"So Glad to be at Home Again": L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a Rereading of Homer's *Odyssey*

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In an article in the *BBC News Magazine* some years ago, Lyman Frank Baum's (1856–1919) novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was called "one of the world's best-loved fairytales" (Jahangir 2009). The story of little Dorothy Gale being swept away from her home on a farm in Kansas by a cyclone and carried to a magical parallel world called the "Land of Oz," where she encounters numerous unknown creatures and dangers and has to survive various adventures before finally finding her way back home, is indeed one of the most popular literary fairy tales of the Modern Period. Ever since its first publication in 1900,[1] Baum's narrative has been an unparalleled commercial success, and this success continues to this day, especially in the U.S. Aside from countless reprints and translations, Baum's story was further popularised, and thus gradually became part of America's common cultural heritage, through a total of thirteen sequels and, in particular, by its adaptation to an early Technicolor film by MGM in 1939.[2] In modern scholarship, after a first period of almost virtual negligence, allegorical readings became increasingly popular and have remained so to this day. In this paper, I will suggest an alternative reading of Baum's novel, using Homer's *Odyssey* as its backdrop and hypotext. It will be shown that the Homeric *Odyssey* provides a key intertextual model of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the most important narrative devices of which are the Odyssean motifs of homecoming, transgression, and transformation. Furthermore, it will also be demonstrated that the character of Dorothy is, contrary to common assumption, not subject to development or maturation in the course of the narrative, but rather she is presented as a quasi-adult person from the very beginning of the novel, similarly to how the epic hero Odysseus, who is already a fully grown and mature man when he embarks upon his *nostos*, is depicted in the *Odyssey.*

Contrary to what might be expected in view of its immediate and unbroken commercial success, L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* received relatively little scholarly attention in the six decades that followed its first publication in 1900.[3] It was as late as the 1960s that the publication of one specific critical interpretation heavily promoted scholarly interest in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* when Littlefield (1964) suggested that Baum's narrative be read as a parable of the political and economic situation in the U.S. circa 1900, especially in the context of the discussion about the introduction of a bi-metallic monetary standard (that is, a standard that combined gold and silver) which was to replace the gold standard in order to increase the U.S. monetary supply.[4] On the basis of this allegorical interpretation, Littlefield painstakingly attributed allegorical "labels" to each character and to several important places and items in Baum's narrative.[5] Ever since, Littlefield's hypothesis has been subject to debate and has been continually revitalised, readapted and rewritten, right up to the very recent past.[6] Moreover, this hypothesis gave rise to various other allegorical readings.[7] Intriguing as Littlefield's and many of these other hypotheses may be, they all remain highly speculative and thus essentially unconvincing because they presume a consistent allegorical interpretation of a narrative text which ultimately defies any attempt at being proven or disproven. Furthermore, Littlefield's interpretation is problematic since it largely operates on the basis of the attribution of personal rather than conventional symbols to the various characters and items in the text, so much so that the assignation of a specific symbolic value to a character, place or item seems arbitrary and thus ubiquitously possible.

Therefore, in what follows, I suggest an approach fundamentally different from that of Littlefield and most of his "followers," that is, an interpretation of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* based on an analysis of the novel's relation with Homer's *Odyssey* as its hypotext, thus shifting the centre of interest from allegory/allegorisation to intertextuality. I will argue that the *Odyssey* is an important intertextual model of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, but has, to the best of my knowledge, not yet been considered in critical writings concerned with Baum's novel. The overwhelming impact which Littlefield's allegorical interpretation has had in the past few decades may be one reason for this gap in research. Another reason may be that Baum does not seem to exhibit much interest in the classical world in any of his novels or novellas (of which there are over eighty), so much so that a classical Greek text does not

necessarily suggest itself as a point of comparison for one of his works, especially when looking at it from a purely receptional and/or biographical point of view.[8]

