

The Wizard of Oz and the High Tor Legend: Stories for America's Future

What follows is excerpted and edited from various chapters of *Searching for the Spirit of the West: A Hidden History of the USA and the Twentieth Century*.



Sally Rutledge: *Dorothy Feeding the Lion*

At the end of the nineteenth century in the U.S. two forces looked at each other as mirror images. On one hand, the external frontier was practically closed as the nation had reached its present borders, "from sea to shining sea," by the end of the 19th century. On the other hand, the American soul was restless on the inner frontier. This was the time of spiritualism and religious revivals on the East Coast and Frank Baum's birth occurred at the center of it. The creation of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* bathed in this spiritual atmosphere.

Spiritualism saw its birth in the spring of 1848 through the Fox sisters. The movement spread from Rochester to Syracuse, close to Frank Baum's birthplace. It became both popular and controversial. In 1875 this yearning would take a more definite direction through the forming of the Theosophical Society in New York City. It was officially formed in November 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, and others. The Society, which owed its origins to a true Rosicrucian impulse, wanted to study and penetrate occultism very broadly. In time this took the direction of Eastern religions and esotericism, so much so that the headquarters moved from New York to Adyar, India.

The need to explore what it means to be human beyond dogmas and traditions also led to the women's emancipation movement and its landmark convention at Seneca Falls in the fateful year 1848. Though an external, political movement it reflected of the deeper yearning of recovering and liberating one's full humanity. Susan B. Anthony was deeply inspired by her native Quakerism. Elizabeth Cady Stanton wanted more than simple political rights, as she expressed it in her seminal "Solitude of Self." Matilda Gage was both an engaged feminist and an earnest Theosophist.

Over and against the turning of the frontier to the inner life, stood the temptation of continued territorial expansion. After the Spanish-American War the U.S. stood on the brink of becoming a world power and empire. It acquired its first overseas territories of Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Guam and Philippines from 1898 to 1901. The temptation of Empire called the nation south and west.

At the turning of the century America was poised between a needed change of orientation from the outer to the inner plane. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* offered this reminder. The story shows the five friends roaming through vastness of spaces from the East to the West, clearly pointing to American geography. However, what is important in this wandering are the soul trials that the companions meet.

A Story for America

The Wizard of Oz was written in 1899 and published in 1900. It was the fruit of inspiration of a writer who was then a Theosophist and who had grown up homeschooled under the inspiration of fairy tales.

Frank Baum, was born the seventh of nine children—many dead in childhood—on May 15, 1856 in Chittenango, close to Syracuse, in the New York Finger Lakes region. The shy child, who was homeschooled, spent much time reading fairy tales and playing with imaginary playmates. Among his favorite authors were the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Perrault and Andrew Lang. Other sources were Dickens, Shakespeare, Swift, Thoreau, Emerson, Hawthorne, Twain and Lewis Carroll.

In speaking later about his favorite storytellers Baum reminisced: “[they] deserve undying fame for having rescued so many beautiful stories from threatened oblivion, for it has been impossible for modern authors to equal the charming imagery of those ancient tales.”¹ Yet, though enamored of European fairy tales he somehow intuited that it would be possible to write a story of a more American mold. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was conceived at the turning point of the end of Kali Yuga and the beginning of the Age of Light. This is an important turning point in history, a time in which humanity started to develop new faculties of soul, the first beginnings of a new clairvoyance.

In the genesis of the timeless story Matilda Gage, Frank Baum’s mother-in-law, played an important role. She was instrumental in awakening Baum’s interest in Theosophy, which at the time was no more than two decades old. Matilda died on March 18, 1898. Just before that time she had announced “I am to live on the plane that shall be above all things that dishearten. And I shall have courage and force out of the Unseen to do the things that I am asked to do. When I receive instructions from those who are in the Invisible, I will receive them willingly, with a desire to put them into practice to the extent of my spirit light and potency.”² Her courage in the face of death inspired Frank to write the poem *Who’s Afraid*. Matilda had faith in Frank as an author, witness a letter in which she prophesied “Now you are a good writer and advise you to try ... a fiction which comes with a moral without, however, any attempt to sermonize.”³ She even suggested a Dakota blizzard or a cyclone as part of it.

After Matilda’s death, at the end of a snowy day, Baum remembers experiencing a most singular moment of inspiration. “Suddenly, this one [story] moved right in and took possession,” is what he wrote to the

¹ From *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, Michael Patrick Hearn editor, 138.

² Evan I. Schwartz, *Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story*, 263.

³ *Ibid*, 253.

publisher.⁴ He was experiencing a vision coming with great clarity. The children came, who were used to hearing him tell stories, but he had to send them away since he was hardly able to speak.

