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Michael O'Neal Riley. *Oz and Beyond: The Fantasy World of L. Frank Baum.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997. xiii + 286 pp. $29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-0832-4.

Reviewed by Richard Tuerk (Texas A&M University-Commerce)
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In *Oz and Beyond: The Fantasy World of L. Frank Baum* Michael Riley investigates the worlds Baum creates in his works of fantasy and shows that Baum gradually weaves those worlds together until they all become related to the Land of Oz. Riley also demonstrates how Baum's conception of Oz itself changes from the earlier books (in which it is relatively small and acts of magic rarely occur) to his later books (in which it is much larger, with many unexplored nooks and crannies, and acts of magic occur frequently). Riley investigates chronologically almost all of Baum's works of fantasy ranging from *Adventures in Phunniland* (written in 1896; published as *A New Wonderland* in 1900; in 1903 reissued as *The Surprising Adventures of the Magical Monarch of Mo and His People*) to *Glinda of Oz* (published posthumously in 1920), including Baum's stage plays and films; in so doing, he gives an excellent picture of the development of Baum's imagination and of his imaginary other world. He also demonstrates that Baum's Oz develops from a "slightly sinister land of illusion" in the first Oz book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900; later shortened to *The Wizard of Oz*) to the "beautiful, wished-for place" it becomes in the sixth Oz book, *The Emerald City of Oz* (1910). In a short epilogue he shows some of the changes Oz undergoes in books by the authors he considers Baum's major successors.

Riley's book is a carefully argued, well-written study that shows how Baum wove his fantasy worlds together as his conception of Oz evolved. Riley also renders some fascinating readings of many of Baum's works and places them nicely into the context of Baum's life. In addition, the University Press of Kansas has produced a beautiful book. The illustrations, all taken from Oz books in Riley's collection, are clearly reproduced. The jacket is extremely attractive, and the print is easy to read and pleasing to the eye.

Still, the work has several flaws. Riley gives credit to many other scholars who have investigated Baum's works but has some strange omissions. Although he speaks of the Oz books as being "subversive" and frequently discusses their implications in terms of what he calls Baum's concern about "directions America was taking," he omits all mention of Jack Zipes' *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, which contains the most complete published treatment of this aspect of Baum's Oz books. Although in his first chapter Riley investigates the impact of Baum's background before 1900 on his fantasy world, Riley omits discussion of important works by Stuart Culver and Nancy Tystad Koupal that deal with this topic. Moreover, Riley takes at face value everything that seems autobiographical in Baum's prefaces to his Oz books, but presents no evidence that Baum's words are reliable. Riley calls the 1939 MGM film version of *The Wizard of Oz* "in most respects, faithful to the original book," although he does not try to support his point. And he asserts that until *Tik-Tok of Oz* (1914; eighth book in the series) "the most general impression of" Oz's location "had been that it is in our world, hidden away and difficult to get to, but a magical, marvelous, undiscovered part of America," another unsupported assertion.

Riley summarizes the plots of the works he discusses. He says that he must summarize in detail the plot of *The Wizard of Oz* because it "is Baum's masterpiece" and "it forms the real basis from which his fantasy continent was later developed," but its familiarity to readers makes plot summary seem unnecessary, and he does not tie many of the elements he summarizes to the development of Baum's imaginary world. Still, none of these problems interfere with Riley's demonstration of the validity of his central points, and Riley's plot summaries of little-known works may even be helpful for one who knows only Baum's masterpiece.

On the whole, Riley's work is exceptionally well done. It repeatedly supplies fresh insights into Baum's works individually and as a whole. It helps demonstrate the importance of Baum in American literary history and the seriousness with which one may profitably approach this creator of America's favorite fairyland.

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