The first Odyssean motif to consider is the *nostos* motif. Homecoming is *a*, if not *the* central narrative motor in Baum's novel. From the very beginning, Dorothy is rigidly determined to return home as quickly as possible. After she has been "ostensibly involuntarily displaced by a tornado," as Barrett (2006: 153) puts it, and realised that she and her little dog Toto are "not in Kansas anymore,"[9] and been informed by the Witch of the North about her whereabouts (*WWO* ch. 2: 20–22),[10] she makes her resolution unmistakably clear during her first encounter with the Munchkins (*WWO* ch. 2: 23): "I am anxious to get back to my Aunt and Uncle, for I am sure they will worry about me." Consequently, the rest of the whole narrative is set in motion by this very wish. Dorothy's wanderings through the Land of Oz, as her encounters with all the many strange creatures, stem from her simple wish to return to her foster parents in Kansas. In other words, Dorothy's perambulation of the whole geography of the fairy-tale *topos* is the result of her resolute wish for a successful *nostos.* Further, Chaston (1994: 210) rightly points out that Dorothy is not the only character in the novel who wishes to return home: "The Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Lion all gain new homes in the kingdoms that they are to rule. Through the Lion, who loves the woods in the Quadling country, Baum also reiterates the theme in the novel that the ideal home is a matter of personal taste." Finally, we must not forget the Great Wizard who seizes the opportunity to leave the Land of Oz in a balloon so as to finally return home, too (*WWO* ch. 17: 201–207). Therefore, all in all it can be firmly stated that the wanderings of Dorothy and her companions through the Land of Oz are a crucial and fully valid narratological entity which stands on an equal footing with other narrative strategies.[11]

In view of the palpable importance of the motifs of wandering and homecoming in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the question necessarily arises as to how far the Homeric *Odyssey* as *the* prototypical homecoming narrative[12] can be regarded as a potential hypotext of Baum's novel. Before pursuing this line of thought, two caveats must be taken into account: first, it could be maintained that the desire to find one's lost home and to devote all one's strength to this task could, in fact, be seen as an archetype common to all humans, so much so that any attempt at identifying a concrete intertextual model would ultimately prove futile. Secondly, it might also be counterargued that the *nostos* motif is a standard element of multitudinous fairy tales which all deal with the trials and tribulations of a hero/heroine who is compelled to leave his/her home so as to explore the world before returning or being brought back again (cf. e.g. the widespread fairy-tale patterns "the prodigal's return," AaTh 935, and "the homecoming husband," AaTh 974). As a result, the identification of a specific hypotext in Baum's novel would seem problematic in view of the general proliferation of the *nostos* motif in the fairy-tale genre.[13] Nonetheless, despite these potential objections, I would like to argue that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* may be regarded as being intertextually indebted to the *Odyssey*, since Baum's novel includes a number of arguably strong points of intertextual reference to the Homeric epic which clearly go beyond the *nostos* motif as a common narrative motor *per se.* As said, the *nostos* motif is the overarching frame and the narrative *movens* of both the *Odyssey* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.* In other words, without the protagonists' fervent wish to return home, neither narrative would be set in motion: Dorothy's sole desire is to reach home as swiftly as possible, just as "Odysseus had never wished to leave home" and "had never wished to be a wanderer, or traveller, or explorer" (Stanford [2]1968: 86), but is compelled to become one in order to be able to return home. In both texts the protagonists are involuntarily transfered from the ordinary, real, civilised world into a fairy-tale-like parallel world which is defined by the existence of strange creatures and supernatural forces that do not exist in our world. In the *Odyssey*, it is in the so-called *Apologoi* (Books 9–12) that Odysseus as a metadiegetic first-person narrator relates his adventurous wanderings and encounters to his Phaeacian hosts; accordingly, this part of the epic has appropriately been related to the fairy-tale genre,[14] and Odysseus has even been described as standing between an epic and a fairy-tale hero.[15]

In this context, another feature common to both texts is the lack of civilisation in the fairy-tale parallel word. In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, this is made explicit by the Witch of the North when she speaks to Dorothy:

> In the civilized countries I believe there are no witches left; nor wizards, nor sorceresses, nor magicians. But, you see, the Land of Oz has never been civilized, for we are cut off from all

the rest of the world. Therefore we still have witches and wizards amongst us. (*WWO* ch. 2: 21–2)

