**Title**
Is the Musical Disabled?



**Author**
Gold, Thea

**Publication Date**
2019

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

# Is the Musical Disabled?

By

Thea Gold

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Performance Studies

and the designated emphasis

In

Women, Gender and Sexuality

in the

Graduate Division of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Mel Y. Chen, Co-Chair

Professor Abigail De Kosnik, Co-Chair

Professor Brandi Catanese

Professor Susan Schweik

Spring, 2019

**ABSTRACT**

While there have been many studies of musical theater's affinity to various marginalized cultural identities, such as gay or Jewish ones, there is less scholarly discussion of the genre's relationship specifically to disability cultures and identities. In this dissertation I examine three oft-discussed aspects of musicals – gayness, Jewishness, and duality – each through the lens of disability, to reveal disability's significance to the genre. Casting discrimination, the ubiquity of ableist tropes, and the over-categorizing of the visibly impaired body all contribute to the detrimental shortage of disabled performers and disability perspectives in productions of mainstream musicals. Casting more disabled talent in mainstream musicals, especially in "regular" roles, promotes disability justice, deepens the truth and reach of such productions, and transforms the musical genre as a whole to be more in resonance with itself.

**In memory of my beloved mother, Miriam Gold.**

**לאמא, האהובה מכל.**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you to my parents.

~~

I acknowledge that the University of California, Berkeley, at which I have completed this dissertation, is sitting on stolen Ohlone land.

**~~**

Innumerable beings, known to me and not, have supported me in this endeavor and made it possible; here is a partial list:

Adi Gold, all my teachers past and present, Althea Grannum-Cummings, Amalia Ziv, Ana Villarreal, Anastasia Kayaitos, Angela Marino, Arlene Lueck, Ashley Ferro-Murray, Bonnie Awesu, Brandi Catanese, Breeze Harper, Bub Sprocket, Carolyn Swalina, Catharine Price, Catherine Cole, Cathy Kudlick, Chana Kronfeld, Christina Lehnherr, Daigan Gaither, Dana Most, Daniel Boyarin, Danny Kodmur, Eli Ben Zaken, Emily Smith Beitiks, fellow graduate students and seminar participants, Fu Schroeder, Gail De Kosnik, Gillian Edgelow, Grace Leach, Hanna Scolnicov, Hanna and Guy Selzer and family, Haya and Zvi Zelig, Herb Kohl, Hertha D. Sweet Wong, Holley Replogle-Wong, Jacqueline Pearl, Jennie Bowers, Joe Goode, Juana María Rodríguez, Lela Rose Bachrach and family, Leslie Salzinger, Linda Williams, Lisa Wymore, Luis Macias, Marc Boucai, Megan Lowe, Mel Chen, Michael Mansfield, Michael Most, Minoo Moallem, Miriam Gold, Naomi Seidman, Noa Shein, Ofer Rog, Ofer Gazit, Otto and Aviva Gold, Pascua and Sweet Pea, Perla Pinedo, Pnina and Brad Young, Ragdoll and family, Robert Alter, Robin Davidson, Rutie Adler, Samira Saraya, Sandra Hall, Sandy Richmond, SanSan Kwan, Scott Wallin, Shannon Jackson, Sharlene Mulder, Shaul Setter, Shorena Kurtsikidze, Sima Belmar, Slobodan Simic, Stephanie Gail Valentine, Susan Merrill, Susan Schweik, Takeo Rivera, the Falsettos, the Wolffs, UC Berkeley workers and AFSCME Local 3299, Valorie Beer, Yehuda Visser, Yonatan Most, You, and every one of my students over the years.

**Thank you with all my heart.**

**INTRODUCTION – TOO EASY BEING GREEN**

Image: Photograph of Ali Stoker as Ado Annie in Broadway's 2019 revival of *Oklahoma!* (by Rogers and Hammerstein). Seated on a manual wheelchair wearing a tank top and short denim cut-offs with her hair in a messy blond bun, she holds a mic to her expressive face, singing her number "I Cain't Say No!"

[F]rom the moment she was born,
she was - well - different
It's coming
Now?
The baby's coming
And how!
I see a nose
I see a curl
It's a healthy, perfect,
Lovely, little -
Sweet Oz!
What is it? what's wrong?
How can it be?
What does it mean?
It's atrocious
It's obscene!
Like a froggy, ferny cabbage
The baby is unnaturally ----
Green!
Take it away, take it away!

From the opening number of *Wicked*: "No-one Mourns the Wicked."

During the summer of 2009 three unrelated award-winning musicals running in New York City each featured a lovable main character with green skin.

*Wicked* (music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and book by Winnie Holzman) tells the story of the green young Elphaba; *Shrek: the Musical* (music by Jeanine Tesori and book and lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire) follows the adventures of the green Shrek; and *The Toxic Avenger* (by Joe DiPietro and David Bryan) stars the radioactively green Toxie. Both *Wicked* and *Shrek: The Musical* were nominated for a Tony award for best musical, and *The Toxic Avenger* won the 2009 Outer Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Musical.


Image: Posters for *Wicked*, *Shrek: The Musical*, and *The Toxic Avenger*, side by side, each featuring its green main character, as well as green in the design background or lettering.

While these three shows vary widely in theme and style, they seem to engage with greenness in somewhat similar ways. In all three productions, for example, these sympathetic green characters struggle with the stigma of being different, then gradually grow to accept and appreciate themselves as they are; meanwhile the audience enjoys applauding the heart-warming (albeit shocking) message that looking different doesn't mean one is evil or bad or unlovable.

*Shrek: The Musical*'s most memorable ensemble number (and arguably one of this musical's main messages) is the pride anthem, "Let Your Freak Flag Fly," sung by disfigured or unusual fictional characters from fairy tales and nursery rhymes. Meanwhile, one of *Wicked*'s taglines, "There's a Green Girl in All of Us," offers a similar call to embrace physical difference; after all if

"all of us" have it inside, how different can it be? Greenness in these musicals thus acts as a generic mark of visible physical difference, which is then able to facilitate a universal feel-good message of tolerance.

It is interesting, therefore, that in addition to a sympathetic main green character, *Wicked, Shrek: The Musical,* and *The Toxic Avenger* each also notably features a secondary character who is visibly disabled and presented in a negative light. In *Wicked*, Elphaba's sister, Nessarose, uses a wheelchair and is portrayed as bitter and unlovable. The laughable, evil villain of *Shrek,* Lord Farquaad, has a deformed short stature (the actor portraying him stands on his knees, with fake thin little legs dangling from his torso), and in *The Toxic Avenger*, Toxie's love interest is a ditzy blind librarian, her blindness being the show's running gag.

These musicals profess to celebrate physical "difference" and to offer a message of tolerance through green skinned characters, but in fact they seem to marginalize both disability and real oppression based on skin color. Green characters are in these productions all played by white performers. Meanwhile, Shrek's outrageous donkey sidekick was voiced by Eddie Murphy in the original animated film *Shrek*, and then played by Daniel Breaker in the Broadway musical version, each being an African American performer within an otherwise predominantly white cast. The audience is made to understand that – underneath the "race-less" animal costume/animation – the donkey is "actually" a black performer, and that underneath the green makeup, Shrek, Elphaba & Toxie are "actually" white performers. The derision of visibly disabled secondary characters has a similarly insidious effect of subtly implying that the green

characters are “actually” not so abnormal. The green character’s “everyman” subject position is thus in a way formed through the implicit racializing or abjection of supporting characters. “Let your freak flag fly” is revealed to be just a tongue twister with little political punch.

The word “freak” in the context of disability performance is of course in itself significant and charged, given the long legacy of displaying abnormal bodies in sideshows and “freak shows.” American audiences paid money to gawk in fascination at bearded ladies, limbless men, conjoined twins, and other human oddities displayed in circuses and fairgrounds. This form of entertainment served to self-fashion and confirm the gawker’s own normalcy and has often been the only way a gimp could make any kind of living. Even Helen Keller performed in Vaudeville when her book sales and lectures were not generating enough income. People still gawk and stare at the freakery of anomalous bodies in public (or try not to do so). Disabled comedian Josh Blue jokes that when people ask him if he gets nervous before a show, he laughs, “Nervous? I’ve got this many people staring at me all day!” Petra Kuppers explains the contradiction that visibly disabled performers are forced to navigate:

> The disabled performer is marginalized and invisible – relegated to borderlands, far outside the central area of cultural activity, into the discourses of medicine, therapy, and victimhood. At the same time, people with physical impairments are also hypervisible, instantly defined in their physicality. The physically disabled performer has therefore to negotiate two areas of cultural meaning: invisibility as an active member in the public sphere, and hypervisibility and instant categorization. (Kuppers).

These very real and tricky navigations are not something these “green” musicals address. Green skin is able to allude to both racialized differences and bodily abnormality, while not really being either. Safely removed from the realm of the Real, the fantastical greenness of skin is a seemingly neutral and apolitical trait which “mainstream” (e.g. white, non-disabled) audiences can comfortably root for without needing to consider actual discrimination and oppression of living people. Visible disability in these works then becomes the scapegoat, derided in secondary characters, so that the main character’s (non-realistic) difference can be elevated, celebrated and can teach audiences a somewhat skewed lesson in tolerance. While *Wicked*, for example, challenges the assumed villainy of one witch, it confirms the villainy of the other (Nessa Rose may be pretty, but the wheelchair gives her evil nature away). *Wicked* leads its audience to love Elphaba, the outsider. At the same time, the musical portrays Elphaba’s visibly disabled sister Nessarose as entirely unsympathetic – she is mean, weak, and bitter – and in the end it is arguably her, and not Elphaba, that “no-one mourns.” Nessarose’s later fate of being killed by a falling house in *The Wizard of Oz*, where her only appearance is as a pair of disembodied and incapacitated legs, is celebrated with a musical number (“Ding Dong the Wicked Witch is Dead!”)

Image: Still from *The Wizard of Oz* showing the legs of the Wicked Witch of the East – shriveled and clad in striped tights and Ruby slippers – sticking out from under the house that has just fatally fallen upon her.

Nessarose is hardly the first character in a musical whose costume includes a wheelchair. Consider, for example, the role of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in *Annie,* or young Colin in *The Secret Garden*. Disability, as Douglas Baynton has observed, is everywhere in history once you know to look for it. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder have revealed how many literary works utilize disability as a primary discursive tool, a "narrative prosthesis," with disability representing the "problem" that requires resolution. Physical and cognitive anomalies "lend a "tangible" body to textual abstractions" (Mitchell and Snyder, in Davis 205). Trite ableist tropes of the evil villain, the pathetic martyr, the clown, or the miracle cure are ubiquitous, reducing disability to a metaphor uninterested in actual disabled lives. This removal from actual disabled lived experience is solidified by the casting of non-disabled actors in disabled roles. At the end of *The Secret Garden*, Colin steps out of his wheelchair and walks upright, visually and metaphorically representing his inner recovery and newfound joy, enforcing a misleading and harmful disability trope, while also limiting the casting of the character to an actor who is able to walk. The wheelchair is there only as a narrative prosthesis, a problem that needs resolution, and a symbol of what holds Colin back; the happy ending requires him to grow out of it and be "cured."

It was only in January 2015, that a Broadway production actually cast and hired a performer who uses a wheelchair in real life. Actress and singer Ali Stoker, reviving the role of Anna in

*Spring Awakening* at the Brook Atkinson's Theater, was the first wheelchair user in history to appear on a Broadway stage. "When Ali Stroker wheeled herself into that audition room on a hot summer afternoon in Los Angeles of 2014, I admit—my mind went there," says D.J. Kurs, artistic director for this production of *Spring Awakening*. "How would this work? Was the venue that we selected going to be accessible for Ali? That's how a producer thinks, but that's also human nature. We saw Ali's talent and we knew that *Spring Awakening* would be a better show with her in it. So we forged ahead into the unknown, and we offered her the role." (Considine). They knew the show would be better with her in it, and it was.

Nice work if you can get it. The fact it took until recently for Broadway to hire a professional actor who uses a wheelchair is an indication of just how dire the state of professional opportunities for disabled artists is. Disabled actress Kathleen Traylor has quipped that theater companies find ways to bring live elephants onto the stage, but somehow the notion of a wheelchair is completely baffling. (Wolf, "How The Crushed Dreams Of 5 Disabled Actors Became The Phamaly Theatre Company"). In their frustration at never getting cast, Taylor and a cohort of fellow disabled actors in Denver eventually co-founded Phamaly (an acronym for "Physically Handicapped Actors and Musical Artists League"), a theater company of their own, where talented disabled actors could practice their craft. Phamaly, now one of the biggest and best regarded disabled theater companies in the United States, recently celebrated its thirty-year anniversary. Deaf West Theatre, the acclaimed Los Angeles deaf and hearing theater company, was similarly founded by artists frustrated with the dearth of work for Deaf actors in mainstream theater. They, too, successfully sought to remedy this by forming their own theatre company to create acting opportunities for professional Deaf actors in the Los Angeles area.

I find it notable that Deaf West reached its greatest mainstream recognition for its musical theater productions (*Big River*, *Spring Awakening*), and that for Phamaly's first eighteen years the company produced only musicals (and has continued to produce one musical each year since). Why musicals? What does the genre of the musical offer Deaf and disabled thespians? British actor and musician Mat Fraser may offer one possibility: "I have found that I achieve more success and notice and money, if I stick to disability stuff," he says. "I wish I didn't have to. I wish someone would give me a fucking job in a drama. It's not happening. What could I do? Go and write *Thalidomide!! A Musical*." His politically incorrect, in-your-face, funny musical theater show gives a retaliatory middle finger to an ableist world, while framing his protest in a fun and funny genre. As the saying attributed to George Bernard Shaw goes, "If you tell people the truth, make them laugh or they'll kill you." Perhaps musicals offer a way to introduce radical content that can be more easily absorbed by mainstream audiences.

There is also the campy nature of musicals, and the appeal this holds for some marginalized groups. As a style, Realism often affirms and upholds the supposed naturalness of cultural norms, and is hard to read against the grain; it can therefore be less appealing to those with marginalized identities. While there is a substantial amount of scholarship regarding musical theater's affinity to various marginalized cultural identities, such as gay or Jewish ones, there is little discussion of the genre's relationship specifically to disability culture and identities. In this dissertation I examine three oft-discussed aspects of musicals – gayness, Jewishness, and duality – all through the lens of disability, to reveal disability's significance to the genre. I argue that musicals need lived disability experience, and that the overwhelming absence of disabled performers and writers from mainstream musical productions must be remedied. One

immediate remedy that has been seen to work is casting disabled actors in "regular" roles. This helps undo harmful and pervasive disability tropes, reduces casting discrimination against disabled artists, makes any show ring more true, while also transforming the genre as a whole to be more in resonance with itself.

My first chapter – "Is the Musical Gay?" – reads disability in MGM's classic 1939 musical film *The Wizard of Oz*. I trace how gay has often been read where disability is shown and suggest that the film – long associated with gay culture and fandom – presents a disability politics. I argue that the narrative involving characters in search of body parts they lack – paired with the lived experiences of disability and physical impairment on the production set – allow for a presentation of a crip ideology of interdependence.