What he declared in a later interview only confirms something that would make sense from a spiritual scientific perspective: "It was pure inspiration. It came to me right out of the blue. I think that sometimes the Great Author has a message to get across, and he has to use the instrument at hand. I happened to be that medium, and I believe the magic key was given to me to open the doors to sympathy and understanding, joy, peace and happiness. I grabbed a piece of paper that was lying there and I began to write. The story really seemed to write itself."⁵

Baum was so absorbed in the writing that he would not hear people around him. He also realized that he couldn't change the direction of the tale: "The characters surprised me. It was almost as though they were living people."⁶

Later on Baum called his Wizard of Oz his "most truthful tale." And further: "The winged fairies of Grimm and Andersen have brought more happiness to childish hearts than all other human creations... Yet the old-time fairy tale, having served for generations, may now be classed as 'historical'... for the time has come for a series of new 'wonder tales.'"⁷

Baum's biographer, Rebecca Loncraine, comments what many Americans could only agree with: "He managed to create something that felt already ancient, weathered into such a perfect, archetypal shape that it seemed authorless from the start."⁸ Thus was born the first American fairy tale. That the story was inspired and unique is confirmed by the fact that later Baum tried to exploit the Oz vein with many sequels, none of which garnered significant success and interest. They were Frank Baum's personal versions of Oz and very few children or adults remember even their titles to this day.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is a story of at least two levels. At the most obvious it speaks of the individual's initiation into the spiritual world through the meetings with the Lesser Guardian and Greater Guardians, and the integration of the soul forces. At another one it speaks of America through its growth from East to West and South.

⁴ Ibid, 263.

⁵ Ibid, 264.

⁶ Ibid, 271-72.

⁷ Rebecca Loncraine, *The Real Wizard of Oz: The Life and Times of L. Frank Baum*, 183.

⁸ Ibid, xiv.

Remarkably little is said about the North and nothing of importance about this region that does not exist in US popular geography. The only north is that of our Canadian neighbors. But the story also says little about the East, which we can intuit is America's past, the one which is no longer challenging its identity. When the story begins the Witch of the East has been killed and the companions have to move to the center before reaching the West. We will now look at this journey from Kansas to the East, from there to the center and finally the West of Oz. We will return to exploring the companions' travels to the South, episodes which seems to concern the far future of the land.

It is fascinating to see that Frank Baum's color coding of the cardinal directions corresponds with what can be perceived through occult investigation. Jeshaiahu ben Aharon indicates that "Spiritually seen, the eastern side of the globe appears as a bluish-purple, and the West appears as a fiery red-yellow. The West radiates fire from the depths out to the world. This reflects the cosmic spirit. Everything of the West has to do with those forces of the depths: original fire, original electricity, atomic power."⁹ And as we know in the Wizard of Oz the East has been portrayed in blue, the Emerald City in green, the West in yellow and the South in red. Thus were they color-coded in a felicitous way by W. W. Denslow who complemented Baum's text with the image.

The Wizard of Oz from East to Center

In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* the search for our life in the spirit starts from the very center of the continental United States, Kansas. Here before the turn of the century the American citizen lives in the depleted world of the senses. There is nothing in sight beside the farm; not a tree, not a hill, just the horizon. A land devoid of soul.

Let us notice an element of pure inspiration in the choice of name Dorothy, "loved of God." She is a child, but as an orphan, already tried by fate. The bright and joyful Dorothy has been adopted by the dull, duty-bound Uncle Henry and Aunt Emily. Everything in the Kansas prairie reminds us all too much of a world devoid of spirit. Everything lacks color and joy; grey is mentioned ten times before the cyclone hits. Toto is different; he is not grey but black; and he is a joyful companion. Toto made Dorothy laugh, and saved her from growing as grey as her surroundings. In Dorothy and Toto live true spirit and soul capable of uplifting the grey situation. And yet help comes from the outside, from a cyclone, through the meeting of the north and south winds in the great Midwest prairie corridor. The reference to north and south winds also points to the two good witches who help Dorothy through the cyclone.

⁹ Jeshayahu Ben-Aharon, *Spiritual Science in the 21st Century: Transforming Evil, Meeting the Other and Awakening to the Global Initiation of Humanity*, 293.

After the cyclone, Dorothy is awakened by a severe shock. Darkness had made way to the light of the sun. She awakens in the land of the Munchkins, a land of marvelous beauty, a land thoroughly humanized with fields of grains and vegetables and farmers cultivating them. The Munchkins look like elementals, small in stature, but seemingly old. Dorothy has landed in the elemental world which forms a stark contrast with the depleted physical world of Kansas.

Dorothy, welcomed by the Witch of the North, has inadvertently killed the Witch of the East. All that is left of her are her silver shoes, which Dorothy inherits, and they fit her perfectly. The Witch of the North cannot help Dorothy and she advises she seek the help of Oz, by following the yellow brick road, the road that is "straight and narrow." She offers her kiss on the forehead, whose mark will act as a protection for her travels, and warns her that "It is a long journey, through a country that is sometimes pleasant and sometimes dark and terrible." Dorothy sets off, soon meeting the forces of the soul, before these are tested in the journey toward the threshold of the spiritual world, the Emerald City.

Meeting the Forces of the Soul

It is only fitting that a child gets to know the forces of the soul on the way to adulthood and its trials. This is what Dorothy and Toto will undertake. Dorothy sets out in the open fields of cleared land and farm crops. Her dress has, coincidentally, the blue of the Munchkins and the white of the witches. The Munchkins in fact believe her to be a great sorceress, all the more so since the silver shoes fit her perfectly.