It seems striking that this connection between a para-reality inhabited by fairy-tale creatures which possess supernatural forces and the concept of (non-)civilisation finds its exact parallel in the Homeric *Odyssey.* There, we also find the marked juxtaposition of uncivilised, malevolent characters (e.g. Circe, Scylla and Charybdis, or Polyphemus) and civilised, benevolent ones (viz. the Phaeacians); in the case of the brutish giant Polyphemus, the opposition between the civilised human sailors and the flesh-eating, pre-agrarian, uncivilised Cyclops almost prototypically juxtaposes civilisation and non-civilisation.[16]

Furthermore, in both narratives, the transgression from reality to para-reality is the result of a thunderstorm (*Od.* 9.67–83; *WWO* ch. 1: 12–13), and the journey back to reality is triggered by yet another supernatural force which does not allow the protagonists to witness their transgression from one spatial entity to the other: whereas Odysseus is carried to Ithaca on a swift, almost magical Phaeacian vessel and is asleep during the whole journey (*Od.* 13.70–125), Dorothy is swept back home through the air with the aid of her magical silver shoes (*WWO* ch. 23: 258–9). Finally, again in both texts, the return journey is irreversible. Thus, the possibility of an oscillation between the two worlds – and the theoretical option of returning to the parallel world – is impeded, and the protagonists remain confined to the worlds of their origin for good: in the *Odyssey*, the Phaeacian vessel is fossilised by Poseidon on its return journey (*Od.* 13.159–64),[17] whereas Dorothy loses her shoes during her flight through the air (*WWO* ch. 23: 259): "Dorothy stood up and found she was in her stockingfeet. For the Silver Shoes had fallen off in her flight through the air, and were lost forever in the desert."[18]

In light of the evidence discussed, it therefore seems justifiable to argue that both the narrative frame of Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and, more specifically, the opposition of, and oscillation between, reality and para-reality are closely modelled upon the narrative frame of the Homeric *Odyssey.* To this, one might add the observation that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is equally divided into twenty-four chapters just as the *Odyssey* consists of twenty-four books – a fact that is not trivial since it adds to the formal parallelism between the two texts as outlined above. Thus, the *Odyssey* provides an intertextual backdrop, a hypotext, to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* with regard to the latter's formal structure as well as the narrative strategies which Baum's novel employs.[19]

Next to homecoming and transgression, the motif of transformation is of prime importance and should be considered when examining the characters in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.* First, we must think of Dorothy's three companions – the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman and the Lion – who accompany the little girl to see the Great Wizard because they wish to receive something they lack (or have lost) and thus undergo a transformation related to their own personalities (cf. *WWO* ch. 16: 193–99, where the Great Wizard administers a placebo to the three in order to make them believe in an instant transformation which, in effect, they had undergone by themselves long ago). Furthermore, the Great Wizard's entire art and trickery – that is, his alleged ability to assume the shape of virtually any life form or being – is wholly based on transformation; in fact, there is a double-transformation at work since the Great Wizard not only pretends to be able to change his shape, but his whole existence as such relies upon yet another form of transformation – his change from an ordinary human being to a fake wizard and, later, back to a human being again (*WWO* ch. 15: 177–92; ch. 17: 201–207). Other narratologically important transformations include, for example, the story of the Tin Woodman's transformation from a human being to a metallic android (*WWO* ch. 5: 59–62, an analepsis); the killing of the Wicked Witch of the West (*WWO* ch. 12: 154–5), which leads to her "[falling] down in a brown, melted, shapeless mass […] spread[ing] over the clean boards of the kitchen floor" (155); the rescue and subsequent restoration of the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow (*WWO* ch. 13: 160–62); the Lion's election as King of the Beasts (*WWO* ch. 21: 237–42); and the freeing of the enchanted Winged Monkeys (*WWO* ch. 23: 256). In sum, it can thus be firmly stated that the motif of transformation runs like a thread through Baum's novel and also that this motif constitutes an important narrative device which must be viewed in connection with the *nostos* motif. Transformation and metamorphosis are, of course, typical fairy-tale motifs.[20] However, from a structural point of view, an Odyssean intertext can be considered in this respect, too, since the *Odyssey* itself is full of transformations and metamorphoses; we need only think of the three most obvious and prominent examples: the

polymorphic god Proteus (*Od.* 4.351–586), Odysseus' comrades who are turned into swine by the sorceress Circe and then retransformed shortly afterwards (*Od.* 10.135–574), and Odysseus' disguise as a beggar (*Od.* 13.392–440) and subsequent retransformation into his real shape (*Od.* 22.1–4).[21] Consequently, it can be argued that the *Odyssey* provides a structural hypotext to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, not only with regard to the motifs of homecoming and transgression but also with regard to the motif of transformation.