My second chapter – "Is the musical Jewish?" – addresses the prominence of male Jewish immigrants among creators of American musicals. I examine representations in musical theater of the ritual act of Jewish male circumcision, as a locus in which identities based in gender, religion, race, illness and defect intersect. The chapter addresses three very different musicals, *Whoopee!* (stage version in 1928, film version in 1930), *Kazablan* (stage version in 1966, film version in 1973), and John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (stage version in 1998, film version in 2001) which all include significant allusions to or representations of circumcision. I show that it is in part the physical and emotional "defects" long attributed to the male Jew in Western discourse that lend a stigmatized outsider perspective to so many musicals.

In my third chapter – "Is the musical single?" – I discuss Deaf West's 2014-2015 production of *Spring Awakening*. I argue that the doublings and dualities in Deaf West's production, particularly its role doubling and ASL/English bilingualism, transform and elevate this rock musical, due to a deep resonance with an inherent doubling structure of the musical theater genre itself. At the same time, the production's dualities and related Deaf politics challenge basic assumptions about musical theater, such as the necessity or dominance of sound in musicals, the unity of voice and body, and the unity of the self. Indeed, as Deaf West artistic director DJ Kurs has claimed, this production of *Spring Awakening* is "redefining the Broadway musical."

In the concluding chapter – "Is the musical white?" I reflect on the whiteness in my dissertation and in the fields that frame it. I revisit my chapters through the question of whiteness to excavate what lies underneath or beyond it. I ask myself how whiteness relates to my focus on marginalized and stigmatized identities in this dissertation. Finally, I emphasize once more the need to include lived disability experience in musical productions throughout the industry, and reiterate my call to cast disabled performers in un-marked roles.

I write this dissertation from my particular subject position: A queer white Israeli Jewish naturalized US citizen, with severe ADHD, an invisible disability. I have formal training in music and music theory, and I am a musical theater fan. I write in simple language that I hope is easy to understand.

The topic of musicals and disability is vast and complex, and I offer just one little corner of it here. I have recently been introduced Samuel Yates' wonderful work on musical theater and disability, so will not be able to meaningfully engage with his work here, but look forward to it in future. I have chosen to focus on mainstream musicals in this dissertation, rather than experimental, radical or community-based works. I have also chosen to focus my discussion on narrative and performance analyses, and do not offer technical musical analysis nor in depth discussion of music and dance. These are, of course, significant elements of musical theater that require and deserve future study and analysis. My analysis of marginalized cultures in mainstream musicals remains mainly within white gay, disabled and Jewish cultures. I do not offer analyses of important mainstream Black musicals nor do I address the dependence of American musical theater on African American cultural inventions. The widespread cynical and racist ways in which African American music, dance, styles and culture have been taken and appropriated by whites, including Jewish whites, in all areas of show business, underlies my research and my thinking, and I address it in the concluding chapter. Finally, my dissertation does not address pedagogical musicals aimed particularly at educating children about disability, such as *Addy & Uno*; nor do I address community theater productions of musicals as "therapy" for disabled participants, such as those depicted in the documentary films *Autism the Musical* and *Yellow Brick Road*). These all deserve further study and discussion but have not been my focus in this dissertation.

Speaking of the yellow brick road, let us now put on a thick-lensed pair of green tinted glasses , grab our canes and meds, and head towards the Emerald City together, shall we?

Image: Profile of The Wicked Witch of the West, green, crooked and hook-nosed, staring down a frightened fresh-faced young white Dorothy, in a still image from the classic MGM film, *The Wizard of Oz.*

**CHAPTER 1 – IS THE MUSICAL GAY?**

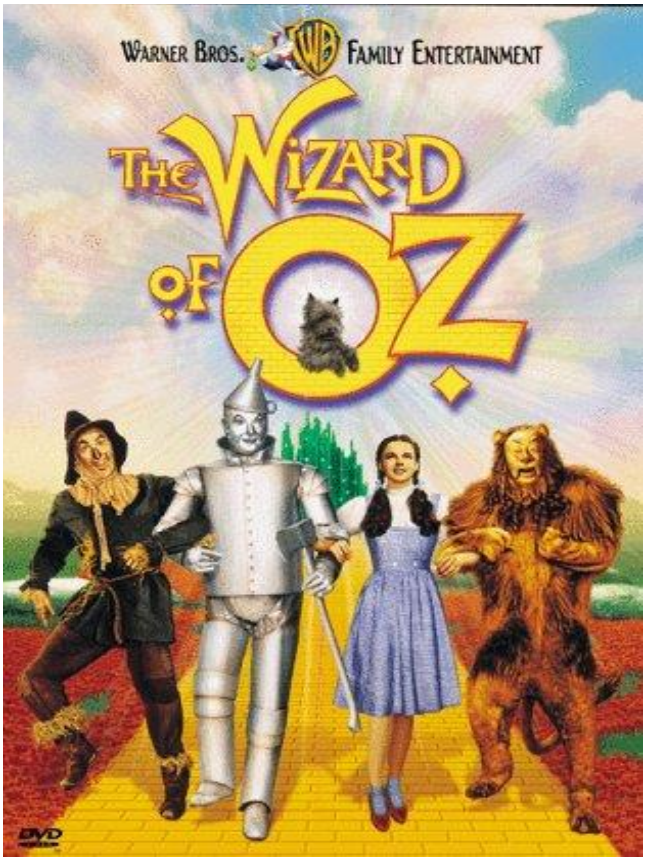


Image: Movie poster for *The Wizard of OZ* featuring the four companions – Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, Dorothy and the Cowardly Lion - linking arms on the yellow brick road. Toto the dog peeks out from within the letter O in the word Oz.

**"We're Off":**

**Cripping Judy Garland and *The Wizard of Oz***

"What about the materiality of the body, *Judy*?"

-- Judith Butler quoting friends, in *Bodies that Matter*

Why has Judy Garland been such a (white) gay icon? Sure, her father was gay, as were at least two of her husbands. And true, she played the legendary role of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* (MGM 1939), who lovingly accepted her misfit male companions on the yellow-brick road, inspiring the term "friend of Dorothy" – code words (and later, slang) for "gay man." Then, of course, there is Dorothy's signature song "Somewhere over the Rainbow," the sentiment of which resonated with metronormative gay dreams of coming out from a drab rural existence to a technicolor life in the big city. Richard Dyer in his essay "Judy Garland and Gay Men" attributes gay men's fascination with Garland in part to her "failed" femininity and to her famously troubled personal life, which, he claims, made it possible to read neurosis and authentic psychic pain into her performances, serving as a point of identification for some gay men. (Dyer)

But there was also something about Garland's *body* that was queer, that didn't quite fit, and the attempts to correct and fix it caused her great suffering throughout her short life. Adrienne McLean provides an analysis of Garland's body movement, pointing out the physical suffering her body performs on the screen; even without knowing any biographical details about Garland, McLean claims, it is possible to read pain and suffering physically in her performances (McLean). Ann Pellegrini recently claimed Garland as a *lesbian* icon as well, suggesting that

Garland's "struggle with the "wrong" body resonated with my own sense of being not quite at home in my own."(Pellegrini 126)

Pellegrini refers to Garland's "wrong" body, McLean mentions Garland's scoliosis and the disciplining of her body by MGM studios, and Dyer speaks of her hysteria, her neurosis, her "special relationship to suffering" and her lack of bodily control. Yet none go so far as to consider her as a *disabled* performer or to offer a disability studies analysis of her performance and persona. For Dyer in particular, Garland's physical and emotional impairments merely serve metaphorically as queer points of identification for her gay or queer fans. But "what would it mean," asks Tobin Siebers, "to esteem the disabled body for what it really is?" (Siebers)

In this chapter, I offer a disability reading of the film most associated with Judy Garland's status as a gay icon – *The Wizard of Oz.* I will first address the narrative of the film, and then its production history. I will argue that the narrative involving characters in search of body parts they lack – paired with the lived experiences of disability and physical impairment on the production set – allow for a presentation of a crip ideology of difference and interdependence.

*The Wizard of Oz* is a musical technicolor white fantasy film adaptation of L. Frank Baum's 1900 fantasy novel T*he Wonderful Wizard of Oz.* The MGM film was directed and written by a host of artists, with Victor Flemming credited as main director, and Florence Ryerson and Edgar Allan Woolf credited with writing most of the screenplay. Songs were penned by Edgar "Yip" Harburg (words) and Harold Arlen (music), and starring performers included Judy Garland, Ray Bolger,

Margaret Hamilton, Frank Morgan, Jack Haley, Billie Burke and Bert Lahr. Its opening sequences in sepia, the film follows Dorothy Gale, a young girl living with her aunt and uncle on a dustbowl era Kansas farm, who is swept away by a tornado into a technicolor fantasy world of Oz, her house landing on and killing a local wicked witch whose magical ruby slippers Dorothy inherits. From there Dorothy sets out on a journey to the mysterious and all-powerful wizard of Oz, who might be able to help her find her way home back to Kansas. On her way she befriends a scarecrow, a tin man and a cowardly lion, and the four make the journey to meet the Wizard, who ultimately turns out to be a sham. In the end Dorothy is able to find her way home with the aid of her magical slippers, and the film concludes with Dorothy waking up in her sepia Kansas bed, feverish, exclaiming that "there is no place like home!"

The film was a flop in its time, but it was its live television broadcast premiere on CBS in 1956 that began its transformation into one of the best-known film texts, and one that has lent itself to multiple readings. Both the MGM film and L. Frank Baum's books on which it is based have been read as political allegory (for populism, for New Deal politics), queer allegory (Oz as a queer utopia), and spiritual allegory (the Yellow-brick road leads to enlightenment). The film's central premise – characters who journey to a magical all-powerful wizard with the hope that he will cure their defective bodies – seems to invite a disability studies reading, yet such a reading of this popular and ubiquitous text has not yet, to my knowledge, been presented. As Mitchell and Snyder point out, "[o]nce a reader begins to seek out representations of disability in our literatures, it is difficult to avoid their proliferation in texts with which one believed

oneself to be utterly familiar" (Mitchell and Snyder). Indeed, once we think of *The Wizard of Oz* with disability in mind, we realize that the film is saturated with it.

First, not only are Dorothy's companions known mainly for their "lacking" body parts – The Scarecrow is missing a brain, the Tin Woodsman is missing a heart, and the Lion is missing "the nerve," but other aspects of their embodiment are also non-normative. The scarecrow's loose-jointed "spastic" way of walking and his body that is always on the verge of falling apart, the tin woodsman's stiff and often immobilizing metal prosthetic body, and, to a degree, even the cowardly lion's effeminate and animalistic gestures each invoke an idea of a disabled corporeality. I will show how the film presents these embodiments as accepted and not in need of "cure," within a sociality of interdependence.

Second, *The Wizard of Oz* features more disabled actors than any other film in Hollywood history, namely the one hundred and twenty-four actors playing the Munchkins, as well as Judy Garland herself.

Finally, many of the film's actors had to wear restrictive or cumbersome costumes which limited their mobility during the months of production and could not be removed until the end of each day: Judy Garland was forced throughout the filming to wear a painful canvas and metal corset which made it hard for her to sing (she recorded the song playbacks in advance without the corset). Jack Haley (Tin Woodsman) was unable to sit or lie down in his costume and could only rest by leaning against a wall. Bert Lahr (Cowardly Lion) had to drink his lunch

through a straw, and Margaret Hamilton (Wicked Witch of the West) required the use of an attendant in order to eat and use the toilet.

I will claim that the widespread presence of lived disabled or impaired experience on set troubles any tendency to see disabled bodies as merely metaphorical for other forms of difference, further contributing to the film's crip message, and allowing for a more accurate reading.

**The Narrative – "If I Only Had a…"**

"The medical model defines disability as an individual defect lodged in the person, a defect that must be cured or eliminated if the person is to achieve full capacity as a human being."

-- Tobin Siebers

"…just because I'm presumin'
That I could be kind of human
If I only had a heart!"

-- Tin Woodsman

In a 2004 disability listserv discussion of the medical model of disability, Anna Mollow offers the following summary:

1. Disability should not be understood in terms of individual defect.
2. Bodily difference is often pathologized when it should not be.
3. The idea that medical interventions designed to cure, correct, or

> rehabilitate such individual defects are 'the solution' to the 'problem' of disability is at the root of much of the social oppression of people with disabilities, because it implies that individual transformation, rather than broad social change, is what is required. (Quoted in Chen et al.)

Dorothy's three friends, Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and Cowardly Lion, each lacks what is in his opinion a crucial body part, and desires to have this defect fixed, memorably expressed in three verses of one song ("if I only had a…").

McMillin, in his book length study of the musical as a dramatic form attributes the political potential of the form to its roots in popular entertainment, dubbing musical theater "an illegitimate drama" with a radical aesthetic, so that its political potential is embedded in its very form. McMillin claims that the majority of mainstream American literature and drama is in a realist mode, and focuses on the individual character's journey, whereas the musical challenges such "rugged individualism" of American literature and drama. (McMillin) The musical forms and structures that govern the musical – such as duets, ensemble numbers, musical harmony and dance -- frame a "togetherness" even among completely disparate voices. In a musical, inner subtext is not hidden between the lines, it is sung. A song lends itself to be joined by other voices, and danced to, relating one character's inner motivations to another's, transforming the subtext into a shared, ensemble experience.

Dorothy's journey along the yellow brick road is framed by song. It starts with “We're off to see the wizard” - reprised for every additional friend that joins her, so that what begins as her solo becomes a duet, then a trio and finally a quartet. Through the repetition of the song, the community of travelers is formed.

The introduction of each new companion is done through song as well, the scarecrow's “If I only had a brain”, reprised by the Tin Man's “If I only had a heart” and finally reprised again by the Lion's “If I only had the nerve.” In this way, the music draws together each character's particular predicament, to form the community. The dotted rhythm of both songs (“We're off to see the wizard” and “If I only had a...”) make these into traveling songs – songs to skip along to, arms linked. Musically, the songs are similar enough so that the “If I only had a...” song always leads into the “We're off to see the wizard” song each time it is reprised. This creates the narrative effect of relating the four travelers via their missing parts, and of presenting a shared solution of the journey to the Wizard who can “fix” their deficiencies.

This thrice repeated musical theme “If I only had a Brain/Heart/the Nerve” is an ode to what Siebers calls “the ideology of ability;” their songs list all the wonderful things they would be able to do, if only their bodies were complete. In this way, despite the bodily organs operating to some extent metaphorically, Dorothy’s companions seem to reinforce the problematic deficiency model of disability. And yet, the ambiguous, open-ended satirical “curing” scene with the Wizard plays against this model, and the happy ending is achieved without them needing to undergo any physical transformation. The ambiguity regarding whether or not the Wizard cures

them, whether they actually have their missing organs in the end is especially noticeable in the Wizard's exchange with the Tin Woodsman:

WIZARD (to Tin Man)

As for you, my galvanized friend, you want a heart! You don't know how lucky you are *not to have one…*

TIN MAN

But I still want one…

WIZARD

...back where I come from there are men whodo nothing all day but good deeds. They are called phil...er -- er -- phil -- er, yes...good-deed-doers. And their hearts are *no bigger than yours*. But! They have one thing you haven't got! A testimonial!