The scarecrow is found in a cornfield, in open, civilized land. He calls Dorothy's attention through his eyes and his friendliness. His life has been very short; he was built the day before Dorothy found him. The scarecrow's greatest desire is to have brains. He never tires and does not suffer hunger, but does fear fire.

Gradually the yellow brick road becomes rougher. The bricks are uneven, broken or missing, and holes appear. The path moves from open fields to the forest where the trees shut out the light of day. Toto and the scarecrow can still see through the darkness. While they are in the forest they hear the groans of the Tin Woodman. He holds an uplifted axe in a frozen position. He is entirely made of tin. Contrary to the scarecrow the Tin Woodman has a story. He once had brains and heart, but he prefers his heart. He was persecuted by the Witch of the East, who wanted to prevent him from loving a Munchkin girl. He lost his heart, and his love, and he hit all his body parts with an axe due to the spells of the witch.

The scarecrow has no support; he is stuffed; the Tinman has no insides. Neither Scarecrow nor Woodman eat. The Woodman needs to constantly lubricate his joints to prevent them from rusting from water or tears. He is in fact oversensitive; he has known suffering and cries easily. The Woodman can help the companions as the forest grows denser and thicker; he can chop the branches.

Scarecrow and Tinman posit a question for their journey: "Said the Scarecrow 'I shall ask for brains instead of a heart; for only a fool would not know what to do with a heart if he had one.' 'I shall take the heart,' returned the Tin Woodman; 'for brains do not make one happy, and happiness is the best thing in the world.' Dorothy did not say anything, for she was puzzled to know which of her friends was right..."

On the way to meeting the last companion the road becomes harder. The Lion they meet last thinks himself a coward, even though all other creatures are scared of him. He yearns to find courage. Meanwhile he makes up for his fear by roaring out loudly.

America finds itself at the onset orphaned from the moorings of the Old World. Everything has to be pursued anew. Likewise Dorothy has left the grey of habit and tradition to discover new colors and new companions. She has killed the Witch of the East almost without knowing it. She has nothing to do with the past. Other dangers lurk toward the future and the West, and she may not be ready for those, even as she faces them with optimism.

Head or heart, pursuing understanding or happiness, probably posits a question that our continent and history have long articulated. But in the mix there is also a Lion that calls for courage.

From the onset Dorothy has killed the Witch of the East, the Luciferic powers. This is not to say that Lucifer is vanquished in the USA. It only indicates that by and large it doesn't represent a danger for the future. And America as a whole was hardly enraptured with the battle of the ideologies that held sway in Europe. Even here it cannot claim to have clean hands, quite the contrary. Rather, it is clear that in America, more than in Europe and the rest of the world, the real test lies in withstanding the full onslaught of the forces of Ahriman and Asuras arrayed together, and of the Sorath that looms behind them. With the help of the positive Luciferic forces, leading us to the Christ, we can counter the decadent forces of the West. We will meet them in the figure of the Witch of the West.

The Road to the Emerald City

Before reaching the Emerald City Dorothy has met with the forces of the soul which tend to each go their own way. The images are quite obvious; the scarecrow embodies the power of thinking; the Woodman feeling and the Cowardly Lion the will. Now Dorothy must strive to hold them together through tests that affect one or more than one at a time, three of them in total.

The first obstacle is a very wide, and very deep, ditch. It is the Lion who helps the others jump over it. "I'm terribly afraid of falling, myself, ... but I suppose there is nothing to do but try it." On the other side the forest is very thick and the Kalidahs are there and again the Lion is very afraid of them. They have bodies of bears and heads of tigers. It is the Scarecrow who figures the idea of using the tree as a bridge and the Tin Woodman who cuts the big tree once the Kalidahs are getting close to catching up with the group. "One would suspect you had brains in your head ... says the Lion to the Scarecrow.

After the ditch comes the river. The companions have left the forest behind and have before them "a lovely, sunny country." But a wide river stands between them. Here too it is the Scarecrow who attacks the problem by asking Tin Woodman to build a raft. The stream threatens to pull them to the land of the West.

In the middle of the stream the Scarecrow, fighting against the current, remains stuck in the water on top of the pole he uses for pushing the raft. He is in the same position he was in the field; his old stance will not help him in the etheric! It is the stork which offers him the lightness he needs, rescuing him from the air. The scarecrow who used to scare off birds is now rescued by one. The stork who rescues him is the one who brings the newborn from the world of the spirit into earth existence. Thinking can be rejuvenated by the forces that carried it before earthly birth. And it is the Lion that carries the raft to the shore.

On the other side of the river the companions find a lovely land with abundance of flowers and fruit trees. Poppies are those flowers that dazzle the senses and overwhelm the feelings. They subdue the will (Lion) and Toto. They almost dazzle Dorothy's eyes. There are progressively more and more of them, until they are the only flower. The Tin Woodman prevents Dorothy from sleeping. He, who lives in the feelings, does not suffer from the poppies' effect, but realizes that the party has to hurry, and the Scarecrow agrees. Dorothy falls asleep, so does Toto; the Lion is about to be the next and he races to get beyond the poppy field but fails just before the end of the field.