Finally, the motif of transformation is closely connected to the idea of development. In this context, reference must be made to those interpretive approaches which take a psychological/psychoanalytic stance, interpreting Dorothy's exploits and homeward journey as an epitomisation of her process of maturation. For example, Byrnes (1995: 57) claims that the "journey motif in stories of the archetypal child is a way of representing movement from the conscious world to the unconscious sphere," suggesting "ascendancy into the spiritual realm" in Dorothy's case. It is indeed true that development (of whichever kind) is an important motif in this novel, next to themes such as transformation, transgression and homecoming. However, in my view, it is not Dorothy who develops, that is, who undergoes a significant psychological change or a lasting process of maturation; rather, her three companions acquire the mental characteristics which they had been seeking in the course of their journey, so much so that when they are finally bestowed by the Great Wizard, the latter has only to administer a placebo in order to make them aware of their changes (*WWO* ch. 16: 193–99; cf. above). As far as Dorothy is concerned, however, there is no textual evidence to support the assumption that she undergoes a significant change or process of maturation. Nonetheless, Dorothy is not, as earlier critics have argued, an eternal, Peter-Pan-like child in a "continuing state of childhood" (Wolstenholme 1997: xxxiv) who "is never allowed to grow up" (Rzepka 1987: 63). Rather, although she is described and depicted as a little girl aged between five and seven,[22] she acts in a strikingly adult way throughout the novel; the fact that she is both an only child and an orphan may further have added to her mental precociousness.[23] Her mature behaviour becomes evident at the very start of her journey, shortly after her removal to the Land of Oz, when she systematically demands information on her whereabouts from the Witch of the North (*WWO* ch. 2: 19–22) and then makes her resolution to find a way home unmistakably clear upon learning where she has involuntarily been brought (*WWO* ch. 2: 23).[24] Indeed, it is Dorothy – a child – who assumes the role of the leader when taking her three companions – three adult anthropomorphised beings – to Emerald City.[25] As an example of Dorothy's adult behaviour, we should consider her first encounter with the Lion, where she self-assuredly scolds the cowardly animal for trying to bite Toto, her little dog:

> "Don't you dare to bite Toto! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, a big beast like you, to bite a poor little dog!"
> "I didn't bite him," said the Lion, as he rubbed his nose with his paw where Dorothy had hit it.
> "Not, but you tried to," she retorted. "You are nothing but a big coward."
> "I know it," said the Lion, hanging his head in shame; "I've always known it. But how can I help it?"
> "I don't know, I'm sure. To think of your striking a stuffed man, like the poor Scarecrow!"
> (*WWO* ch. 6: 69)

It would be a truism to state that human views on the child and the development of children have undergone numerous significant changes over the course of human history – as much as it would be a commonplace to draw attention to the fact that different representations of the child are to be found in art and literature, and especially in the English literature of the 18th and 19th centuries.[26] It is, however, important to consider that the representation of Dorothy as a quasi-adult person is a specific construct which, as I would like to argue, serves a specific function within the narrative of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.* As I have noted previously, the novel's narrative frame is modelled upon the narrative frame of the Homeric *Odyssey.* Along similar lines, the motifs of transformation, transgression and homecoming are not only central themes that promote the narrative course of our text – they are also heavily indebted to the Homeric hypotext, the *Odyssey.* It is from the backdrop of this hypotext that the character of Dorothy becomes manifest, too. Odysseus is already an established epic hero during the Trojan War and thus a stable personality and a fully grown, mature man when he embarks upon his journey home. Accordingly, Taylor (1961: 569) appropriately describes the psychological side of Odysseus' adventures as follows: "Instead of depicting primarily the progressive development of the hero, they reveal the nature of his already developed character."[27] In a similar