At first, the wizard confirms that the Tin Man has no heart (which makes him lucky), and shortly after he claims that other people's hearts are no bigger than Tin Man's – implying that he *does* have a heart, and it's just the size which could be an issue, but isn't. The wizard's contradictory statements are partly in character for him – he is a humbug who tries to be different things for different people at different times, and we are to see that he is *not* all-knowing. But these contradictions might also be a result of the countless writers that worked on the screenplay. The writer who had the last say in this scene was *Oz* lyricist Yip Harburg, who has said that in most

of the script versions Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman and Lion realized at the end that they had always had the brain, the heart and the courage they had been seeking (indeed the film shows throughout that the Scarecrow is the smart one, the Tin Woodsman always overcome with emotion, etc.) This would seem to hang the happy ending on the removal of disability altogether. Harburg offers an interesting comment about his decision to change the script at precisely this moment in the narrative:

"I devised the satiric and cynical idea of the Wizard handing out symbols because I was so aware of our lives being the images of things rather than the things themselves."

In a sense, the film sets up the metaphors of heart, brain and nerve, only to eventually empty them of meaning. The story becomes less about the tin woodsman getting a heart (he doesn't!) but about his real and non-metaphorical feelings of inadequacy brought about by an imaginary assumption that one needs a heart to feel. The Wizard's certificate marks the tin woodsman's disability as having all to do with social validation rather than with any kind of impairment, in agreement with crip ideologies. The film thus sets up an individual deficiency model, only to reject it, replacing the narrative of cure with a narrative of social critique.

This is further expressed in the characters actual embodiments. Beyond their trademark quasi-metaphorical "defects," these characters are freaky fellows with visibly impaired bodies: The scarecrow's body does not maintain clear boundaries of internal and external – his insides are always spilling out and needing to be re-stuffed, and his limbs get torn off of his body easily and

need to be re-attached. He is loose-jointed and "floppy," and at times seems unable to control his body's movements, and exhibits "spastic" movements, or falls to the ground. The tin woodsman has the stiff movements of a man in a metal brace, his body is prone to rusting, which renders him immobile and mute, dependent on his friends to oil him back into shape. (In L. Frank Baum's book, the Tin Woodsman's axe cut his body into pieces due to a witch's curse, and a tinsmith constructed him a prosthetic body.) This Tin Man is by all accounts a physically impaired character.[1] The lion's "sissy" and/or animalistic gestures and vocalizations mark him as not fully human (although he is meant to be a "lion," he is obviously a man in a lion suit). Lahr's son writes that his father was "too grotesque in close-up (his energy made him grotesque) to work in full form in films… he was so large a comic figure… he radiated such energy and size, that the camera could only accept it as 'real' if he was an animal and not a human."[2] The lion's physicality cannot be classified as "normal." Like Scarecrow's "spasticity" and Tin Man's heavy stiffness, Lion's unchecked lisping sissiness and "animality" suggest corporealities that have been associated with certain kinds of disability.

[1] Arwen Mohun, for example, uses the character of the Tin Woodsman in Baum's book to explain how early twentieth century industrialization was inscribed in workers' injured bodies: "[A]mputations," he argues, "the injury that led the Woodman to have a tin body but no heart, took on particular social, cultural, and political significance in this period. Unlike other kinds of disabilities such as poisoning or internal damage, amputations could be "read" as unambiguous evidence of the riskiness of industrial workplaces and of the potential violence of machines. As a consequence, reformist rhetoric as well as the first workmen's compensation schemes and rehabilitation programs were built around this particular kind of disability." See Arwen Mohun, "Inscribed on the Body: Reading Industrial Disabilities in the Age of Kafka and the Wizard of Oz". Society for the History of Technology. Meeting (48th : 2007 : Washington). D.C.). "Looking Back, Looking Beyond": The Washington, D.C., Meeting, 17–21 October 2007." *Technology and Culture*, vol. 49 no. 1, 2008, pp. 179-201.

[2] John Lahr, quoted in Harmetz p.129

Interestingly, these characters' physical differences or impairments as portrayed in the film, are *not pathologized in the least*. They are simply presented as a part of the character, nothing to be concerned about, and certainly nothing that needs to be cured. These men are on a trip to see a powerful wizard, yet not once do they consider asking him to give them a body that moves "better." The fact that the film presents not just one impaired character but several, and that their different bodies are never stigmatized but rather fully welcomed and supported, mark additional moments of crip utopia in Oz.

Paul Longmore has written that disability studies offers "an alternative view of the nature of community and the relationships of individuals to one another within communities." (Longmore 95) He notes how the ideal American is independent, not dependent on anyone for anything, and that "[t]o become sick or disabled in America is to lose one's social validity. It is to become an inversion of what a real American is supposed to be." (Longmore 190).

How interesting it is, then, that in an iconic musical film considered as "American" as apple pie, the dominant sociability is *interdependence*. Prominent film musical scholar Rick Altman has shown in great detail, how the American musical follows what he calls a "dual focus" structure, involving a heterosexual couple of opposites, who eventually get together or get married at the end, resolving the differences they represented. (Altman). Altman himself has no answer to why one of the best loved of American movie musicals – *The Wizard of Oz* – does not in any way follow a "dual focus" structure. Instead of the heterosexual pair, we have a group of four freaky

people, arms linked, sharing a journey and helping each other out whenever necessary (the image of the four walking along in a row arm in arm is the poster image for the film). Dorothy and Scarecrow will repeatedly oil Tin Man when he gets stuck, just as Tin Man and Lion will help collect the pieces of Scarecrow and put him back together again.

The "queer" sociability people have found in *The Wizard of Oz*, is also a crip sociability of interdependence, and this is as crip a film as it is queer. If not more so. Because the queerness is mainly found in the film through the metaphor of physical disability. Recent anti-social or anti-relational turns in queer theory have been invested in a reclaiming or reengagement with negative queer affects, looking towards the past ("feeling backwards") rather than looking towards a (reproductive) future, shame rather than pride. But a disability studies perspective complicates such affects, and it makes legible a sociability of interdependence.

*The Wizard of Oz* may be an allegory, in other words, it might rely on metaphor and representation rather than depictions of things as they are. In fact, in the movie version, the land of Oz turns out to be merely Dorothy's hallucination after she gets injured in the head and sick with a high fever.

Yet here again, gay is read where disability is shown: The colorful city of Oz is not born from Dorothy "coming out of the closet" but by *a mental impairment induced by a physical injury.*

**Production – Impairment on Set**

Few films in the history of Hollywood can boast a cast that includes over one hundred disabled actors. *The Wizard of Oz* was made in part because MGM was interested in emulating the huge success of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1937). If Disney had seven dwarves, Mayer wanted a hundred and fifty. He would flex studio muscle by using "real midgets" to play the Munchkins and achieving the same effects with live-action that Disney could only get with animation. The success of Tod Browning's film *Freaks* (1932), which featured little people as leading actors, further convinced Mayer that the public wanted to see little people acting on screen.

To find the actors, Mayer turned to Leo Singer, the manager of a "midget troupe" who committed to signing on one hundred and twenty four little people from all over the United States and Europe to perform in the picture. (Interestingly, some of them are said to have used the opportunity to defect – so to speak – to the United States and escape Nazi persecution.) Singer would later turn out to have financially scammed most of the little people he managed. Also, all but one of these actors were credited simply and insultingly as "The Munchkins" in the opening credits of the film, and "The Singer Midgets" (after Leo Singer) in the closing credits, suggesting that they were playing themselves. This was from the truth, as the actors wore prosthetic cheeks, foreheads and hairpieces, to say nothing of their elfin cartoonesque costumes, designed to make them appear childlike and smaller than they actually were. Also, all but two of their voices were dubbed.

The participation of so many significantly disabled and stigmatized performers in the film seems to have left its imprint on the filming experience. A lore of backstage Munchkin shenanigan rumors, as well as stories of infantilizing encounters between little people and big people indicate a high degree of engagement.

Technicians who worked on the set said that the actors "got into sex orgies at the hotel. We had to have police on every floor." And [producer] Mervyn LeRoy claimed, "Everything you can imagine sexually was going on… they had terrific fights over women… I heard that some knives were pulled. Midgets are evidently highly sexed or something." (Harmetz 85) An older (and seemingly imbibed) Judy Garland fueled these rumors when she appeared on the Jack Paar show in 1967 and gave her account of her co-actors: "They were drunks… They got smashed every night and the police had to pick them up in butterfly nets." (Harmetz 188) She also said that one of them who was "around two inches tall" had asked her out. Steve Rash's ill-acclaimed film *Under the Rainbow* (1981) depicts scenes of wild debauchery among Munchkins at the Culver hotel, which helped keep these rumors alive in recent decades. All of these stories have since been proven unambiguously false.[3]

While imagined as drunken sex perverts on the one hand, the little people were also infantilized and perceived as children or dolls on the other (if you have two). Betty Danko, who was the stunt double for the Wicked Witch, recalls: "[T]he wardrobe man had [one] midget under one

[3] See Harmetz, and Reinhardt Raabe and Daniel Kinske: *Memories of a Munchkin: An Illustrated Walk Down the Yellow Brick Road* and John Fricke, *The Wizard of Oz: The Official 50th Anniversary Pictorial History*.

arm and another midget under his other arm. And he was crabbing. 'What am I, a wardrobe man or a nursemaid?' because he had to take them to the bathroom and unlace their costumes and then lace them back up again when they were through." Harmetz summarizes that most Oz crew members he interviewed remembered little people with infantilizing affection: "They were such cute little things." "They were such toys." "They were like little dolls." He comments that these statements were presented in a gentle tone, "reminiscent of the tone in which one might praise a clever dog." This is consistent with the way the Munchkins were presented in the film, as part of a magical candy-land, with miniature soldiers recalling toy soldiers, and the workers guild presented as the "lollypop guild." Their costumes had flowers "appliquéd everywhere – on gloves, on hats, on bodices, even on sleeves and capes." "The huge vests and coats and jewelry were designed to make the munchkins look even smaller." The production's dance director, Dona Massin, recalls: "Technically speaking, they did not do much dancing. Just little hopping things, cute little movements. There were no really difficult steps of any kind." (Harmetz 198–202)

Both kinds of stories – oversexualizing tall tales, as well as infantalizing descriptions of cross-disability engagement – indicate just how significant these performers presence must have been for others on set.

Within the narrative, too, the little performers actual "freakish" bodies on screen as the Munchkins leave a lasting imprint from the very beginning. As Dorothy's first stop on her Oz journey, Munchkin Land sets the tone for the rest of the movie, introducing colorful Oz as a land

in which abnormal embodiment is the norm. Any character on screen with a supposedly defective body might keep pointing back to the disabled people who graced the screen in the first scene in *Oz*. They cannot be ignored. [4]

Judy Garland was born Ethel Frances Gumm, known as "Baby" – who, starting as a toddler, was the smallest and sweetest member of a vaudeville sisters act managed by their mother. On stage with The Gumm Sisters she was presented as a curiosity, a small person with a freakishly big voice, a child singing adult songs. This led Louella Parsons to wonder in one of her columns if perhaps "Baby Gumm might not really be a[n adult] midget. No child could have such a voice – and such power." (Frank 35)

Judy Garland was born with scoliosis, a slight curvature of the spine, which gave her a so-called dowager's hump early on in her life. MGM studio head L.B. Mayer is known to have once greeted his teenaged star with the words: "How is my little hunchback this morning?" Mayer's offensive remark was merely part of the general constant judgment and disparaging to which Garland's body was subjected, and which ate away at her self-esteem throughout her life. From the very start it was clear that she was no Jeanette MacDonald, Vivien Leigh, or Bette Davis – her body would never meet the tall, slim, beautiful movie star physical standard of her day, but

[4] All of the actors playing the munchkins were hypopituitary ("normally" proportionate) dwarfs. Betty Adelson notes that since the discovery of growth hormones, such "perfectly proportioned" little people have become a dying breed: "because of the introduction of synthetic growth hormone treatment in the 1980s, a film such as The Wizard of Oz, if made today, could no longer feature the same type of "Munchkins" as in United States of 1938, when only Caucasian, hypopituitary dwarfs were included in the cast. Since growth hormone treatment became available, the preferred category of cute, "perfectly-formed" miniatures like Tom Thumb, common in the courts and frequent among exhibiting dwarfs, has nearly disappeared in most Western nations." The genocidal nature of "curing" a non-impairing (or impairing, for that matter) physical condition to extinction is highly disturbing. Consider the fact that the category of such little people in Europe also nearly disappeared following their persecution by the Nazis.

the studio kept trying to fix it. Garland's biographer Gerald Frank describes her body and the "corrective" measures it required:

> Garland was short, plump; she had no neck. There was a slight curvature of the spine… she was a bit humpbacked . . . There were other matters that would have to be dealt with. She had a bad bite. Her teeth were not bad, but out of alignment in front. Judy balked at having them permanently capped. She would have to wear portable caps before the camera. Her nose could be improved upon . . . little rubber disks would have to be inserted to bring that about. . . They would have to bind her breasts to keep her no more than fourteen for the next few years, and… to give her a shapely waist, squeeze her into a [...] cruel harness of canvas and metal stays which required a woman on either side to pull the strings tight. (Frank 72)

Behind the much-beloved fresh-faced, earnest image of Dorothy in her blue and white (or sepia) gingham dress was a young woman barely able to breathe – let alone sing – in her metal and canvas corset, with caps on her teeth and rubber disks in her nose.[5] The songs were all filmed against playbacks, recorded in advance by a comfortable, corset-free, hunchbacked Judy, whom the studio wanted us to hear but not see, and like many of her fans over the years, she performed "somewhere over the rainbow" in lip-sync.

[5] The efforts to "fix" Judy's body conflated the enforcement of both ablist and sexist body standards. Rosemarie Garland-Thompson offers the example of corrective body braces to show how disciplining appearance norms and disciplining health norms are intertwined: "[B]ody braces developed in the 1930s to "correct" scoliosis discipline the body to conform to the dictates of both the gender and ability systems by enforcing standardized female form similarly to the nineteenth century corset, which, ironically, often disabled female bodies."

Salman Rushdie, who claims MGM's *Oz* as his first literary influence, writes that Garand's ability to carry the film while remaining an "everyman" character is due, in part, to her "odd stockiness, the gaucherie that endears us precisely because it is half-unbeautiful, *jolie-laide*… [t]he scrubbed, ever so slightly lumpy *unsexiness* of Garland's playing is what makes the movie work."(Rushdie 27) The film implicitly references Judy's ambiguous position between beauty and ugliness in the following exchange between Dorothy and Glinda, the Good Witch of the North:

GLINDA

Are you a good witch, or a bad witch?

DOROTHY

Who, me? Why, I'm not a witch at all. I'm Dorothy Gale from Kansas.

GLINDA

Oh! Well... (points to Toto) is *that* the witch?

Soon after, Glinda explains that "only bad witches are ugly." What a participant on a gay *The Wizard of Oz* fan site wonders – in Dorothy's name – is: "Uh, then why did you have to ask which one I am?"