Providentially the Tin Woodman saves a mouse from a big yellow wildcat. The party meets the queen of the field mice. To repay the Tin Woodman she offers

to save the Lion, in answer to the Scarecrow's idea. At the end of the ordeal the Lion realizes: "I have always thought myself very big and terrible; Yet such little things as flowers came nearer to killing me, and such a small animals as mice have saved my life."

In the trials it is first willing that is tested by the Khalidahs, then thinking in the river and finally feeling in the poppy field. The Scarecrow is stuck in the water, and carried away in the air by a stork. Before that he is neither earthly, nor spiritual; the stork lends his help to carry him to a sphere of higher knowledge. The Lion is stuck on the ground, almost killed by such small thing as a flower, and carried by the mice (ground and underground). The first is elevated or rejuvenated by reconnecting to the spirit; the second one is humbled. We know that thinking and willing have to be transformed before coming to the threshold of the spiritual world, before reaching the Emerald City. Neither the pride of sense-bound thinking, nor the might of the senses can lead us past the Guardian of the Threshold, past the Wizard of Oz.

The Meeting with the Guardian

The companions have followed the golden sun thread of the yellow brick road before having to fend for themselves on the open road. When Dorothy arrives and asks to see the Great Oz, the guardian at the gate marvels that it has been years since anyone asked to see him. He warns: "... to those who are not honest, or who approach him from curiosity, he is most terrible, and few have dared ask to see his face." Fortunately the companions have been tested along the way.

Everybody in Oz has to wear green spectacles "Because if you did not wear spectacles the brightness and glory of the Emerald City would blind you." Even with the spectacles Dorothy and her party are at first dazzled by the light of Oz. The magician admits only one of the party alone per day. Oz is angry to be disturbed by the newcomers, but then relents when he hears that Dorothy has the Silver Shoes (from the Witch of the East) and the mark on her forehead (from the Witch of the North). We are told that Dorothy walks boldly through the door, but when Oz asks her what she wants she replies: I am Dorothy, the Small and Meek." Notice that the two important words are capitalized!

When Oz asks her why he should do anything for her she replies "Because you are strong and I am weak; because you are a Great Wizard and I am only a helpless little girl." Oz's reply is: "In this country everyone must pay for everything he gets." And he asks her to kill the Witch of the West. The Scarecrow is the next one to face Oz. He meets a lovely lady. When the Tinman meets Oz, he sees a most terrible beast. The Lion sees a great ball of fire.

The companions/soul forces and ego have been strengthened at the threshold. They have been carried beyond their own forces—through the stork and mice—before meeting the Wizard of Oz. Now they face the danger at the West, the confrontation that meets the United States or North America at the fullest in relation to the rest of humankind.

Before the year 1900 America has resisted the trials coming from the East; everything that wanted to pull her back toward Europe and empire. It preserved its democratic institutions and had not yet fallen prey to the same powers present in Europe through the world of finances—the forces of international investment firms and central banks. These forces no longer threatened the independence of the American nation. However, they will soon work from within to threaten the integrity of the American experiment, wanting to turn it into an empire. The threat of the East has been replaced by the threat of the West.

The Witch of the West and Her Taming

The Wizard of Oz shows us in Dorothy the force of the innocent feminine, which preserves the pristine forces of the will for later times. The Witch of the West has asked the winged monkeys to destroy all of the party, except to capture the Lion. The Tin Woodman is dropped off from the heights; the Scarecrow's is scattered and all of his clothes gathered into a ball and made into a bundle that is placed atop a tall tree. However, they cannot harm Dorothy "for she is protected by the Power of Good, and that is greater than the Power of Evil." They see the mark on the forehead of the kiss of the Witch of the North. The Witch of the West herself is worried upon seeing the mark on Dorothy's forehead and her Silver Shoes, but she realizes the girl is naïve about her own power.

The Lion scares the witch who wants to harness him, and she decides to starve him. Dorothy secretly feeds him at night. It is this feeding of the Lion at night that we have portrayed in many ways in various writings. To give but one example Twelve Step serves to feed the will and render it transpersonal. It is only when the will is humbled through powerlessness that true power can be experienced in utter humility.

The Witch of the West concocts a plan to get hold of the Silver Shoes. Dorothy only takes them off at night and when she takes a shower but the witch is scared of both dark and water. She tries to trip Dorothy with an iron bar, but she only manages to snatch one shoe. Dorothy picks up a bucket of water and throws it at the witch, who immediately dissolves. For the second time Dorothy unintentionally kills a witch. The witch announces that Dorothy shall have the castle to herself.

Dorothy feeds the Lion at night. She feeds the will secretly to preserve her own strength and innocence. Dorothy has strengthened the etheric, that of which the Witch has deprived herself through the use and abuse of the forces of the Double. This is why the Witch fears Dorothy as much as she does water. Through the power of imagination and the transformed will Dorothy will be able to vanquish Ahriman.

