.
“Madame Morrible took out your records and read to us a profile of your character as assessed by your various teachers. We were warned about your spikiness, your fringiness” (Maguire 368). Using the term “spikiness,” Maguire demonstrates Elphaba is piercing. And using “fringiness,” suggests she is something additional to what already exists. As Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehdua state in Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance, the evil the deviant persons “do, or are thought to do, is felt to be so wounding to the substance and fabric of the body social” that there is “a crisis for that society” (31). Accordingly, her phallic existence, developed through the fusion of male-female, mind-body, and human-animal, wounds Oz by breaking the hymen of the system, the untouched area between the binary.

In doing so, Elphaba becomes indefinable, a tertiary object thrust in the midst of a politically binary system. In a culture that demands a person must be one or the other, there is no room for a break in ideology or between-ness because there is no language to identify it. Hence, Maguire’s uses language such as “different” and “unrecognizable” to describe Elphaba. She cannot be crystallized as a subject because language has no material to do so. Even though she commits no violent acts, she breaks, penetrates, and violates the norm. And that makes her the Wicked Witch of the West.

It is this difference and unrecognizability that demands the Witch must die. If she cannot be defined, she cannot exist. In fact, at the end of the novel, Maguire writes, “all that was left was the carapace of her reputation” (Maguire 406). The idea that all that remained of Elphaba was a “carapace” or empty shell suggests that Elphaba is in an empty space, such as what exists along the continuum of
oppositions. Between male and female, there is nothing. Nothing exists between mind and body. And between human and animal, there is a void. She has to die because the Ozians cannot conceptualize that something between the markers of their rationality exists. Thus, to ease the consciousness of the Ozians, somehow, someway, Elphaba must die. And it just so happens that she dies by the good-intentioned acts of Dorothy, who signifies solidarity of boundaries—white, feminine, and good. Elphaba’s melting death heals the break she caused. Normalcy in Oz can be restored.

This concept is difficult to put into language because our culture has removed concepts of between-ness out of its discourse and consciousness. For example, currently, the United States is battling the integration of Islam into the national discourse and narrative. Identifying itself as a predominately Christian nation, the United States functions on Biblical ideologies. That is, there are pre-established concepts that polarize American thought: good/evil, Christian/non-Christian, creationism/evolution, and so on. After the attacks of 9/11, Islam became a religion abruptly blasted upon the consciousness of American politics and people. Suddenly, an embodiment of tertiary ideas came onto the scene. With ideological and theological concepts that both resemble “us” and the Other, Islam did not fit on either side of American ideology. And the United States was unsure of how to conceptualize these ideas. Of course, those responsible for the horrendous events of 9/11 were labeled terrorists. But so were all Muslims.

Politically, the solution was to get rid of the tertiary body. To do so, on March 20, 2003, the United States military began its defensive mission against Iraq, in the
war that would later be mislabeled as Operation: Iraqi Freedom. The purpose of this war may have been to “liberate” the Iraqi people. But the rhetoric that stemmed from it implied there is no place for this group of people—not if they could break or pierce the established system of the United States. Steven Salaita states in “Beyond Orientalism and Islamophobia: 9/11, Anti-Arab Racism, and the Mythos of National Pride,” the United States “invoked 9/11 as evidence of Arab perfidy and later as evidence of the need to retain George W. Bush to protect ‘us’ from ‘them’” (251).

The government became the force that helped keep Islam from penetrating American ideology.

This sentiment was carried into daily, mainstream American life. Muslims who had spent a lifetime living in the United States were suddenly “terrorists.” Throughout the country, peaceful Muslims were profiled in airports. Trying to build a new community center near Ground Zero, Muslims of New York faced heavy resistance from conservative Christian organizations. In a few cases, Muslims were assaulted. And in even fewer cases, but more disturbingly so, Muslims were murdered. The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) reports that in 2005 there was a “29.6 percent increase in the total number of complaints of anti-Muslim harassment, violence and discriminatory treatment from 2004.” CAIR also notes that this marked “the highest number of Muslim civil rights complaints ever reported to CAIR in its twelve-year history” (“Islamophobia”). Ultimately, the culmination of these events led to an emerging, volatile American movement, anti-Arab racism. Because America’s normalcy was broken, the entire population of Muslim-Americans became the phallic threat. They threatened to penetrate into the United
States, and thus, like Elphaba, even though they were innocent, they were the guilty—the wicked evildoers.

Although anti-Arab racism actually existed long before the events of 9/11, it was not until the abrupt presence of Islam that the terms “Islamophobia” or anti-Arab racism became household terms. As Salaita expresses, “Since 9/11, Arab Americans have evolved from...an invisible group in the United States into a highly visible community” (245). Likewise, by making her presence known, by trying to regain phallic power, Elphaba makes it very aware she is there, in the middle of what already existed. Had she simply and quietly lived without penetrating into the middle of Oz’s dichotomies, she would likely have gone unnoticed. As Maguire writes, evil is “a presence not an absence” (370).

What is Maguire trying to tell his reader? Elphaba’s complexities make it difficult to say. But through this analysis, I contend that Elphaba is meant to teach us that wicked or evil does not always have a face or an action. Of course, there will always be isolated moments of wickedness and violence that challenge the stability of a culture. But on a daily level, the enemy has no true face until it is given one. And that face is unrecognizable until we can see a little part of our selves in it. Part this or part that. Part us. Part them.

Elphaba proves that once something comes in between, its objective is phallic and threatening. So to return to the perception of safety and normalcy, we must rid ourselves of it. Castrate it. Go to war with it. Kill it. Melt it. But what makes this story a cautionary tale is that if Elphaba had never been castrated at birth, she would have never been on the search for her phallus, in search of power. She never
would have threatened Oz. They made their own Wicked Witch of the West. And through our ideology, we make our own wicked enemies, too.
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