If Judy Garland's scoliosis and "ugliness" disabled her in a looks-obsessed Hollywood, it was ironically her corrective costume accessories that actually limited her abilities on set. Garland's corset wasn't the only costume in the production that was impairing. Bert Lahr's costume

weighed 90 pounds, and he dreaded having his make-up put on. “Once his lion’s nose and mouth were glued to his face, he could not open his own mouth wide enough to chew. His lunch was whatever he could sip through a straw.”(Harmetz 171) Jack Haley had it no easier: his costume “was made of buckram, a coarse fabric used for binding books. The buckram was covered with leather that had been painted silver, and it was stiff as cardboard. “I couldn’t lie down in that costume. I couldn’t even sit in it. I could only lean against a reclining board that was originally built for actresses wearing crinoline gowns and lots of hoopskirts.” (Harmetz 171) But he had it better than Buddy Ebsen, who was originally cast in the role of Tin Man, but had to leave the production after the Aluminum powder that was applied to his face as the Tin Man’s make-up got into his lungs and nearly killed him. He was hospitalized for two weeks, and by then had been replaced by Haley.

Margaret Hamilton’s make-up took two hours to apply. It included a false rubber nose, a rubber jutting chin, a rubber wart with hairs sticking out of it, and her entire face arms and hands were covered with green paint. “From the time I got my make-up on, I was immobilized… If I touched my costume, it would be streaked with green. I couldn’t do anything for myself, and that included the amenities in the bathroom… I needed *a great deal of help* from the little girl the studio had assigned me as a sort of maid – holding up my skirt *and that sort of thing.”* (italics mine) She was also badly burned in the face and hands during the filming of one of the scenes in which she had to handle fire. (Harmetz 178)

The three costumed male leads of the film – Haley, Bolger and Lahr – were deemed too revolting to eat in the commissary with the rest of the cast and crew. “They tried it once, dressed in bathrobes, their legs bare, their faces covered with rubber and fur and aluminum paste. They were told they looked disgusting. After that… some sort of tacit arrangement was made with the studio. If they would eat in their dressing rooms, the studio would pay for lunch.” (Harmetz 172)

Strange embodiment in Oz has traditionally been read as a representation of difference in general, and specifically sexual difference. In “’There lived in the Land of Oz two queerly made men’: Queer Utopianism and Antisocial Eroticism in L. Frank Baum’s Oz Series,” Tison Pugh claims that Baum’s Oz is a land in which normative constructions of gender and sexuality are subverted, rendering it a queer utopia. “Eccentricity and singularity are privileged cultural values in Oz,” he writes, “and many messages endorsing antinormativity resonate with queer meaning…” The example he cites is the Scarecrow’s encouraging Jack Pumpkinhead, “who fears that his ragtag body invites ridicule,” to be proud of his uniqueness: “That proves you are unusual . . . and I am convinced that the only people worthy of consideration in this world are the unusual ones. For the common folks are like the leaves of a tree, and live and die unnoticed” (Pugh 220).

Pugh sees the privileging of odd bodies and the disparagement of “normal” as a queer manifestation, but to do so he must first use the “ragtag body that invites ridicule,” essentially a disabled body, as a metaphor for queer. “Disability lends a distinctive idiosyncrasy to any

character that differentiates the character from the anonymous background of the 'norm,'" explain Mitchell and Snyder. But, "while stories rely upon the potency of disability as a symbolic figure, they rarely take up disability as an experience of social or political dimensions."(Mitchell and Snyder 201–05) For Pugh, the metaphor is so natural, that the disabled body he discusses is not seen at all, and is directly mapped onto a queer interpretation. Similarly, the "queerly made men" in the title of his article more likely refers to men with odd or unique bodies. While Pugh surely knows that "queer" in Baum means "strange," and has little if anything to do with sexuality, his use of the word in the title of his article indicates that he is mapping the "oddly put-together people" onto the modern meaning of the word "queer." I join other disability scholars in a call to body theorists everywhere to consider the disabled body as an actual living body, rather than just use disability as a metaphor for sexual difference and ignore the lived experiences of disabled people. On the set of Oz, disabled lived experience was too common to be ignored in that way.

Since I am reading Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and the Cowardly Lion as disabled characters in the film, I find it meaningful that they are played by impaired actors. While under their cumbersome costumes their bodies were "normal" (significantly, like the bodies of the farmhands they play in the scenes in Kansas), during each entire day on set, the actors' actual bodies were not able to move in a "normal" fashion, and their lived experience was by necessity affected by this. Could it be that a set where people were drinking their food, limited in mobility and needing attendants to help them use the toilet, a set on which there were over 100 visibly

disabled performers every day interacting with non-disabled cast and crew--that such a set was somehow more than usual infused with the lived-experience of disability?

There is something in this film that repeatedly ruptures the sterility of disability as metaphor. There are real disabled bodies in the film, they cannot be ignored, forgotten or textualized. There are actors who are physically impaired by their costumes, and a physically suffering star; the presence of physically impaired actors on screen has a lasting effect. To use Yip Harburg's words - "the things themselves" are constantly there, haunting and rupturing "the images of things." (Harmetz 85)

And so many more of us have been "friends of Dorothy" all these years than we ever realized.

**CHAPTER 2 - IS THE MUSICAL JEWISH?**

Image: Black-and-white photograph of screaming infant undergoing ritual circumcision.

**“Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off”:**

**Performing Circumcision in the Musical**

In *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical*, Andrea Most argues that the history of the American musical cannot be separated from the story of Jewish assimilation into American society. This chapter explores the intersection of two central ideas: The first is the well-documented centrality of Jewish composers, writers, librettists, producers, and other artists in the development of musical theater in the United States during the twentieth century. The second is the also well-documented historical widespread European perspective that the Jewish male body is inherently defective. I argue that the role of Jews and Jewishness in the American musical theater tradition has important intersections with this imagined defective male Jewish body, and these must be investigated for a more complete understanding of the supposed "Jewishness" of the musical.

Sander Gilman asserts that the very definition of the Jew is centered on the image of the male Jew's circumcised penis as "impaired, damaged, or incomplete, and therefore threatening to the wholeness and health of the male Aryan," and by extension, the body politic (Gilman 61). For fellow Jew Jacque Derrida, modern Western culture is dominated by logocentrism, or determinateness, in which knowledge and language are seen as based in absolute fact and truth. Writing from the opposite philosophy, that of the unresolvable contradictions and fundamental indeterminateness of things, Derrida coins the term *phallogocentrism* to indicate how logocentrism is itself inseparable from phallocentrism, the centralizing of the phallic or masculine. How might Derrida view a

circumcised penis? At once whole and severed, it is an aporetic phallus, indeterminate in both meaning and gender.

In his essay on the Broadway musical, *Place for Us*, D. A. Miller claims that the musical belongs to the female star, and that the male performer in a musical is expected "to forgo, in favor of secondary roles, that pride of place which he may freely take in every other sphere…" (Miller 80). I would say that a male *can* be the star in the musical, so long as his phallus is in some way "improper," or "defective," in some way not fully intact. I examine three very different musicals, each of which centers around a male star: Eddie Cantor in *Whoopee!* (stage version in 1928, film version in 1930), Yehoram Gaon in *Kazablan* (stage version in 1966, film version in 1973), and John Cameron Mitchell in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (stage version in 1998, film version in 2001).[6] These musicals all include significant allusions to or representations of circumcision and male genital defectiveness. In *Whoopee!*, an effeminate and obviously Jewish Eddie Cantor plays Henry, a hypochondriac who makes repeated references to his "operation," while indicating the crotch area inside his pants. The Israeli musical *Kazablan* ends with a grand finale circumcision scene which, in the movie version at least, lasts for almost ten full minutes. In *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* circumcision is a

[6]Due to lack of access to view the stage productions of these musicals, I will be basing my analysis upon the films as well. The film version of *Whoopee!* is known to have essentially recreated the stage production; the film and stage versions of *Kazablan* were similar – they used more-or-less the same script and music and the same main performer; my information about where the two versions differ comes from a telephone interview I conducted with the director of the stage production, Joel Silberg, who was also one of the original writers. While the film version of *Hedwig* differs from the Off-Broadway production in certain modes of expression, both productions used the same story, music, lyrics, creative team and performers.

central theme; the "angry inch" in the title itself refers to what remains after Hedwig undergoes surgery that removes part of her penis.

I will begin with a discussion of the singing voice itself as it relates to genitals and gender. Second, I will examine the system of cultural signification involved in the perception of Jewish circumcision by European gentiles, for whom the circumcised penis was a mark of castration, femininity, sickness and racial "otherness" that conflated Jews with women or homosexuals. I will show how this system of signification is invoked in *Whoopee!* by examining the references to circumcision in Eddie Cantor's performance.

Third, I will address circumcision from the Jewish perspective, as a mock-sacrificial rite that symbolically purifies the male infant from his mother's impure post-partum blood, an initiation rite into masculinity, God's covenant, and a patrilineal community. From the Jewish perspective, it is the uncircumcised penis which is imperfect, an unsharpened pencil[7], if you will, or a closed organ[8]. I will read *Kazablan* in this light, illustrating how the Moroccan Jewish hero nicknamed Kazablan (feminized by being named metonymically for a city, Casablanca) can be the musical's singing star so long as he is considered a *Shwartze Chaye*, a "black beast," as the racist Yiddish expression goes, not a real man. The circumcision of the baby at the end of the film marks Kazablan's own entrance into the proper masculine Israeli hegemony, after which he no longer sings.

[7]I am grateful to Eli Ben-Zaken for this metaphor.
[8]Biblical Hebrew uses the word "uncircumcised" metaphorically to describe hearts, ears and lips that are blocked, as discussed below.

Finally, I will reveal circumcision as the cut that both severs and makes whole. I will follow the theme of cutting and division in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch,* showing how the musical undoes the dichotomy of meanings attributed to circumcision (as a cut that marks its bearer female according to one view and male according to the other) dismantling dichotomies of male and female, gentile and Jew, healthy and defective, and offers an alternative image of "wholeness" outside such oppressive grids.

**Gender, Genitals and the Voice**

A theme that is central to all these musicals is the gendered nature of the voice. "The spookily genderless voice box has been clothed with a feminine aura," writes Wayne Koestenbaum in his book *The Queen's Throat*, an exploration of the queer aspects of opera (Koestenbaum 159). The voice box, Koestenbaum says, resembles the female genitals in shape, and like the female genitals it is hidden from view: "Voice commentators describe the larynx as labial - based on visual analogy, and on the association between women and invisible things." (Kostenbaum 160). The mouth through which the voice resonates, itself a red, moist cavernous organ, has a traditionally vaginal nature. And Jewish law forbids a man to hear a woman sing because, as the Hebrew dictum states, *kol b'isha erva* (a woman's voice is genitalia).

In discursive traditions in the West[9], the singing voice and music in general have been sites of emasculation. The song of the Sirens can make a man grow weak and lure him to his death. And Plato describes how devotion to music produces softness and effeminacy in a man:

> When a man allows music to play upon him and to pour into his soul through the funnel of his ears those sweet and soft and melancholy airs… he begins to melt and waste, until he has wasted away his spirit and cut out the sinews of his soul; and he becomes a feeble warrior…
>
> the power of music weakening the spirit renders him excitable; on the least provocation he flames up at once, and is speedily extinguished; instead of having spirit he grows irritable and passionate and is quite impracticable…

(Plato book 3)

In a text about the feminization of men, the image of liquid music flowing through the open ear canal and into the soul is almost a sexual one; the ear canal is imagined as a sort of vaginal tunnel being inseminated, causing the spirit to waste away.[10] In biblical Hebrew, the word *arel* (uncircumcised) is used not only to describe male genitals, but also ears, lips and hearts.[11] *Arel* metaphorically means blocked or closed; an "uncircumcised ear" is one that cannot be penetrated, that refuses to hear, as in Jeremiah's complaint: "Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot listen."

---

[9]In non-Western cultures politics of singing and gender may be different; in Yiddish or Arabic cultures, for example, singing is men's domain. As mentioned above, Jewish law forbids women to sing in public, as their voices are thought to be sexually arousing to men.

[10]That the spirit wastes away after the sexual act is a common Western trope, see for example Shakespeare's sonnet 129: "The expense of spirit in a waste of shame/ Is lust in action."

[11]I am grateful to Chana Kronfeld for pointing out this beautiful connection.

(Jeremiah 6:10). Similarly, Moses tells God he cannot speak before Pharaoh because he is of "uncircumcised lips," his speech is blocked. (Exodus 6:30). Underscoring the relationship between genitals and the voice, "uncircumcised" has thus been used to describe not only penises but also organs associated with speech and song – ears, lips, and the heart. In the context of an open ear, Plato's reference to the soul's sinews being "cut out" is thus also in resonance with a circumcision vocabulary.

And it was the male *castrati,* the renowned physically castrated Baroque opera stars who dominated the popular music halls of their day, thrilling audiences with their gender-defying mellifluous virtuosic voices. It was the castrati's sacrifice of a part of their male genitals as children (not by their own choice) that allowed them to maintain their soprano voices into adulthood. For non-castrated males, the lowering of the voice occurs in direct relation to the development of the genitals: A low voice in males is a secondary sex characteristic; it signifies the existence of developed testes. The voice is thus also a major gender signifier.

**Circumcision as Castration, the Jew as Woman**

And what about circumcision? Does it affect the voice? Marjorie Garber describes the sing-song lilt of what was anti-Semitically perceived as the "Jewish" voice as "a kind of aural clothing that linked Jew and "woman," Jew and emasculated man, Jew and degenerate male homosexual." This perception of the Jewish voice as feminine or degenerate is related to a general belief held historically by many in Europe that Jewish

circumcision was akin to castration. In a footnote to *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old-Boy: "Little Hans"* (1909), Freud problematically casts the complex as the very source of both anti-Semitism and misogyny:

> The castration complex is the deepest unconscious root of anti-Semitism; for even in the nursery little boys hear that a Jew has something cut off his penis – a piece of his penis, they think – and this gives them a right to despise Jews. And there is no stronger unconscious root for the sense of superiority over women. (Freud)

In the same footnote, Freud also makes reference to Otto Weininger's infamous and influential essay "Sex and Character" in which Weininger compares the Jew to the woman, berating both as having no soul. Freud and Weininger, though both Jews themselves[12], were likely internalizing the widespread Anti-Semitic European understanding of circumcision as a form of castration that was thought to leave the Jew with female genitals, a kind of clitoris. In fact, Sander Gilman recounts how in turn-of-the-20th-century Vienna the clitoris was understood to be homologous to a truncated penis and was colloquially called "the Jew." Female masturbation was known as "playing with the Jew." In this way circumcision was seen as a kind of sex-change operation, rendering female whoever underwent it.