Before returning to the final parts of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Chapters 18 to 22) let us complement the picture that has emerged so far with what we can learn from the High Tor legend, which has a Rosicrucian stamp.

The Spirit of America and Its Redemption: The High Tor Legend

What appears in the quintessentially American story of the Wizard of Oz is reinforced and deepened in the High Tor legend. What has been so far characterized in symptomatic fashion can be widened from spiritual scientific research. For this we turn to the work of Jesaiah ben Aharon.

High Tor is a mountain located north of New York on the western bank of the Hudson River. The legend, originating from the second half of the 18th century, connects North America with the Mystery of Golgotha, the Rosicrucian and Manichean Mysteries. The Archangel of [northeastern] America, in the legend, is an 'Angel of Fire' sent down to help humankind. However, he has been corrupted by evil spirits, becoming a Salamander, one of the highest elemental beings.

The High Tor legend is articulated around two points in time: the first refers to the time of Christ, the second to the second half of 18th century, to events relating to the mining industry seen through the eyes of German immigrants who brought with them the Rosicrucian impulse.¹⁰ A version of the legend, brings together a number of spiritual impulses.¹¹ It is here retold very briefly.

On the summit of High Tor, a certain Amasis—who had received in vision the secret knowledge of the ores in the mountain—built a temple. He had married a native woman who gave him a daughter. The magus, who refused to take up the Sun worship, had been threatened by the natives. He was saved because an earthquake broke, which brought everybody to their death, except Amasis and his daughter.

¹⁰ A certain Peter Hasenclever owned iron mines in the region of the Ramapo Mountains; his land extended toward High Tor Mountain which overlooks New York City.

¹¹ The original legend can be found in Jeshaiahu Ben-Aharon, *Spiritual Science in the Twenty-first Century: Transforming Evil, Meeting the Other and Awakening to the global Initiation of Humankind*, lecture 12: "The Transformation of Evil in America and the High Tor Archangel."

Centuries later a certain Hugo, of noble origin, forms a German colony in the area. He is surrounded by his wife, a son also named Hugo and a daughter, Mary. The elder Hugo runs afoul of his workers who want to respect a German tradition of extinguishing the forge fires every seven years, at a time in which a Salamander, grown to large proportions, can cause havoc.

Having refused to stop the fires he witnesses with his men the disquieting presence of the Salamander in the fire. His wife decides to cast holy water into the fire and recite an incantation. A storm arises and the rain extinguishes the fire, but Hugo's wife lays dead.

Seven years later the children are to be baptized, and on that occasion there is a flash of light and the child Hugo is spirited away. Another seven years later, Hugo takes his daughter Mary, who has retained purity of soul, to the top of High Tor Mountain. He leads her to see the caves of the Earth Spirits who promise to offer their jewels to Hugo if "he could pronounce the word that binds the free to the Earth forces and bars his future for a thousand years." There he beholds the Salamander again and his soul is rescued by the prayers of Mary's pure soul.

Hugo tries for many nights, but fortunately fails to read the words on the Salamander's back, and is left enraged. Meanwhile a knight has arrived to the mines and love has grown between him and Mary. It is this knight who rescues Mary when a panther attacks her. When she is about to yield to his love he declares to her that he is under the spell of the Earth spirit. He reveals that he is the Salamander who first had power over the Fire element and now over Earth and Water. Recognizing Mary's purity he places a crown of gems over her head; when her tears fall into his hands they turn into lilies that he places on her brow.

The Salamander lets Mary know his story, and how he came from heaven for the love he bore to human beings. When Mary's mother cast him out of the furnace he took the form of a child, but then encountered trials in the world of the senses so foreign to him. He retells of his temptations through the wish for power and how he forgot the love he bore to human beings. He declares this to be his last trial. At that moment the young man faces the irate Hugo who orders he be thrown in the furnace. Here, through the love of Mary he is transfigured, wearing robes of silvery light. Mary knows he is safe and feels serene.

In the legend the one who comes to America is the youngest of the Magi, Amasis, whom Ben Aharon identifies as the initiate Mani. And Mani's task is continued by Hugo and his family. Hugo alone cannot bring the task to its completion. Ben Aharon comments: "Then other people came to Manhattan.

They were the ones who set the evil spirits free. They were the ones who came here and used the Earthly power of the depths in order to rule the world. This is basically the story of the rise of the financial and industrial powers of the East Coast. But this also extends to America as a whole. These are the spirits of Mammon. "They take universal, free, cosmic energy from the stars, from the planets, from the universal ether, and they are continuously condensing it into jewels, money, gold and silver."¹²

The spirits that are kept bound in the legend, are no longer bound since the end of Kali Yuga. They are those who unleash the power for world domination. These Earth spirits work through the powers of jewels, gold and precious metals to hold human consciousness under their spell and further the Ahrimanic impulse throughout the world.