vein, Dorothy – at least in terms of some of her characteristics – is not really a child when she makes her way through the Land of Oz in order to find a way home. Furthermore, just as Odysseus is a leader-figure to his crew, Dorothy is also a leader-figure to her three anthropomorphised but childlike companions.[28] Ultimately, the deeper sense of her journey does not seem to be her own development or maturation, but the aid and assistance which she provides to her companions and, in an indirect way, also to the Great Wizard, who, as a result of his encounter with Dorothy, is forced to remove himself from his fake wizard role and thus manages to set out on his own return journey (*WWO* ch. 17: 201–207). Consequently, the Great Wizard is not so "obviously a father figure" to Dorothy, as Wolstenholme (1997: xxxvi) claims;[29] rather, the little girl assumes a quasi-mother role towards him, and he is subsequently revealed to be much less powerful, and much more childish, than he pretends throughout the narrative.

In the context of Dorothy's non-development, it is fundamental also to consider the last chapter of the novel (*WWO* ch. 24: 261–3). Astonishingly, the description of Dorothy's reunion with her foster parents is restricted to only a few sentences, yet it is by no means free of mutual joy and emotions:

> Aunt Em had just come out of the house to water the cabbages when she looked up and saw Dorothy running toward her.
> "My darling child!" she cried, folding the little girl in her arms and covering her face with kisses; "where in the world did you come from?"
> "From the Land of Oz," said Dorothy, gravely.
> "And here is Toto, too. And oh, Aunt Em! I'm so glad to be at home again!"

I would like to argue that the narrator remains so succinct about Dorothy's homecoming and the welcome which she receives because the point of her journey was not any kind of development on her part. Rather, her mission ends precisely when she leaves the Land of Oz for good (*WWO* ch. 23: 258–9). Her foster mother does not comment upon any change in Dorothy (a habit which most grown-ups have when encountering a child whom they have not seen for some time) simply because she has not changed at all. Along similar lines, the narrator comments upon Dorothy's adult-like way of speaking by qualifying it as "gravely" (emphatically highlighted by a preceding comma), thus emphasising the same point: Dorothy is, at the end of her journey, the same quasi-adult person she has been since the beginning of the novel.

It is at this point that the value of the *Odyssey* as a hypotext to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* becomes apparent: by way of a structural intertextuality which manifests itself in a number of parallels between the two texts, the reader is invited to equate Dorothy – a little girl – with Odysseus – an adult man and epic hero. Thus, the reader necessarily transfers his/her idea of Odysseus as a fully grown, mature, and equally determined personality to the figure of Dorothy, to whom we would not necessarily attribute such characteristics on first sight. In other words, it is not Dorothy who develops and matures over the course of her journey – we, the readers, alongside her companions, gradually revise and change our perception of her character and, in so doing, undergo our own psychological process of inner transformation. Thus, the insight into Dorothy being a quasi-adult person from the beginning of her journey may help to strengthen the reader's confidence in her as a leader-figure. As much as she acts as a guide to her three companions, on a metatextual level she acts as the reader's guide through a vastness of incredible occurrences. Thus, in the end, she is a "homebringer" not only for herself and her companions, but also for her readers. Be it in Kansas, be it in Ithaca, be it anywhere in the world – we're all so glad to be at home again…

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(Note: all internet sources were last accessed 25 April 2014).

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[1] The first edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was accompanied by colour illustrations by William W. Denslow. At least three printings of this first edition exist, which all vary in some philological details. In this paper, I use the annotated paperback edition by Wolstenholme (1997), which is based on the first printing of the first edition from 1900. On different editions of the text, cf. Gardner (1962).

[2] Cf. Wolstenholme (1997: ix–xlvi) for a survey of Baum's life and career and the reception and history of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and Moore (1974: 1–39) on "The Baum Boom." On the film, cf. e.g. Harmetz (1978); Nathanson (1991); Rushdie (1992).

[3] The first critical monograph (Wagenknecht 1929) appeared three decades after Baum's narrative. On the early popular and scholarly reception of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, cf. Hearn (2001).