[12] For a brilliant reading of Freud on the case of "Little Hans" that discusses Freud's Jewishness in this context see Daniel Boyarin, "Homophobia and the Postcoloniality of the "Jewish Science"", in *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, ed. Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz and Ann Pellegrini (Columbia University Press, New York, 2003)

**Whoopee! (1928; 1930)**

In the 1928 Broadway musical *Whoopee!* (adapted to a film by Florenz Ziegfeld and Samuel Goldwyn in 1930) Eddie Cantor plays Henry Williams, despite his Anglo name, an effeminate and unmistakably Jewish hypochondriac. Caught in the middle of a race-crossing love snarl – white ingénue Sally and the partially-Native-American Wanenis are in love but cannot marry because of their racial difference; the white Sheriff wishes to marry Sally; she runs away aided by Henry, who has a butch nurse (with a soft-spot for feminine men) trying to gain his affection. Along the way Henry, in a parodic performance drawn directly from the satirical tradition of Yiddish theater and literature, dons both blackface and red-face and sings several hit numbers backed up by the Ziegfeld Girls. The story is resolved when it is revealed that Wanenis is actually white. Sally can then marry Wanenis, Henry will marry his nurse, and we assume everyone will soon begin "makin' whoopee!"

The musical was written as a star vehicle for Cantor, who flaunts his trademark effeminate rolls of the eyes, high voice, and repeated Jewish and homosexual allusions. Andrea Most sees Cantor's portrayal of Henry as a literal representation of the Jewish man as feminine, homosexual, and sickly. As Most demonstrates, Henry's illness seems to be related to his genitals (Most 48). He repeatedly mentions his "operation," implicitly referring to his circumcision:

NURSE: Henry, you're just a hypochondriac!

HENRY: Yeah, am I? How would you like to see my operation? [Henry rises, lifts shirt and begins to unbutton his pants]

NURSE: No! No! Sit down.

Later:

HENRY: You think you've got a scar? I'm going to show you something, my dear man, that will amaze you…. Now look down here [HENRY pulling open his pants. Underwood looks in amazement] Now let me take a look at yours [Looks down Underwood's pants… they soon begin to roll around the floor together]

And even:

HENRY: [sings] My baby just loves these consultations, And how she enjoys my operation!

Finally, I see another circumcision reference in the scene in which Henry picks up a banana cluster, cuts off the tips of all the bananas with scissors, and drops the entire bunch into the questionable waffle batter which he is preparing.

In *Whoopee!*, circumcision is the mark of the sickly, effeminate Jew who has homosexual leanings. Most shows how it is exactly this effeminacy that allows him to star in the musical. Given the emphasis that the musical places on his sickness and

implied circumcision in structuring that effeminacy, I would suggest that it is specifically his "improper" genitals that give him his voice.

**The Jewish meanings of circumcision**

"I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee… This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee: every male among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt Me and you."

-- God, in Genesis 17:6-11

In *The Savage in Judaism*, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz describes the complex historical and metaphysical meanings of the circumcision rite for Jews. Since the biblical covenant between Abraham and God involved a promise of fertility and a noble lineage, he claims, the penis was an appropriate place to bear the covenant's symbol. Eilberg-Schwartz explains how the removal of the foreskin symbolized the fertility of the organ (in different cultures), and the mark left in the flesh of the male organ set this lineage apart from others. In this way "circumcision symbolizes and helps create intergenerational continuity between men. It graphically represents patrilineal descent by giving men of this line a distinctive mark that binds them together." (Eilberg-Schwartz 171)

Rather than the mark of femininity, the original meaning of the circumcision rite involved the separation from the world of women and an entry into *masculinity*. The blood drawn from the male genitals was a ritual cleansing of the male infant from his mother's "impure" post-partum blood - a rite marking "the passage from the impurity of being born of woman to the purity of life in the community of men." In addition, the doubt inherent in matters of paternity had always posed a problem to patrilineal societies which relied on paternity relationships but could never prove them. In an attempt to solve this problem, the circumcision rite served as a ritual way to formally establish – though never confirm - paternal ties. Finally, circumcision involved the individual's flesh sacrifice for the greater cause of entering the (male) group and the community.

***Kazablan* (1966; 1973)**

> At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins… for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their

places in the camp, till they were [revived][13]. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.

The Book of Joshua, Chapter 5, 2-8 (King James Version)

The book of Joshua chronicles the Israelites' arrival in and subsequent conquest of Canaan following their forty year desert trek from Egypt. Here circumcision is not a mark of lack or degeneration – on the contrary: the Israelites' circumcisions revive them, and clear them of the shame of their parents' and grandparents' life of servitude in Egypt, indeed of a supposed shameful association with Egypt in general. It is a wound that prepares the males to be a nation of warriors in their own land, the land later to be named Israel.

This is precisely the model of circumcision that operates in the smash hit Israeli musical *Kazablan* (1966)*,* loosely based on a play of the same name by Yigal Mosenzon. Written, directed and produced by Ashkenazi (European) Jews, *Kazablan* presents a picture of 1950s Jaffa, fraught with ethnic divisions, especially between Ashenazi and Mizrahi (Middle Eastern or North African) Jews. The musical follows Yosef Simantov a.k.a. Kazablan, an Israeli Moroccan Jew and former war hero living among an ethnically diverse community of Israelis including immigrants from Poland, Russia, Tunisia, Algeria,

[13]The King James translation uses the phrase "till they were whole." However, this strays from the original Hebrew, which uses the expression *ad khayotam*, closer in meaning to "till they were revived." The Hebrew words imply rebirth through circumcision, while the English words imply that circumcision is a wound that requires healing for a state of wholeness to be regained – two very different notions. I am grateful to Chana Kronfeld for pointing out the subtle politics of translation in this instance.

and other countries. The shabby Jaffa housing project in which this community abides is set to be bulldozed by the authorities, and Kazablan, because of racist stereotyping of Moroccans as hoodlums, is falsely accused of stealing the money that the residents had pooled together to try to stop the demolition. He manages to clear his name in the end and is finally treated with the dignity he deserves and desires.

Through the well-intentioned but racist eyes of the Westernized Israeli writers, Kazablan's story is one of taming – from someone who is considered more of an animal than a man (he is repeatedly called a "beast" throughout the film), and one who compares himself to a woman because of it, he enters the proper masculine order and becomes worthy of Rachel, the Ashkenazi girl he loves. The musical follows an Altmanian dual-focus structure, contrasting Kazablan with Rachel throughout. And as film scholar Rick Altman suggests, the resolution of this "primary" dichotomy between the lovers, also "mediates between the two terms of the secondary (thematic) opposition" (50) – in this case, the ethnic dichotomy: Just as Kazablan and Rachel will end up meeting across their ethnic difference, so will the Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews in this Jaffa neighborhood. In *Kazablan* intermarriage is presented as a utopian solution to ethnic strife. I agree, however, with Israeli film scholar Ella Shohat that this utopian solution only glosses over and neutralizes the deep-seated racial, social and economic injustice against Mizrahi Jews in Israel: "The protest in films such as [*Kazablan*] tends to find only superficial expression, however, and toward the end the somewhat inarticulate critique is rendered irrelevant by the ideology of integration, presumed to

resolve the conflicts, as if mixed marriage and the Westernization of the Orient were sufficient to modify the political and economic structures of domination…. The happy endings [of such films] foster a "mythical" solution which in fact buttresses the status quo." (Shohat 53) In *Kazablan* such a "mythical" solution is presented through a circumcision scene that brings the diverse community together in the end in joyous celebration, structured like a wedding finale.[14] A clear parallel is set up between Kazablan and the baby being circumcised: Kazablan holds the baby during the operation, having been given the honorable role of *sandak* (godfather). In the film version, the baby is named after him, and during the beginning of the musical finale that ensues after the circumcision, "*Ze hakatan gadol yihieh*" ("This small one[15] shall grow to be great," part of the circumcision blessing over the baby) the camera focuses on Kazablan. In this way, the baby's circumcision can be thought of as a metaphorical second circumcision for Kazablan, one that "rolls away the reproach of Morocco from off of him." In his song just before the circumcision scene, Kazablan had made a passionate plea to himself: *"Stop being like a woman! Look, look what shame! Get off my back, Kazablan!"* seeming to be trying to shed "Kazablan," his Moroccan origins which in his mind (or rather in the cultural stereotypes recreated by the Ashkenazi writers) are affiliated with femininity. Like the Israelites entering Canaan, Kazablan must be ritually rid of the "reproach" of his Arab origins. The circumcision scene marks his entry into the

[14]The stage version followed the scene with an ensemble reprise of the number "Kulanu Yehudim" (We are all Jews.)
[15]*Katan* (literally, "a small one") was at the time also a common euphemism for penis.

Israeli masculine national hegemony. From this point on, he no longer sings. From the Jewish perspective, his phallus has metaphorically been made perfect.

***Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998; 2001)**

HEDWIG'S SUGAR DADDY:

To walk away, you got to leave something behind…

HEDWIG'S MOTHER:

To be free one has to give up a little part of oneself... and I know just the doctor to take it!"

HEDWIG:

Aaaaaa!

John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Outer Critic Circle's Best Off-Broadway musical of 1998, made into a film in 2001) includes a scene that is structurally similar to the circumcision scene in *Kazablan*. As her mother and sugar daddy look on, smiling, a man lifts up a sharp blade and cuts, followed by the victim's scream, and then a musical number. In *Hedwig* this is the titular number "Angry Inch," the story of Hedwig's botched sex-change operation. "I was left with a one inch mound of flesh/ where my penis used to be where my vagina never was/ it was just a little bulge/ it was an angry inch!" explains Hedwig to a mixed crowd of fans and middle-America restaurant patrons.

Was Hedwig's operation a circumcision? Was it a sex-change operation? What kind of an operation was it? As with all dichotomies that surface in the text of Hedwig, these, too are taken apart. Hedwig's operation both was and wasn't a circumcision. It was and it wasn't a sex-change operation: On the one hand, it was not a circumcision, since Hansel was an adult German Christian when it took place. On the other hand it *was* a circumcision, since this operation, like a circumcision, and unlike the "sex-change" it was supposed to have been, was forced upon him by his parent figures, and like a circumcision, it only removed part of the penis.[16]

A circumcision from the Jewish perspective would have marked Hansel's entry into masculinity. A circumcision from the gentile European perspective would have been the near-equivalent of a sex-change operation, marking Hedwig's entry into femininity. But Hedwig's operation is a liminal act which doesn't allow for a resolution between these two polarities. While beaurocratically the result of the operation was the ability to obtain a marriage certificate as a woman, allowing her to flee Eastern Berlin and immigrate to the United States, this is just a technicality. The film presents Hedwig's gender as "in-between" in a number of places; a wiser Tommy Gnosis, who originally left Hedwig after encountering her genitals ("What is that?" he stammers, and she replies, "It's what I have to work with.") later sings, in his version of the ballad "Wicked

[16]"My first day as a woman --" gripes Hedwig about the blood oozing from between her legs after her operation, "already it's that time of the month." Jewish men too, were historically thought to menstruate, the belief stemming in part from misconceptions about circumcision.

Little Town:" "I was just a boy, you were so much more than any god could ever plan… more than a woman or a man."

During an earlier song's bridge, Hedwig's front man Yitzhak (the Hebrew form of Isaac) calls out:

> Ladies and Gentlemen, Hedwig is like that wall!
>
> Standing before you on the divide
>
> between East and West,
>
> Slavery and Freedom,
>
> Man and Woman,
>
> Top and Bottom…

Hedwig is the sign that resists binary categorization and refuses to fit within socially constructed dichotomies, granting meaning through this refusal of meaning. "We thought the wall would stand forever, and now that it's gone we don't know who we are anymore," exclaims Yitzhak, and Hedwig sings to us, "ain't much of a difference / between a bridge and a wall / without me right in the middle, babe / you would be nothing at all." She is Derrida's *differánce* – a deferral, a rupture that threatens to "tear down" the meaning of anything that comes in contact with it: "I was born on the other side of a town ripped in two," sings Hedwig, her first sung lines in the film. "I made it over the great divide, now I'm coming for you!"

But ruptured meaning and cut-but-not-clear-cut genitals are not an easy thing to look at straight in the eye. During her "Angry Inch" number, audience members become increasingly distressed at Hedwig's descriptions of the area between her legs. Finally, a man shouts out "faggot!" and a brawl ensues. The angry rock song continues as audience members, restaurant employees, fans and band members all beat each other up, in a scene of complete mayhem and chaos. This is no community gathering together over a circumcision, celebrating their integration and singing in joyous unison, "this small one shall grow to be great!" as in the equivalent scene in *Kazablan.* Rather, here there is a complete breakdown of societal boundaries – everyone tearing each other down, cooks chopping up lobsters into shreds, a son and his mother throwing food at the father, a waitress spontaneously kissing a young patron. The effect of Hedwig's "inch" on those who encounter it is a complete loss of boundaries - confusion and chaos.

**Head/Wig**

For Hedwig herself, however, the operation has another meaning: It enables her to find her singing voice. The scene that immediately follows the "angry inch" scene shows Hedwig in a trailer in Junction City on her first wedding anniversary, abandoned by her husband, and having just realizing that since the Berlin wall has just fallen, her genital sacrifice has been painfully unnecessary. With the help of a succession of blond wigs and the arrival of a musical band, Hedwig overcomes her despair and sings her next number, "Wig in a Box" which culminates in her finding her singer's persona.

Hedwig's wig is connected both to her performance persona, and to the detachable "head" of her penis. Her fans (called "hed-heads") wear yellow cardboard replicas of her wig that graphically vaguely resemble a caricature image of the head of a penis. Her detachable genitals are further associated with the singing voice by her use of the microphone stand: She slides the stand, which has no microphone in it, between her legs as she describes her genitalia, making an obvious connection between the detachable microphone (it is in her hand, not between her legs) and her detached penis. Finally, the fact that *she names her band* after her "angry inch" further attests to the association the film makes between her singer persona and the compromised nature of her phallus.

**Yitzhak**

> "This meeting and melting into one another, this becoming one instead of two, was the very expression of [a human's] ancient need. And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love."
>
> – Plato
>
> "Know that you're whole."
>
> - Hedwig, in her final number "Midnight Radio"

In a beautiful scene that didn't make it into the final cut of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* Yitzhak and Hedwig meet for the first time at a Barbra Streisand drag night in Croatia.

“Will you marry me?” asks Yitzhak in a Barbra wig and a heavy Croatian accent, standing inches away from Hedwig in a dark stairway. “Take me away from this living hell,” he begs, and after a moment of intrigued consideration Hedwig pulls off his wig and pulls him in for a kiss.

Yitzhak the Jewish-Croatian male drag queen is played by Miriam Shor, a woman. Shor joins a tradition of women cross-dressing to play Jewish men. Marjorie Garber mentions a nineteenth century vogue of female actors playing the part of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. And Barbra Streisand herself donned orthodox Jewish male garb in her musical film *Yentl*, based on the Isaac Bashevis-Singer story. The cross-dressed woman as Jew pushes the Jew as woman thesis further. As Garber asks about *Yentl*, “is the “real” story one of a woman who needs to “become a man” in order to study Torah – or the story of a Torah scholar who is “revealed” to be a woman?” (Garber 227).

Yitzhak’s silent longing to express his femininity and to take center stage himself throughout the film is resolved in a moving moment during the final musical number, “Midnight Radio.”[17] Right after an emotional parting from Tommy Gnosis, and sporting Tommy’s signature silver T across her forehead, Hedwig stands wigless and naked except for simple black shorts as she sings this last number. Holding up her wig, she gestures to Yitzhak, who sadly and dutifully proceeds to start placing the wig on her head. Hedwig, stops him, and indicates to Yitzhak that he should wear the wig himself.