The Salamander has succumbed to the beings that serve Mammon. In the legend she can be set free by the one who reads the symbols on her back, and in so doing the one who frees her has access to great powers. To read means to raise something to consciousness and be able to make use of this gained knowledge, as in the Temple Legend we are told that Mani is set to master the earthly forces, to learn the secrets of the Earth without letting these corrupt him.

In America only the feminine can overcome the Ahrimanic forces; this is the daughter Mary in the High Tor legend—but so is Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz. Mary is initiated in the will after twenty-one years. The Archangel that inspires America—become a Salamander—is a fallen angel, an abnormal archangel, one who did not finish his evolution on Old Sun; he did not complete his human stage. That the archangelic being fails is connected with the Manichean knowledge of evil: if you are to transform evil you have to know it. The Archangel is connected with the stream of Cain who is the master of everything earthly: metals, science, technology, art, which can be used for good or evil. Mani and Rosenkreutz are the healers of the Cain mysteries. In America these express themselves as death forces, electrical, atomic energy, magnetic forces. These forces push us to the extremes; this means you can either move completely into their dark impulses, or you can work at redeeming them.

The Archangel that inspires America falls even lower than the human stage, to that of elemental, becoming an Ahrimanic being. Through Mary's initiation, after her twenty-first year, and through her love, he is able to reach the human stage.

¹² Jeshaiahu Ben-Aharon, *Spiritual Science in the Twenty-first Century*, lecture 12: "The Transformation of Evil in America and the High Tor Archangel."

Fallen Angels

The Angels who reached their human development in Old Moon are now true Angels. Those who did not are 'retarded Angels.' They have the power of Angels, but not their qualities. These retarded angels have developed a kinship to our ego consciousness. "... they are trying, through us to make up for what they missed out in the human stage. ... they are selfish angels. They don't care about our karma."¹³ They can experience egohood through us.

Those beings who are retarded from the Moon stage are the Luciferic beings, those whom the Bible calls the Serpent. In the High Tor legend we are dealing with archangelic beings, the Fire Spirits. They are even more retarded than the Luciferic beings, but they also want to reach their human stage through the human being. "Now these twice retarded archangels have double the power of angels. These fallen archangels also want to make up their ego evolution through us." Whereas the fallen Angels animate human beings through individual competition, the Archangels inspire the leaders of nations, corporations, soccer teams, etc. They inspire a selfishness that is no longer individual but corporate. This is how these beings can express their ego through us. In the High Tor legend **one of these beings** is sent down to help humankind, but because he is a retarded being he is corrupted by the evil spirits.

A Salamander is an elemental being of the fire element, one of those who are closest to the ego element. They are the highest category of elementals since they have a sense for the ego. Hugo does not read the script in the back of the salamander. The salamander then does the bidding of the evil spirits in destroying Hugo and his family. Finally, the Salamander becomes human to tempt Mary. After his redemption through Mary's love this archangelic being has a particular knowledge of evil. He is brought back to his original Archangelic purity, and acquires new faculties at this particular level. Through Mary's love he has become a redeemed Archangel, and the one who fosters a specific kind of Manichaeian initiation. He is an archangel who knows the secret of the depths, whom Ben Aharon believes to be the guardian being of the American East.

Apart from the Ahrimanic beings there are also the Asuras who did not attain egohood on Old Saturn. These are what ben Aharon calls the "Titans bound to the Earth" who incite destruction and nihilism. They invoke planetary egotism. People who think at this level are the likes of Bill Gate, Jeff Bezos, George Soros, Elon Musk, those global visionaries who aim at global transformation

¹³ Jeshaiahu Ben-Aharon, *Spiritual Science in the Twenty-first Century*, lecture 13: "High Tor Part 2: The Fallen Angels and the Alchemical Processes in Initiation."

and global power. The Asuric beings are of the same rank as Michael; they belong to the realm of the Archai. It is to this being, of a higher order, that the retarded archangelic being of America fell prey.

In the legend Hugo is pure enough not to fall into the temptation of reading the script on the back of the Salamander, but not strong enough to transform him. He is followed seven years later by the sacrifice of the wife; the sacrifice of the son fourteen years later. Mary reaches the maturity to transform the Salamander with the attainment of ego-hood at the end of the third seven-year cycle. She is able to connect "the fire birth of the 'I' with the fire of the depths"; "the fire of heaven and the human fire join together, consecrated by the purified ego element embodied in Mary."¹⁴ This is because the Ahrimanic and Asuric powers are powerful masculine powers that can only be met from the feminine within. They can only be transformed with the deepest and purest feminine qualities. At this point in human evolution we can fight at the level of the institution or group, even at the national level. The global level is something that humanity will have to face for quite some time.