[4] Littlefield (1964: 50) delineates his thesis as follows: "Baum created a children's story with a symbolic allegory implicit within its story line and characterizations. The allegory always remains in a minor key, subordinated to the major theme and readily abandoned whenever it threatens to distort the appeal of the fantasy. But through it, in the form of a subtle parable, Baum delineated a Midwesterner's vibrant and ironic portrait of this country as it entered the twentieth century." – Cf. Dighe (2002: 1–40) for a comprehensive survey of the historical, political and economic background to Littlefield's interpretation.

[5] It would exceed the scope of this paper to enumerate, and comment upon, all of Littlefield's allegorical "assignments" (cf. Dighe 2002: 41–132 for a full survey incl. commentary, and Jahangir 2009 for a short overview), and only the most important shall be mentioned: Dorothy stands for the everyday American citizen, the Scarecrow represents the farmers, the Tin Woodman the industrial workers, and the Lion is equated with the politician and pro-bimetallist William J. Bryan (1860–1925), whereas the Great Wizard is meant to stand for the U.S. president(s). Along similar lines, Emerald City is meant to stand for the Greenback paper money, whereas the yellow brick road represents the gold standard and, accordingly, Dorothy's silver shoes the replacement of the latter by a bi-metallic standard. – Dorothy's silver shoes were prominently replaced by a pair of ruby slippers in the MGM film (1939) and thus became an "American icon" (Bowers 2010). Therefore, the film does not convey the idea of an allegory in this respect. (The red colour may have been chosen to emphasise the change from monochrome Kansas to the Technicolor Land of Oz; it may also encompass an implicit sexual undertone; cf. Nathanson 1991: 73–5. On the history and reception of the ruby slippers cf. esp. the research by Rhys 1988a; 1988b; 1989.)

[6] Cf. e.g. Dighe (2002); Erisman (1968); MacDonnell (1990); Rockoff (1990); Parker (1994); Ziaukas (1998).

[7] For example, one may mention interpretive approaches which suggest a reading of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* as a parable on America, as a *mise-en-abyme* of Americanness, or as an allegory of varying aspects of American life and culture (cf. e.g. Barrett 2006; Culver 1988; Griswold 1987; Kim 1996; Zipes 1988: 117–38). Some authors have proposed feminist interpretations, viewing the character of Dorothy as the fairy-tale embodiment of a suffragette and a modern woman (cf. e.g. Culver 1988; McReynolds & Lips 1986; Rzepka 1987; Zipes 1988: 121–31), whereas others have taken a psychological/psychoanalytic approach, reading Dorothy's adventures, deeds and homeward journey as an extended metaphor of her maturation from a child to an adult (cf. e.g. Beckwith 1976; Byrnes 1995: 55–7; Gilead 1991; Griswold 1987).

[8] However, Baum did have an interest in ancient Egypt: cf. his novels *The Last Egyptian* (published under the pseudonym Floyd Akers in 1908) and *The Boy Fortune Hunters in Egypt* (published anonymously, also in 1908).

[9] These are the words spoken by Dorothy to Toto in the MGM film (1939) when they first catch sight of the Land of Oz (cf. Culver 1988: 99). Although they are not a quote from the book, they have become an extremely famous citation attributed to Dorothy.

[10] For the sake of convenience and brevity, I use the abbreviation *WWO* for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* when refering to or quoting from specific chapters, pages, and/or passages.

[11] When considering geography and space in literature, attention should be drawn to the theoretical concept of the so-called "spatial turn" (sometimes also called the "topographical turn"), which has been a subject of discussion in literary studies since the 1980s. Essentially, this concept is based on the

idea that space is not merely a geographical structure in a literal sense, but also a culturally and socially determined entity (cf. e.g. Weigel 2002 for a survey). In literature (as well as in other media), space is neither purely mimetic nor necessarily concrete (and thus "real"); rather, it is a construct that interacts with other aspects such as narration or characterisation – aspects which, when taken together, design the inner "reality" of a piece of literature (cf. e.g. Joachimsthaler 2005). In Moretti's words, "geography is not an inert container, is not a box where cultural history 'happens', but an active force that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth" (Moretti 1998: 3). – Cf. also Nathanson (1991: 112–22) on the specifically American idea of "home" and a "symbolic landscape of home."