Hedwig has been seeking her "other half" throughout the story. Her sugar daddy left her; Tommy betrayed her and they've just said their final goodbyes. In this last number Hedwig lets Yitzhak go. As she passes the wig to him, she sings: "Know that you're whole!" As Yitzhak, wearing a *RENT* shirt, dons the wig, he is transformed into a sexy feminine diva, lovingly lifted up and passed along by members in the audience. As the camera follows the newly luscious figure of Yitzhak, Hedwig sings out to the female rock divas: "Here's to Patti / And Tina / And Yoko / Aretha / And Nona / And Nico / And me." At the same time, "Midnight Radio," sung by a masculine-looking Hedwig, is a Rock 'n Roll anthem, and the once-again feminine Yitzhak, we are left to believe, will go on to play Angel, the Puerto Rican drag queen in the musical *RENT*.

In the end, Hedwig rejects Aristophanes' model of the single half yearning for its complementary mate. She breaks free of the shackles of gender, and her unique identity cannot be contained within any sort of male/female, East/West, wounded/healthy grid. Angry inch and all, and on her own, we see her from behind walking down a dark alley completely naked, emerging whole and complete (or perhaps merely revealed to be the cis-gendered man John Cameron Mitchell?).

**Conclusion – The Cut that Binds**

The Hebrew word *brit* (covenant) stems from the root *b.r.t.* which carries a meaning of connecting, joining, tying together; the similar root *b.t.r.*, a metathesis of *b.r.t*, implies cutting, separating into parts. The verb used with the noun *brit* is *likhrot* (to cut off, to

sever), so that in Hebrew, one oddly "severs a bond" when *forming* a bond. The Hebrew vocabulary of circumcision thus contains within it the deep contradiction of simultaneous cutting and binding.

Towards the end of his life, Jacques Derrida, in his essay *Circumfession* claimed that circumcision was all he had ever really written about:

> That's really what I was talking about, the point detached and retained at the same time, false, not false, but simulated castration, which does not lose what it plays to lose and which transforms it into a pronounceable letter, i and not I…

(Bennington and Derrida 73)

Playing on the graphical shape of the lowercase letter "i" which resembles the circumcised penis, Derrida showed how the i's dot is both separate from and an integral part of the letter. Himself a circumcised Jew, whose Hebrew name was Elie (Elijah), the Hebrew prophet considered the patron of circumcision, Derrida found in circumcision the full representation of his discourse, "the discourse on the limit, margins, marks, marches, etc, the closure, the ring (alliance and gift), the sacrifice, the writing of the body, the pharmakos excluded or cut off, the cutting/sewing of Glas, the blow and the sewing back up…" (Bennington and Derrida 73). As the cut that both severs and connects, both a wall and a bridge, circumcision is deconstruction *par excellence.*

As I have shown, circumcised and uncircumcised penises (and even angry inches) can each appear both "defective" and "whole," depending on context. The question,

therefore, remains unanswered: which is the "healthy" penis – the one that is cut, or the one left uncut? The unresolved medical debate over circumcision is, as I have claimed, merely symptomatic of a much wider ideological ambivalence surrounding the operation. Something about this ancient genital surgery, with its cultural and religious significance and its ritual wounding and celebration of the penis, refuses to be clear cut. Circumcision – "the cut that binds," as anthropologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has dubbed it – creates, connects and troubles categories of gender, nationality and physical health; it is at once a mark of belonging and a mark of difference, at once an attack on the phallus and a veneration of the phallus, a simultaneous moment of partitioning and integration.

**CHAPTER 3 - IS THE MUSICAL SINGLE?**

Image: Fellow schoolboys Ernst and Hanchen seated on top of a piano, kissing, as Ernst's voice looks on in wonder from the piano bench, in Deaf West's production of *Spring Awakening.*

**"It's Just (You and) Me": The Power of Doubling in Deaf West's *Spring Awakening.***

The first time I went to see Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater's 2006 rock musical *Spring Awakening*, I left at intermission. Melchior Gabor, the leading boy, rapes Wendla Bergmann, the leading girl, in a graphic scene that is presented as the manifestation of teen love and sexual awakening. They are on a haystack, alone, he is passionately arguing that expressing their love in this way cannot be wrong; he pulls up her dress. "Wait…" she says, and he counters, "It's just me." Soon after, he pulls down his pants, climbs on top of her, and thrusts. The climactic moment is punctuated by an immediate blackout marking the end of the first act, and then, applause. I did not care to stay and watch this (tired) trope of rape-as-sexual-awakening unfold any further, especially not in song.

A few years later I saw Deaf West Theatre's critically-acclaimed 2014 *Spring Awakening* revival, directed by Michael Arden. The production felt deep, new and organic in a way the original had not. As in other Deaf West productions, the original text is unchanged, but the show is meaningfully transformed. First, the production is "bilingual" in ASL and English; second, it reimagines several main characters as Deaf, and incorporates Deaf issues and history effectively into the narrative without modifying the text. Finally, the production showcases Deaf West's signature staging – the dramaturgical choice of using two actors on stage to play each Deaf character – a main Deaf actor signing the role, shadowed on stage by a speaking actor voicing the part in English. Hearing characters in the story, on the other hand, are played by a single actor, who voices the character while simultaneously signing the ASL translation. In this production Wendla was

represented on stage at all times by two performers (Sandra Mae Frank as Wendla and Katie Boeck as her Voice), and Melchior was represented by one performer (Austin P. McKenzie).

Image: Wendla (left) and Melchior (center) kissing on a bale of hay as Wendla's voice (right) kneeling below them looks on.

Deaf West's use of two performers to embody one character transformed *Spring Awakening* for me. In Deaf West's production, for example, Wendla was not alone when she was raped. She had her voice there with her as witness, as friend, as a reminder that a person is not just one single separate being. The romantic pair is thus represented by

three bodies on stage, queering the heterosexual dyad, and avoiding the claustrophobic he-said/she-said doom following sexual assaults committed behind closed doors. Additionally, not all of Wendla was being raped on stage: her voice was nearby and not physically subject to the assault. Something about the staging of this *Spring Awakening* production made it a completely different performance to watch. I didn't leave after intermission; I could stay in the theater, connected and open. The show did not seem limiting, ableist, straight and pre-determined as the original had felt to me. This show felt exciting, inventive, and resonant. I spent a long time thinking about what had made Deaf West's production feel so qualitatively different from the original production I had seen. This chapter offers my analysis.

The chapter addresses the effects of role doublings in Deaf West's production of *Spring Awakening*. I argue that these doublings (two actors playing one character; two languages presented at once) and the centrality of Deaf lives and #Deaftalent transform and crack open this rock musical. This, I claim, is due to a deep resonance with the inherent doubled structure of the musical theater genre itself

I begin with some historical background about Deaf West Theater and continue with background on the musical *Spring Awakening*. I provide a short description of this chapter's main object of analysis, the bilingual role doubling in Deaf West's production.

I then turn to scholarship within musical theater studies and argue that duality and union of opposites are at the structural core of the musical as a genre, citing analyses from a variety of scholars in the field. These include Robert Altman's dual-focus (love story as central structure), Dyer's structural analysis of utopia in musicals (a doubled world of Utopian feelings in opposition to dreary real life), and McMillin's distinction between the two orders of time at work in any musical (book time and lyric time). I conclude that the ongoing debate regarding how structurally "integrated" the musical aspires to be, only further proves that the musical is indeed made of separate elements, or there would be nothing to integrate.

Having established duality as structurally fundamental to the musical as a genre, I return to *Spring Awakening* to list the many effects, uses and implications of role doubling that I find in Deaf West's production. To demonstrate these I then offer a brief close reading of the musical number "The Dark I Know Well" as performed by Treshelle Edmond as Martha in this production. Turning to the critique of the production by Deaf audiences, I address the production's choice to double only the Deaf characters, while using a single actor to play each hearing character. The resulting simultaneous speaking, singing and signing by one actor – a kind of SimCom – reduces the clarity of communication, and limits access to the musical for Deaf audiences. I conclude that the production does seem to favor hearing audience members such as me, yet its creative dramaturgical use of doubling and its centering of Deaf characters and actors has transformed both *Spring Awakening*, and the musical as a genre.

Deaf West Theatre, a company "created specifically for and by the deaf community" claims the dual missions of offering cultural and professional opportunities for deaf audiences and artists, while also "exposing hearing patrons to deaf culture." By casting deaf and hearing actors in their production, and incorporating both ASL and spoken English in the performance in innovating ways, the company strives to meet its missions, while successfully demonstrating its philosophy that in theater, deafness is an artistic asset, not a technical limitation. (Kurs).

Deaf West Theatre was officially founded in 1991 in Los Angeles by Ed Waterstreet, an established Deaf actor and longtime member of The National Theatre of the Deaf, with his wife Linda Bove, a Deaf actress known for her role of Linda on Sesame Street from 1972 until 2002, and ASL master for *Spring Awakening*. Deaf West Theatre originally aimed to enrich the cultural landscape for Deaf and hard-of-hearing people in Los Angeles with high-caliber and ambitious productions. These were ASL adaptations of both contemporary original works and classic plays from the American canon, with main characters meaningfully re-imagined as deaf. A voice-over was played, translating the show in real time for hearing patrons with no ASL fluency.

One breakthrough show for Deaf West Theatre was its 2001 production of the 1985 Roger Miller and William Hauptman musical *Big River*. "It was when Deaf West began to … do something that at first sounds unthinkable—produce "Deaf musicals"—that the small company broke through to a new level of artistry and influence," writes critic Rob

Weinert-Kendt, implying, perhaps, the company's widening recognition and success among mainstream hearing audiences. *Big River* eventually moved on to the larger Mark Taper Forum, and finally to Broadway, winning a nomination for Tony Award for Best Musical.

Upon Waterstreet's retirement in 2012, DJ Kurs took over as artistic director. Kurs selected *Spring Awakening* in part because its themes of strained intergenerational communication and oppressive education seemed to resonate Deaf issues – especially communication challenges between deaf children and their hearing parents, and the consequential history of Deaf education and its oppression, including the attempted suppression of sign language and deaf culture through enforcement of harmful oralist teaching methods in the late nineteenth century.

*Spring Awakening* is based on German playwright Frank Wedekind's 1891 play *Frühlings Erwache: Ein Kindertrogedie* (The Awakening of Spring: A Children's Tragedy). Set in a small nineteenth century German village, the musical presents a cautionary tale of adults failing their adolescent children, with tragic consequences. At home the children suffer sexual repression, misinformation and abuse; at school the children are subjected to cruel and strict teachers and an oppressive education system. *Spring Awakening* explores often taboo themes, including sexual abuse, adolescent sexuality, masturbation, homosexuality, incest, rape, abortion and suicide.

The musical follows a group of adolescent schoolgirls (Wendla, Heidi, Thea, Martha, and Anna) and a group of schoolboys (Melchior, Moritz, Ernst, Georg and Hanschen) as they navigate the rockiness of their coming of age, with little support or guidance from the adults in their lives. The show begins with Fifteen-year-old Wendla asking her mother how babies are made. Her embarrassed mother answers vaguely that it happens "when you love your husband." Wendla is later in the story incredulous to find out she is pregnant, exclaiming to her mother that it cannot be, because she is not married. Melchior shares an essay on female anatomy with his friend Moritz, and Moritz is deeply affected and distraught; new sexual thoughts and images consume him, distracting him from his sleep and his studies. Facing enormous parental pressure to succeed academically, Moritz fails his exams, bitterly disappointing his father. Hopeless and alone, Moritz takes his own life. Martha, one of Wendla's classmates, is physically and sexually abused by her father. An older girl, Ilse, implied to have come from a similar background of abuse, is shown to now be "living who knows where -- with who knows who…" exiled to the outskirts of the town. Meanwhile, shy Ernst is falling for his handsome classmate Hanschen, and the two boys kiss. Melchior, a star student, is blamed for Moritz' suicide and is expelled from school. Wendla dies from the back-alley abortion her mother arranges for her.

Wedekind, a mentor to playwright Berthold Brecht, had presented his foreboding play as a dose of harsh truths, and the sexual encounter between the Wendla and Melchior as a bleak and unsentimental slice of life. There was no romance, just a brief confused

rape that destroys the lives of children. When adapting Wedekind's straight play into *Spring Awakening*, the writers chose to romanticize Wendla and Melchior's encounter, in order to align with musical theater conventions of a central heterosexual love story. As mentioned here in chapter one, film scholar Robert Altman sees the core meaning of a musical to be not in its narrative, but in what he calls its "dual-focus" structure, in which two people from opposite social worlds or ideologies are romantically united, often in marriage.[18] Jonathan Franzen's introduction to his English translation of Wedekind's play critiques the musical adaptation's choice to replace the "casual rape" of the original play with what he deems "a thunderous spectacle of ecstasy and consent." (Wedekind and Franzen) As a musical, *Spring Awakening* retains some of the original play's sharp social critique of sexual repression, but its critique is arguably enervated by such romanticizing, and for me, the romanticizing of Melchior's rape of Wendla was alienating.

**The Duality of the Musical**

I now step away from the production at hand to address the musical theater scholarship of the genre as a whole and to argue that the musical's fundamental core is made of duality and the union of opposites. We have already considered Robert Altman's notion of the musical's "dual-focus" structure. The musical as a genre, Altman claims, is not a traditional plot-based work, but rather a "cultural problem-solving device" that

[18] Altman writes about film musicals, but his dual-focus model has been applied to the musical genre in general.

reconciles opposites and resolves social contradictions. In Altman's formulation, the marriage or romance that resolves the sexual dichotomy between the male and female lead characters, also resolves or mediates the larger social or ideological dichotomy, to the point that the musical "fashions a myth out of the American courtship ritual." (Altman 27)

The musical genre depends on another marriage of opposites, that between words and music. In his lyrical essay on the queerness of opera, Wayne Koestenbaum posits that opera's queerest feature is "Its divided foundation, its marriage of words and music…" He sees the task of opera as the rejoining of the mythical severed halves, words and music, that we want to believe were once a single whole, even as we know this is just myth. Koestenbaum sees the collaboration between poet and composer as a sort of creative gestation, usually a homoerotic coupling since both are, in opera history, often men. So too has it been for the musical, a genre of often two authors, rather than just one: George and Ira Gershwin, Rogers and Hart, Rogers and Hammerstein – yes, there are Andrew Lloyd Webers, but unlike most Western artistic and literary genres, the musical is usually the brainchild of two (or more) men.