The American Manichean initiation of the ego through fire, that Ben Aharon recognizes, corresponds to a rhythmical process regulated by the activity of the will. It has to do with a purifying of the will impulses. Of these we have brought forth the example of the AA Fellowship and referred to a host of others which have been explored elsewhere.¹⁵

It is worth pointing out something that Dorothy and Mary have in common: the power of innocence. The American nation was an example of what Steiner would call a "creation out of nothing." Out of the death of the old forms of empire something completely new emerged after the birth pangs of the Revolution and the travails of the Constitutional Convention. The new nation was able to absorb and transform much that was a given from the Old World with the enthusiasm of new ideas. David Spangler sees the "Flame of Innocence" as that which gives America the power to deal successfully with the regressive shadows of the past.¹⁶ He also sees this as one of the distinguishing qualities of its guardian being, which he calls the Angel of America; a young hierarchic being able to welcome and transmute the

¹⁴ Jeshaiahu Ben-Aharon, *Spiritual Science in the Twenty-first Century*, lecture 13: "High Tor Part 2: The Fallen Angels and the Alchemical Processes in Initiation."

¹⁵ Concerning the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous see Luigi Morelli, *Searching for the Spirit of the West: A Hidden History of the USA and the Twentieth Century*, Chapter 9: America and the Transformation of the Will.

¹⁶ David Spangler, *An American Path: A One-Week Exploratory Forum*, June 3-10, 2017, transcribed and edited by Annabel Chiarelli; see June 8 presentation. Copy shared by courtesy of the author.

collective shadows. Though battered in the last two hundred years American innocence is still present spiritually both in its positive qualities of hope, goodwill, goodness, openness to the new and the possible and in its shadow side of immaturity and naiveté.

Returning to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy's innocence is underlined in many ways. The Winged Monkeys see that "she is protected by the Power of Good, and that is greater than the Power of Evil." At the castle, the Witch of the West also recognizes the mark on Dorothy's forehead of the kiss of the Witch of the North, which protects her from evil; she also realizes that she is naïve about her own strength. In the end it is only quite casually that Dorothy picks up a bucket of water and throws it at the witch, thus dissolving her.

Later Dorothy sees the Golden Cap, tries it on and realizes it fits her perfectly, though she still doesn't know about its charm. It is the Queen of the field-mice who tells her about its power. At the end of her travels it is the witch Glinda who tells Dorothy that her Silver Shoes can carry her over the desert, that in fact she could have gone back to Kansas from the very first day in Oz.

Having looked at the challenges that place us within the present and immediate future we can now journey further with Dorothy and her companions and acquire a taste of America's far future challenges.

Further Travels through Oz: America's Far Future

On the way back to the Emerald City we see a symmetry with the trials that preceded the first arrival in the center of Oz. It is in a field of scarlet flowers that the companions sleep once again. And here Dorothy for the first time loses heart, only to remember that she can call on the help of the Queen of the mice. Soon after, retracing the steps in a new way, the Winged Monkeys who brought the companions to their doom on the way to the Witch's castle, now bring them back to the Emerald City.

Once in the presence of the Great Oz they can see the Guardian without fear and false respect; they can claim their due. They have gained access across the threshold not through conscious initiation, but through the harsh trials they have willingly undergone. That Oz is the Guardian is revealed by his proximity to Dorothy. The girl is from Kansas, the great humbug from Omaha.

What lies after Dorothy's missed return to Kansas continues the journey into the future. We have seen what America has to face in this millennium. Now we enter the ultimate destination of America's meta-history; the South and the far future.

What America has prepared in the present, what appears in tendencies everywhere at work, will be as if spread out in front of the human beings' eyes. The reality of the spirit will be visible in the physical in the Seventh post-Atlantean age, the American Age.

At present we see play out in front of our eyes the drama of the Biblical sword of the ego. At its lower level the ego fights with all other egos to satisfy its own wishes and attain self-gratification. But we also know that the purified ego is what can bring the human being close to the divine. In the path to the "American Mysteries" in modern America the individuals prefigure through the new group souls the free collaboration of human egos.¹⁷ Through new forms and social processes the egos can be harmonized and placed at the service of the new group souls.

The human ego can bring its bearer to the light or to the abyss. In the far future of America and of Earth evolution this abyss will be "the great War of All against All... the war of each single person against every other person in every branch of life—the war of class against class, of caste against caste and sex against sex."¹⁸ If it works upon and transforms itself the ego can offer love to all other human beings and to the spiritual world itself.

Starting with the Sixth Epoch human beings will show good and evil tendencies in their countenances. This will be even more so in the seventh post-Atlantean epoch, when "All matter will bear the stamp of the spirit."¹⁹

The seeds for the Jupiter stage of evolution will be laid out during the sixth post-Atlantean epoch. In the seventh epoch there will be no new impetus that will create future civilization. In the sixth epoch the separation will take place between the stream of Philadelphia, which will embrace inner freedom and brotherly love in the name of Christ, and on the other there will be the great masses of what Steiner calls the "lukewarm," those who will be unable to progress.

The journey to the South of Dorothy and her companions acquires a new quality in relation to the preceding parts of the story. The five become spectators of a reality that they cannot change by much. The companions are first attacked by the fighting trees that want to bar their way (chapter 19). They then witness the display of the "dainty china country" where the frozen and delicate beauty of china figurines masks a fragility both in feelings and in the physical body. Dorothy and friends realize that they cannot help; they can

¹⁷ Rudolf Steiner speaks about the "new groups souls" in the lecture of June 1, 1908 in *The Influence of Spiritual Beings upon Man*.