[12] On the *nostos* motif as the overarching frame and key narrative motor of the *Odyssey*, cf. e.g. Alexopoulou (2009: 17–36); Frame (1978: 34–80); Hall (2008: 161–73); Hölscher (1988 [2000]: 49–50, 104–105). See also Maronitis (2004), who notes that *mutatis mutandis*, the *nostos* motif is also a recurrent narrative pattern in the *Iliad* (on this topic cf. also Frame 1978: 81–124).

[13] In this context, it has to be noted that the prevalent distinction between folk tale and literary fairy tale (*Volksmärchen* vs *Kunstmärchen*) is unnecessary from a structural/formal, as well as a generic, point of view. In fact, it is one of Propp's tenets that "[a]ll fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure" (1968 [1928]: 23). In other words: Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* belongs to the fairy-tale genre as much as Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, for example. (On the generic classification problems concerned with fairy tales, cf. Honko 1987. On the genre of the literary fairy tale, cf. Grätz 1996. On Propp's "morphology of the folktale," cf. e.g. Csapo 2005: 190–99; Renger 2006: 106–121; Voigt 2002.)

[14] On the *Odyssey* (and, especially, the *Apologoi*) as a text that characteristically oscillates between the genres of epic and fairy tale, cf. the seminal study by Hölscher (1988 [2000]); further, also Davies (2002); Hansen (1997); Hoekstra (1989: 3–11); Jensen (1990: 1208–1210); Petersmann (1981); Renger (2006: 200–248); Stanford ([2]1963: 9–10). On the ancient fairy tale, cf. Anderson (2000); Heldmann (2000). On the generic similarities and differences between epic and fairy tale, cf. Renger (2006: 70–105).

[15] Renger (2006: 206–207): "Odysseus is furnished with attributes which point to both the oral tradition of a heroic legendary figure and an old fairy-tale background of the hero." ("Odysseus wird mit Attributen versehen, die sowohl auf die mündliche Tradition einer heroischen Sagengestalt von mythischem Format hindeuten als auch von einem alten Märchenwesen des Helden zeugen.")

[16] On Polyphemus as an embodiment of non-civilisation, cf. e.g. Aronen (2002: 97–9 [with 97, nn. 22–4 for references]); Bremmer (2002); Nieto Hernández (2000). Cf. also Glenn (1978); Hoekstra (1989: 19–20) for further references; Page (1955: 1–20) on the Polyphemus episode in general.

[17] Cf. Krischer (1985: 12), who views the function of the Phaeacians as "to be a connecting link between the fabulous world of the wanderings and the political reality of Ithaca" ("vermittelndes Zwischenglied zu sein zwischen der Fabelwelt der Irrfahrten und der politischen Realität Ithakas"). Cf. also Aronen (2002). – De Jong (2001) attributes a double function to the petrification scene: first, it "emphatically marks the end of Poseidon's anger against Odysseus, which was bound to end at the moment of the hero's return to Ithaca" (320), and secondly, it "explains why, in the time of the narrator and the narratees, no one ever sees the Phaeacians" (321). In my view, de Jong's second point is somewhat feeble, since the whole *Apologoi* contain people and places that "no one ever sees"; it is more important that the petrification of the Phaeacian vessel pointedly marks the end of Odysseus' fabulous adventures and brings him back home into a world which is congruent with the reader's notion of reality.

[18] Dorothy's return to the Land of Oz in the sequels of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (on which cf. e.g. Chaston 1994; Green & Martin 1977; Vidal 1977: 66–82) does not contradict this interpretation as long as our text is taken as an autonomous entity.

[19] When viewed from this angle, one might theoretically attempt to go so far as to suggest yet another (speculative) allegorical interpretation by equating characters, places and important items in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* with corresponding Odyssean entities. Thus, Dorothy could be equated with Odysseus, her three companions with the hero's crew, Emerald City with the city of the Phaeacians, the Great Wizard with the king of the Phaeacians, and ultimately the Wicked Witch of the West with the Odyssean sorceress Circe, who turns her visitors into pigs and equally imprisons and enslaves

them (a whimsical detail may be noted here: Denslow depicts the Wicked Witch of the West wearing two pigtails – the pigtails might be read as a subtle allusion to Circe and her pigs). Along similar lines, the name of the city of Oz could as readily be "deciphered" as an abbreviation for *Odyssey* as it was regarded as a short form of "ounce" by Ziaukas (1998: 10).