Lyricist and Composer, book and score, words and music – there is a productive tension at work within each of these pairings, the hovering question of how distinct the two elements are from each other, and how integrated. Rogers and Hammerstein (their names together roll off my tongue almost as though they were indeed one name) are

often touted as the inventors of the "well-integrated" musical, one in which musical numbers (including their dance elements) fit seamlessly into the narrative and propelled it along, rather than being sprinkled anywhere into the performance purely for entertainment. The secret of a well-integrated musical, in Hammerstein's eyes, depended on "a state of two minds, an attitude of unity" rather than a book written by one, with an assortment of songs later added in. Rogers, too, saw an integrated musical as "a work created by many that gave the impression of having been created by one" (Oxford Companion 98). Their 1943 musical *Oklahoma!* has been famously credited as the first great well-integrated musical, its arrival marking a turning point in the history of the genre, the day it abandoned its lowbrow Vaudevillian origins, and became a respectable dramatic form closer to opera. Debates within musical theater studies abound whether *Oklahoma!* was indeed the first well-integrated musical (citing, for example, *Showboat* from 1931). The field has also long contended with the so-called "integration" debate, with more recent scholarship questioning whether integration of book and score is in fact a desirable (or possible) quality for a musical to have.

In his essay "Entertainment and Utopia," Richard Dyer describes the musical as a genre set in a "doubled world" and based in a mediation of contradictions through the separation of the book and the musical numbers. In Dyer's formulation the core duality in a musical is the split between an exciting inner world of utopian feelings (expressed in the musical numbers) and the dreary outer world of reality and its many social tensions and problems (expressed in the book scenes). The combination allows for a

reconciliation between the very real troubles of daily life, and a wish-fulfilling escape from them into the utopian feeling of something better.

While Oscar Hammerstein believed in the merging of words and music "into a single expression," the very fact that there are two things to merge, points to their individuation. The politically loaded word "integration" in itself implies that there are two distinct and separate elements involved that are to be integrated. Bruce Kirle has claimed that due to the nature of how musicals are written, created, produced and toured, the musical is never a finished singular product, it is always a "work-in-process", never a whole and organic "complete" work, let alone a fully-integrated one.

"The essence of musical theater is in contrast," writes Stacy Wolf. "Gleefully divided and contradictory." She points out the musical's various divisions – speaking versus singing, everyday speech versus poetic lyrics, walking versus dancing, narrative versus number – to show that at every level the musical relies on contradicting pairs in a union of opposites. Scott McMillin asserts that the musical is neither "integrated" nor an inferior form of opera (as some have seen it), but rather a worthy form all its own, and that "[its] success lies not in the smoothness of unity, but in the crackle of difference." Dramatic structure of the musical genre, McMillin suggests, relies on the separation into two orders of time, Book Time – that follows the narrative cause-and-effect progression of the plot, and Lyric Time – the emotional and lyrical development that takes place during musical numbers. It is in its separation of elements that the musical is most itself

and most interesting to McMillin, and he sees musical theater as a form more in line with Brecht's separation of theatrical elements, than with Wagner's ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk. Instead of the seamless merging of “integration” as the genre's superior structural form, McMillin suggests “coherence” as a more accurate term to describe the relationship between the separate parts, songs and story, towards a formulation of the dramatic structure of the musical as a genre based on separation, repetition and difference.

In George Bernard Shaw’s play *Pygmalion*, McMillin points out, Henry Higgins is a character that would never break into song. Ever. This Higgins exists in the play within one order of time throughout. The same Henry Higgins appears in the musical adaptation, *My Fair Lady,* but here he exists in an additional order of time (“Lyric Time”), in which he sings and dances. McMillin is interested in the difference between the two Higgins’s, claiming that shifting between the two orders of time make Higgins in *My Fair Lady* a different kind of character than the Higgins in *Pygmalion*. “Integration” theory within musical theory studies, he argues, overlooks or does not account for this difference.

In a section on the significance of mirror scenes in musicals, McMillin speaks in praise of distance, of the gap in between, even within a single self. I agree with him that “distance is real and necessary to any recognition of the self that is open to change and not caught up in narcissism.” He summarizes what is at the heart of the musical’s dual modes: “The

best reason why musicals alternate between book and number is that space is thereby preserved between the modes, a gap of difference that lets mirroring happen." (McMillin 186-187) It is through this gap that characters in musicals are able to "exceed beyond their ordinary selves" to be "more than single personages." (McMillin 208) The split, the space in between, a gap through which to breathe and shift, across which the self can be reflected and be multiple; not the tyrannical imperative to be one singular bound thing, always.

Image: Sandra Mae Frank (Wendla) and Katie Broek (Wendla's voice) at the beginning of Deaf West's *Spring Awakening*. The show opens with Wendla and her voice facing each

other with a wooden mirror frame between them. Through the mirror frame, Wendla's voice hands her a dress, and Wendla hands her voice a guitar. This wordlessly establishes that these two women represent one character.

In this production, the main character Wendla is deaf; Wendla is played by Deaf actress Sandra Mae Frank, and Wendla's Voice is played by Katie Boeck. The two intimately and silently interact with each other throughout the performance; Frank, as Wendla, is front and center, with Boeck never far away, but almost always in the sidelines, at times with her back to the audience. She is presented as a sort of background guardian angel or caring big sister to Wendla, as well as her musical accompanist.

What does the doubling of two actors for one character in Deaf West's production do? First, it is born out of utilitarian necessity, introduces new relationships to be dramatized. Each of the characters has a different relationship with her voice, and the ways in which the two interact is rife with expressive dramaturgical possibilities. When Wendla is too shy to ask her mother about babies, Wendla's voice gives Wendla a gentle nudge, encouraging her to dare. When Moritz Stiefl is afraid to come down and face his father, his Voice slowly leads him by the hand. Later, Stiefl's voice hands him a gun, with which Stiefl kills himself. When Stiefl is attracted to Melchiors's mother, Stiefl's voice follows her out of the room, entranced, before noticing that Georg is still seated at the table. Ernst and his voice are presented as intimate friends, with his voice always physically near and close. While Ernst and Hanschen sit on top of the piano during the

reprise of the love duet, “The Word of Your Body,” Ernst’s voice is seated at the piano, looking up in amazement, as Hanschen starts seducing shy Ernst. Hanschen kisses Ernst, and briefly also kisses Ernst’s Voice too, who then twirls around in joy on the piano stool. Martha’s voice is always far from her, seated in a dark spot near the top of the stairs, from where she voices Martha. Throughout, interactions between doubles, and their relative physical locations , can indicate the character’s inner states and the production makes full and expressive use of this throughout.

Image: Moritz Stiefel with his voice behind a screen in silhouette with a microphone.

Image: Rehearsal shot of Melchior and Moritz reading an essay on female sexuality. Moritz' Voice looks over their shoulder, emphasizing how every part of Moritz is consumed with this text.

The doubling of roles in the production originates from a practical access need to make the production accessible to an integrated Deaf and hearing audience. The doubling is also, then, the basis for the production's bilingualism of ASL and spoken English. The way the characters are staged, the production presents a refreshing reversal of audist hierarchies that elevate speech over sign. Additionally, the doubling offers a visual reflection of the clash between *Spring Awakening*'s rock score and the eighteenth-century time period in which its story is set: while the characters are dressed in period-appropriate costumes, their voices are dressed in contemporary clothes, with a Rock aesthetic. Two actors playing a single characters also invokes a Brechtian separation of

elements, a constant reminder that these are characters performed. Finally, the doubling queers the self and questions the assumption that the self is separate and single, and resonates with the musical genre's many dualities discussed earlier.

Altman's nearly exhaustive analysis of dozens of film musicals consistently finds the same dual-focus structure in each: a central dichotomy presented within the world of the musical that is then either symbolically or actually resolved through a romance or marriage between a man and a woman from opposite sides of a divide. In Bernstein and Sondheim's *West-Side Story*, for example, the divide is between the white (third-generation Polish) Jets and the Puerto-Rican Sharks, two enemy gangs. Tony and Maria's marriage (and her grief when he is killed) eventually mediates the divide, if only momentarily, as both groups come together to solemnly carry Tony's body in the final scene. In Rogers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!,* quarrels between cowboys and farmers in Oklahoma territory are seemingly resolved through Curly and Laurie's marriage, in a final scene that sees the entire community sing together in a united "we."

In *Spring Awakening*, I parse the central dichotomy along gender lines: the boys and the girls attend separate schools and have little opportunity to interact, although adolescence has made them curious about each other. The musical establishes these two groups as separate, but the growing sexual energy bubbling throughout the narrative feels both exciting and dangerous, with love lyrically equated with wounding and bruising. Within the story on Deaf West's stage, Wendla is a Deaf girl, Melchior is a

hearing boy; their (doomed) love can be seen as symbolically mediating the increasing familiarity between the group of girls and the group of boys, indicative of both groups' developing maturity.

The dual-focus structure is so central to the musical, that the way in which it is used or altered in a work can in itself allow for the expression of a subversive ideology. Stacy Wolf analyzes the dual-focus structure in *Wicked*, noting how replacing the usual heterosexual romantic pair with a pair of female friends queers the genre. In chapter one I pointed out how *The Wizard of Oz* fails to follow Altman's dual-focus structure, presenting instead the main characters as a group of friends helping each other along the way, which I attributed to a crip sensibility of interdependence. In her essay "Dancing Out of the Dark", Jenifer Iverson argues that Lars Von Trier's film *Dancer in the Dark* uses the genre of musical theater to contrast with his Avant Gard aesthetic, leading to a "critical engagement with the expectations of the musical genre" [sounding off 71] In his case, a critique of Hollywood entertainment and American culture. Analyzing Von Trier's film, Iverson says it sets up a dual-focus structure, but one in which the oppositions are not resolved through marriage and unifying, but by removing one of them altogether. "When the film strays from the traditional plot resolution of musicals [i.e. marriage, merging of opposites], it unmasks the ideological core of the genre, its spurious image of social harmony." (Iverson)

In Deaf West's *Spring Awakening* the separation of characters into two groups by gender, only serves to emphasize the quasi-utopian aspect of the world Deaf West presents on stage, in which hearing characters and deaf characters seem completely integrated, with all characters signing all the time. The dichotomy between hearing communities and deaf communities, fraught and significant in the real world, seems to be already perfectly resolved in the world of *Spring Awakening*. There is another important overlaying dichotomy in this musical's narrative – one that can never be reconciled: that between children and adults. The musical, like Wedekind's original play, points an unambiguously accusatory finger at the parents and teachers, for their complete failure to communicate with and take care of their children. The musical's hard-hitting message is encapsulated in Wendla's anguished question to her mother near the end of the musical:

"Why didn't you tell me everything?"

Wendla vocalizes this question, speaking in her voice rather than signing for the only time in the show. It is an effective expression for a hearing audience, but I am not sure the effect for a Deaf audience. It is another expression in this show of communication strains between Deaf children and their hearing parents.

**Close reading of a number: "The Dark I know Well"**

At the start of Act I, Scene 7 the schoolgirls – Wendla, Anna, Martha, Thea and Heidi – are chatting as they walk home together arm in arm. When the girls affectionately tease Martha about how she should fix her hair, she begs them to stop, finally blurting out,

“Papa beats me enough as it is.” The girls are upset and curious and ask Martha to explain why she is so afraid of her father. She stammers that he beats her with a belt; she rolls up her sleeves and shows the girls her welts.

Image: The schoolgirls look intently at their friend Martha as she tells them about the physical abuse to which she is subjected at home.

Wendla is shaken and tells Martha she wishes she could somehow go through the beatings for her. The girls briefly debate whether children should be disciplined by parents or be left free to do as they please. “Free?” Thea asks, “But how will we know what to do if our parents don’t tell us?”

The lights dim to dark, and Martha, until now just a shy secondary character, is suddenly alone in the spotlight. Her mother tells her it's bedtime, and Martha performs her number "The Dark I Know Well" in which she recounts her experience of being sexually abused nightly by her father in her bed, with her mother's tacit approval. While Martha told the other girls about her father's physical abuse, the sexual abuse is "the part I can't tell." By musical theater conventions, however, a character's innermost feelings can be externalized in song, and even a deep secret that cannot be told, can be sung and fully expressed during a musical number. Of course, casting Martha as a Deaf girl with hearing parents, underscores the particular vulnerability of Deaf children exposed to abuse. In this production Treshelle Edmond and Krysta Rodriguez are also the only non-white cast members, and their solidarity with each other throughout this number further underscores the particular vulnerability of girls of color to abuse by white adults, in this case, their own white parents (all the parents and all the teachers in the musical are traditionally played by the same two actors).

Image: Martha in the light, performing her number; behind her is a bed, with boys crouching behind it; Ilse is sitting on the bed facing away.

“The Dark I Know Well” Lyrics:

[MARTHA]

There is a part I can’t tell

About the dark I know well

You say, “Time for bed now, child”

Mom just smiles that smile

Just like she never saw me

Just like she never saw me

So, I leave, wantin’ just to hide

Knowin’ deep inside

You are comin' to me

You are comin' to me

You say all you want is just a kiss good night

Then you hold me and you whisper "Child, the Lord won't mind.

It's just you and me

Child, you're a beauty.

God, it's good, the lovin' – ain't it good tonight?

You ain't seen nothin' yet, gonna treat you right

It's just you and me,

Child, you're a beauty.

[ILSE]

I don't scream, though I know it's wrong

I just play along

I lie there and breathe

Lie there and breathe

I wanna be strong

I want the world to find out

That you're dreamin' on me

Me and my "beauty."

[MARTHA and ILSE]

Me and my “beauty.”

You say all you want is just a kiss good night

Then you hold me and you whisper, “Child, the Lord won’t mind

It’s just you and me

Child, you’re a beauty.

God, it’s so good, the lovin’ – ain’t it good tonight?

You ain’t seen nothin’ yet, gonna teach you right

It’s just you and me

Child, you’re a beauty!”

There is a part I can’t tell

About the dark I know well...

For the first verse of her number, Martha remains the only performer lit on stage, emphasizing the loneliness and aloneness of being violated. Her Voice remains far from her, up on the dark steps where she sits for most of the show, indicating Martha’s internal isolation and frightened silence. As Martha begins the chorus, “You say all you want is just a kiss goodnight” some of the boys, acting as stagehands, roll a bed onto the stage, and Martha sits on it, singing from the bed. Two boys remain crouched ominously behind the bed throughout the number, at times sending an intruding hand to almost

imperceptibly stroke Martha's leg, associating them with the abuser, and amplifying the number's menacing atmosphere.

As the number continues, the chorus of schoolgirls gradually join Martha and Ilse, and surround the bed of horrors from which Martha and Ilse perform. The school boys gather on the opposite side of the stage, resulting in a tableau at the end of the number showing the two groups, girls versus boys, associating the girls with the victims of abuse, and the boys as slightly dangerous. In Deaf West's production, gay schoolboy Ernst stands on the girls' side, suggesting that he too, might be a victim of sexual abuse.

Image: The end pose of the number "The Dark I Know Well" girls (and Ernst) stage right, with hands held up, and boys stage left, with arms reaching out towards the girls.

The number is all the more chilling, having started immediately following Thea's innocent assumptions that parents are the only reliable moral compasses. This number offers yet another hard-hitting condemnation of parental behavior repeatedly expressed in the show.