¹⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *The Apocalypse of Saint John*, lecture of 25 June 1908 (GA 104).

¹⁹ Ibid.

only cause strong feelings of anger, fear, and dismay to surge, or limbs to break in their interactions with the milkmaid, the cow, the young princess or the clown, before leaving the land. To the first two trials follow that of the Hammerheads, beings with a prominent head that works as a hammer, a compact body with no arms at all. They repel the companions, barring the way to the land of the Quadlings. It is only once more with the help of the Winged Monkeys that they can reach their destination. In essence we see the three soul forces in completely one-sided developments, which bind their holders to the physical world. To the rigidified will of the fighting trees and the frozen life of sentiment of the china figurines, follows the intolerant expression of thinking of the Hammerheads. What is present in seed in the present will appear in the physical in the American age.

Already in the sixth post-Atlantean epoch what is evil will not be hidden from those who have developed spirit vision. The astral world will descend into the physical world in the Age of Philadelphia. Further on in the Seventh post-Atlantean epoch Devachan, the realm of the spirit will descend into the physical world. There will be absolutely nothing in this seventh epoch that can be hidden from sight. Those who have refined their life of thinking, feeling and will through the Christ impulse, will have the power to spiritualize their physical body. Those, on the other hand, who have rejected this possibility and have not recognized the Christ impulse will be confined to a physical body that cannot be transformed. The good race will ascend "into the spirit of forms which will live in the astral and which will separate from themselves another material globe, a globe which will contain beings unfit for the ascent because they are unable to dissolve the material part."²⁰

A parallel evolution will take place between our age and the sixth and seventh post-Atlantean epochs. Whereas our age develops the intellect and reason, in the sixth powerful feelings of what is moral or immoral will surge in the souls of human beings. "Delicate feelings of sympathy will be aroused by compassionate, kindly deeds and feelings of antipathy by malicious actions. Nobody living at the present time can have the faintest conception of the intensity of these feelings."²¹

The above will be further intensified in the last age of Earth evolution; this will touch the moral sphere. What touches the man of the sixth age as pleasure in the good, positive and noble, will be intensified during the last stage of the Earth embodiment: not just a pleasure for what is good and moral, but a

²⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *The Apocalypse of Saint John, Lecture of 25 June 1908* (GA 104)

²¹ Rudolf Steiner, *lecture of 21 September 1911, Buddha and Christ: The Sphere of the Bodhisattvas* (GA 130)

resolve to act morally. The cognitive judgment of our time will become first aesthetic pleasure, and finally an active moral life.

It is perhaps this part that is echoed once more in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Here we can recognize that the three soul forces take their place each in a different epoch: They gain power over the fifth, sixth and seventh epochs. The Scarecrow is called to rule over the Emerald City, corresponding to our age; the Tinman among the Winkies, who announce the beginning of the third millennium and the sixth post-Atlantean age; the Lion on the antechamber to the land of the Quadlings, the representatives of the American, or seventh post-Atlantean age.

The Lion gains this place of honor by confronting another threat; that of a giant spider. Through his service he is recognized the king of all the animals. Though the incursion of the spider episode is brief it is noteworthy that the spider web is the image that presently pervades all of American and global culture. But it is also more than that. If dry materialistic thinking, divorced from life and reality, is to be carried over in the next few millennia, Steiner indicates what the consequences will be at the time in which the Moon will reunite with the Earth, roundabout the eighth millennium of our era. By that time the rigidified thoughts will acquire physical reality. "From the earth, there will spring forth a horrible brood of beings. In character they will be in between the mineral and plant kingdoms. They will be beings resembling automatons, with an over-abundant intellect of great intensity. Along with this development, which will spread over the earth, the latter will be covered as if by a network or web of ghastly spiders possessing tremendous wisdom. Yet their organization will not even reach up to the level of the plants. They will be horrible spiders who will be entangled with one another."²² However, at that time the part of humanity that follows the Christ impulse will leave the Earth behind. The nature of the threat is described thus by Steiner in the same lecture: "We are threatened by a conscious will that would exclude us from spirituality and unite us with the spider web of the earth. This conscious will dwells in some people, for they believe that it will be to their advantage if they train only themselves spiritually and leave the others to live in ignorance." This is then the threat that the Lion will confront in the far future.

Technology spreads out of the US into the whole world and in the atmosphere like a web. In America, more than anywhere else, the agenda of transhumanism is fostering the conditions for a merger of the human and the mineral realm in what has been called the future race of the "cyborgs." It is therefore a fitting image that the Lion of the redeemed will, rescues that part

²² Rudolf Steiner, *Materialism and the Task of Anthroposophy*, Lecture of 13 May 1921, GA 204.

of humanity which wants not to fall prey to the Prince of this World, but to follow the Christ impulse. The imagination which practically closes the Wonderful Wizard of Oz shows us once more the lawfulness of the inspiration that came to Frank Baum in the fall of 1899, inspiration that he was no longer able to follow or equal in all of Oz sequels or other later writings.