[20] Cf. e.g. Goldberg (2011).

[21] On the motif of shape-shifting in the *Odyssey*, cf. also Hall (2008: 31–43). On transformation and heroism, cf. the seminal study by Campbell ([3]2008).

[22] Cf. *WWO* ch. 2: 18: "In fact, they [= the Munchkins] seemed about as tall as Dorothy, who was a well-grown child for her age, although they were, so far as looks go, many years older." Wolstenholme (1997: 267) notes the following in relation to this sentence: "in Denslow's illustrations Dorothy seems to be between 5 and 7 years old; in the MGM film (1939) Judy Garland's Dorothy is evidently supposed to be in her early teens; Garland was actually 16."

[23] The only child is often to be found as a fairy tale hero (cf. Lüthi 1984 [1975]: 135–6); the orphan is popular as a protagonist in Victorian prose fiction (cf. Peters 2000: 61–79).

[24] According to Gilead (1991: 279), "Dorothy's desire to return home seems mainly to reflect a primitive ego ideal rather than to emerge from a fully integrated conscience […]. This motivation is too shallow; her maturer imaginings must also wish for return." I, however, strongly disagree with this view; in fact, it seems to me outstanding that a child aged between five and seven is able to proceed so far in her reflection as to acknowledge the fact that her foster parents will probably be worried about her ("I am anxious to get back to my Aunt and Uncle, for I am sure they will worry about me," *WWO* ch. 2: 23), rather than just wishing to return home for her own convenience.

[25] The child taking responsibility in an adult-like way for adults who are incapable of looking after themselves is a common motif in several of Charles Dickens's novels. One may, for example, think of *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–41), where fourteen-year-old Nell Trent has to assume responsibility for her grandfather. The image of Nell as a mentally grown-up child is contrasted by the nasty, gnome-like Daniel Quilp, who resembles a child not only because of his dwarfism, but also because of his selfish and egocentric behaviour. (On the image of the child in Dickens, cf. e.g. Coveney [2]1967: 111–61; Pattison 1978: 76–134; the collection of essays in Peters 2012.)

[26] On the representation of the child in English literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, cf. e.g. Coveney ([2]1967); Pattison (1978); Plotz (2001). On the representation of the child in the visual arts in England and France in the 18th and 19th centuries, contrast also Baur (1983).

[27] Cf. also Whitman (1958: 296): "In and of himself, the hero is a fixed personality, confronted by no hopeless division in himself; he is equipped, as if by magic, with every skill which any situation might require, so that he needs only to deliberate ways and means […]." In contrast to Odysseus, however, his son Telemachus undergoes a significant transformation from a youth to a man (cf. e.g. Beck 1998/99). With regard to Odysseus, Niles (1978: 57) argues that whereas his character does not change during his wanderings, his "spiritual awareness" is subject to development and maturation: "Odysseus learns from his mistakes. As his knowledge increases, his behavior improves accordingly. The hero's progression in the course of the wanderings is clear, and it is a progression from lawlessness to law, from foolhardiness to discretion, from ignorance to knowledge. When Odysseus leaves Phaeacia, he is ready to come home." Along similar lines, Rutherford (1986: 160) argues that in "the course of the poem […], Odysseus acquires greater severity and self-control, and wins a deeper understanding of human feelings and motifs, perhaps even of the wider condition of man," but he points out that the "'philosophic' Odysseus never totally displaces the older, wilier Odysseus."

[28] Cf. Wolstenholme (1997: xxxiii) on the child-like character of Dorothy's companions.

[29] Cf. also the psychological interpretation offered by Griswold (1987: 472), who equally interprets the Great Wizard as a projection of Dorothy's wish for a father figure, and the way she finds out about his being "just a common man" (*WWO* ch. 15: 184) as an important step in the girl's maturation, since she thus "dispense[s] with exaggerated notions about the father."