In her song's lyrics Martha's quotes her father, "It's just you and me," again and again. The words are creepily ambiguous: is he cloyingly reassuring Martha so she complies, is he heightening his own excitement, or is he threatening her? So often abuse takes place in secret, a secret shared by the only two people in the room, the abuser and the abused. Martha's father's phrase "it's just you and me" prefigures Melchior's words at the end of the act, as he overpowers Wendla, saying "It's just me." This echo seems particularly meaningful, since hearing about Martha's abuse is presented as the catalyst awakening Wendla's sexual curiosity, and the (ultimately fatal) sexualization of her relationship with Melchior.

*Spring Awakening* offers a scathing critique of a strict and puritan education system. Set in the 1880s it happens to coincide historically with a significant period in Deaf history, during the contested merits of manualist methods and oralist methods of Deaf education. Eventually the matter was resolved at the Milan Conference of 1880, where a formal resolution was passed to ban sign language from schools. To better assimilate Deaf students into mainstream culture, lip reading and oral speech training was mandated, and sign language used in secret. In a classroom scene in *Spring Awakening*,

Deaf student Moritz Stiefl fails to hear the instructor call on him. When Stiefl starts to sign his answer, the lecturer pounds his ruler on the table to stop him. Stiefl is required to answer orally, and the teacher mockingly imitates his voice. Without changing a word of the text, Deaf West's Spring Awakening was able to invoke a significant and painful moment in Deaf history, and dramatize the injustice and harmfulness in the Milan Conference resolutions.

With this powerful staging of the oppression of mandated oralism in schools, it is curious that the production made the choice of having hearing actors speak and sing while simultaneously signing. Most hearing actors in this production did not speak ASL prior to their participation in this production. Naturally, their ASL was not fluent nor clear. One wonders why a signing double was not included for every speaking actor, just as a voice double was included for every Deaf actor. This difference introduced a clear separation between Deaf and hearing actors on stage, and made the characters trying to sign in ASL while speaking English hard to follow for Deaf audiences. Not only was their ASL understandably not fluent (having just learned it for the production), but they were simultaneously speaking and singing, resulting in something close to SimCom (simultaneous communication), an inferior and for some, oppressive, mode of communicating. ASL and English have different grammars, and facial expression is an important component of ASL, and usually the spoken English ends up dominating, resulting in broken ASL.

Most reviews by Deaf audience members mentioned this problem: “I definitely struggled to understand some of the sim-com and found myself wishing that the hearing actors had Deaf shadows the same way the Deaf actors had hearing shadows,” writes Max Graham-Putter in his review of the production. “In this way, it was very clear that the play was designed for a hearing audience with a secondary intention of being accessible to the Deaf.” He says he would consistently seek out Treshelle Edmond on stage during musical numbers so as to better follow along the lyrics, as her signing was clear and expressive.

The asymmetry between Deaf and hearing actors was also made clear during various promotional appearances, with studio set ups that were clearly not designed with Deaf participants in mind. Camera work, for example, would follow the vocal performer (Wendla’s voice) and not so much Wendla herself, who is shown sporadically, her signing filmed in fragments as if it were an accompanying dance, rather than a language.

Image: Photograph showing a closeup of Katie Boeck (Wendla's voice) singing into a microphone, while Sandra Mae Frank (Wendla) is not shown at all. From a taped "Talks at Google" event that featured a performance of Wendla's number, "Mama Who Bore Me" and a conversation with the cast.

Image: Another shot from the same performance, a fade from a longshot of the two performers into a closeup of Katie Boeck's hand strumming her guitar.

During this questions and answers session of this promotional event, the cast members were all seated facing in one direction, in such a way that Deaf cast members could not see each other signing. Interpreters were provided to translate between ASL and spoken English, but the seating arrangement was not conducive to conversing in ASL, as indicated by the obvious frustration of Deaf actor Daniel N Durant (who plays Moritz in the show) at being unable to see what Sandra Mae Frank is saying.

Image: Daniel N Durant seated behind Sandra Mae Frank, leaning over to try and see what she is signing.

These kinds of failures make clear the extent to which the industry is still designed within unexamined audist hierarchies that favor speech and hearing over sign and Deafness.

Deaf West's staging of the production itself, on the other hand, was intentional throughout about reversing such hierarchies. Creative blocking throughout visually emphasized the character signing over the performer voicing the character. Voices were placed in ways that rendered them visually secondary: either standing off to the side, or behind a screen in silhouette, or facing away from the audience, or lit less brightly, or kneeling below. This artful reversal of the hierarchy makes for a more interesting, more subversive, and more beautiful show.

Deafness, throughout, is a generative font of endless original creative dramaturgical ideas – never a limitation. It adds layers of meaning and context to the characters and to their story. It invites the profound use of bilingual role doubling – a source of endless new expressive and dramatic possibilities in itself – transforming the musical by resonating with its inherent structures.

**CONCLUSION – IS THE MUSICAL WHITE?**

IMAGE: Little Red Riding Hood (Kirsten Lang), The Baker's Wife (Regan Linton), holding her baby in a basket in her lap, and the Baker (MacGregor Arney) in Phamaly Theater's 2018 production of *Into the Woods* (by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim).

Throughout this dissertation I have sought to understand and articulate how the genre of the musical and the experience of disability are meaningfully connected. I considered the affinity of certain marginalized social groups to the genre, mainly gays and Jews, and showed how impairment, disability and defect are present within these very affinities. I argued that engaging with lived disability experience and including it in musical productions makes for better, truer, shows. My conclusion is essentially a call for musical productions to cast and include more disabled talent in "unmarked" roles, reimagining these characters as disabled. This is a win-win-win situation: disabled performers get jobs in their field, audiences enjoy better conceived

disabled characters on stage and a better show, and productions benefit from the untapped talent pool of underused disabled artists.

My research here and my analyses leave some major questions unanswered. For example: how does whiteness figure into my discussions of marginalized social groups and their affinity for musicals? Each of the theoretical fields that frame my work – Disability Studies, Queer Studies, Musical Theater Studies – has been called out by scholars of color for its overwhelming white focus. Chris Bell pointed out that Disability Studies might more aptly be named "White Disability Studies" given its scope and concentrations and the scholars it holds central. Queer Studies too, has privileged white scholars and perspectives, and focused on white subjects and paradigms, while assuming the universality of white experience. Musical theater history (and present) has always been racially fraught, and scholars in this field, too, I find, are overwhelmingly white and more often than not concentrating on white texts and performers. My own research objects here – the shows and people and casts and identities and stories I analyze in this dissertation – are predominantly white. I focus throughout this dissertation on marginalized perspectives and subjects, from places in my own heart and my own identity that are outsiders looking in. I read against the grain to see myself, I poke holes through assumptions that don't account for me, I call out from behind to share the way things look from there. But my access to the whiteness is generally uncomplicated, I don't need to engage in the same kind of disidentification someone who is not white might need to use in order to meaningfully relate to, say, Judy Garland.

By way of conclusion, I want to revisit each of the three chapters I have written here, their arguments and conclusions, to see what questions I might find covered under the whiteness in each. A sort of small reprise.

**Is the Musical Gay? (Reprise)**

Just before shooting *The Wizard of Oz*, Judy Garland (alongside Billie Burke, who played Glinda in *Oz*) starred in the musical film *Everybody Sing* (1938). In one of her numbers she performs in blackface, singing a mash-up of the Negro spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and a standard "New Deal" minstrel song with plantation myth lyrics that reminisce over the good days back home in "Alabammy." The performance uses double and opposing meanings of "home" in this number (home as freedom from bondage in the spiritual, and home on the mythologized plantation in the song).

| | |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| "There's no place like home!" Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) | "Sweet chariot / coming for to carry me home!" Judy Garland in *Everybody Sing* (1938) |

Tensions around home and migration (towards the cities, and as part of Westward expansion) were expressed in such "New Deal" minstrel performances, with the figure of the minstrel slave (performed by a white performer in blackface) shouldering, as Michael Rogin puts it, "the desire of mobile whites for a stable, ordered, pastoral home" (Rogin 41). Dressed in a checkered gingham dress, just like in her later role as Dorothy, Garland sings of her nostalgia for the plantation home. "Blackface nostalgia conjured up the lost plantation," writes Rogin. "Minstrel consciousness not only repressed the savagery experienced by slaves on plantations; it also appropriated for voluntary immigrants and migrants to the New World the homesickness of the single group of Americans who were actually stolen from their Old World homes." (Rogin 41)

Judy gave several more "nostalgic" minstrel performances in her movies *Babes in Arms* (1939) and *Babes on Broadway* (1941), and her blackface performances often include a mimicked disabled physicality, especially in her performances as Mr. Tambo. She stutters, grimaces, and uses a crooked posture when she walks, conflating disabled and minstrel mimicry. Note for example the differences in her hand positions in the two pictures above. The image of her in blackface points to her whiteness, to the violence in whiteness; it troubles her image as a fresh-faced sweet girl outside of racial paradigms.

Garland's legacy as a symbol of gay liberation is also troubled. The Stonewall Riots of June 1969 in New York City have come to signify the birth of the modern gay rights movement in the United States. The myth that Judy Garland's death inspired the riots persists, despite having

been officially disproved; although her body was on display at a funeral home in New York City on the day of the riots, her gay fan base included mostly middle-aged middle-class white gay men, whereas the riots were instigated by young working class queers - butch lesbians, transwomen, drag queens, and street youth, many of them of queers of color, fighting for their lives. "When people talk about Judy Garland's death having anything much to do with the riot, that makes me crazy. The street kids faced death every day. They had nothing to lose. And they couldn't have cared less about Judy. We're talking about kids who were fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. Judy Garland was the middle-aged darling of the middle-class gays" (Deitcher 72). Rather than the inspiration for the Stonewall riots, Garland is actually aligned with what these riots ended - the pre-liberation gay culture. Her death is more accurately a representation of this old culture's demise (Carter 260). The myth prevails over the facts, in part due to the power some white gay men have assumed within the queer community to dictate gay liberation discourse and history.

In their entry on filmed musicals in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical* Raymond Knapp and Mitchell Morris posit that camp modes of performance and appreciation depend on a tension between an internal "real" self, and an external social "artificial" self. The moments of failure in performing the outer self are both funny and touching, the triumph of the "real" self breaking through the cover-up and revealing the artificiality and performative nature of the social self. Camp, claim Knapp and Morris, might therefore most appeal to stigmatized social groups who can "pass" such as white homosexuals and Jews (and I would add: people with invisible disabilities). Passing minorities are those whose stigmatized "true" identity can be

hidden or managed through daily social performance, rather than the stigma being visibly inscribed in the body and thus impossible to hide. Does this mode of camp, so often invoked in musicals, work differently for visibly racialized or visibly disabled social groups?

**Is the Musical Jewish? (Reprise)**

Assimilation of Jewish immigrants into white America through show business is an established part of musical theater history. Andrea Most's book on Jews and the Broadway musical, referenced in chapter two, is titled "Making Americans" (i.e. out of immigrant Jews). Consider the first talking picture, *The Jazz Singer*, a musical about an immigrant Jewish cantor's son, who prefers "jazz" music to the prayer music of his own tradition, and who through show business eventually successfully assimilates, and even gets the non-Jewish white girl in the end. Todd Decker summarizes the way such narratives of immigrant assimilation can work for some but never for others:

> The pain and pleasure of assimilation explored in *The Jazz Singer* became an enduring part of the affirming American story told again and again by the musical. It could be translated into almost any ethnic other. But it would be impossible to make a version of *The Jazz Singer* where Jolson's character was black. The African American experience is fundamentally unlike that of immigrant groups who came on their own terms rather than through force. And while the assimilation story at the heart of the Jazz Singer seems made for the celebratory mode of the musical, the very different historical experience of African Americans is not so easy to render in the simplified narrative patterns of the musical.

(Decker in Knapp et al 202)

Stories of white community formation and the assimilation of ethnic immigrants into white American culture through show business drive the narrative of many musicals. As in *The Jazz Singer*, however, assimilation and whiteness often come at the expense of the very people whose music was taken and used to this end.

**Is the Musical Single? (Reprise)**

In chapter 3 I discussed at length the musical's core dual-focus structure, and the way in which heterosexual courtship across two different social or ideological groups leads to a unification between the groups themselves. I described the ending of Rogers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, in which a now united community of farmers and cowboys sing together: "We know we belong to the land!/And the land we belong to is grand!" The land in question is Indian Territory, and the musical's community of farmers and cowboys is white. The supposedly historical narrative of the musical, set in 1906 and written in 1943, completely ignores the presence of American Indians and African Americans in the territory, and neither the Curtis Act of 1898, nor the later Tulsa race riots are referenced in any way. In some musicals, the reconciliation of the opposing sides masks an ideology of violent separation based in white supremacy, and the "we" formed in the happy ending is also a "not them," and a fantasy of erasure. And as for a dual-focus musical across the color line, could such courtship rise to the level of myth when the racist legacy of violent anti-miscegenation laws is still all too real?

In conclusion, I wish to simply reiterate that musicals need lived disability experience, and call on the entertainment industry to hire as many disabled actors as possible in “regular” roles, to show disabled lives as they are. This will change how disability is experienced by everyone, and will transform the musical genre as a whole to one more in resonance with itself.

**REFERENCES**


Altman, Rick, editor. *Genre, the Musical: A Reader*. Routledge & Kegan Paul in association with the British Film Institute, 1981.

---. *The American Film Musical*. 9. print, Indiana Univ. Press, 2007.

*AMERICAN THEATRE | TEDxBroadway Explores the Magic of Possibility*. https://www.americantheatre.org/2016/02/26/tedxbroadway-explores-the-magic-of-possibility/. Accessed 11 Apr. 2019.

Anglin-Jaffe, Hannah. "Signs of Resistance: Peer Learning of Sign Languages Within 'Oral' Schools for the Deaf." *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, vol. 32, no. 3, May 2013, pp. 261–71. *Crossref*, doi:10.1007/s11217-012-9350-3.

Bauman, H. Dirksen L., et al., editors. *Signing the Body Poetic: Essays on American Sign Language Literature*. University of California Press, 2006.

Baynton, Douglas C. *Forbidden Signs: American Culture and the Campaign against Sign Language*. University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Bennington, Geoffrey, and Jacques Derrida. *Jacques Derrida*. University of Chicago Press, 1993.

*Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance*. University of Michigan Press, 2005. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, doi:10.3998/mpub.92455.

BRADFORD, SHANNON. "The National Theatre of the Deaf." *Bodies in Commotion*, edited by Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander, University of Michigan Press, 2005, pp. 86–94, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.92455.12. JSTOR.

Brewer, Diane. "West Side Silence: Producing West Side Story with Deaf and Hearing Actors." *Theatre Topics*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2002, pp. 17–34. *Crossref*, doi:10.1353/tt.2002.0003.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* Routledge, 2011.

Catanese, Brandi Wilkins. *The Problem of the Color(Blind): Racial Transgression and the Politics of Black Performance*. University of Michigan Press, 2011.

Chen, Linda, et al., editors. "Guidelines for Disability Studies: Highlights of a 2004 SDS Listserv Discussion." *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 4, Fall 2004, http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/894/1069.

Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Duke University Press, 2012.

Clarke, Gerald. *Get Happy: The Life of Judy Garland*. 1st ed, Random House, 2000.

Clover, Carol J. "Dancin' in the Rain." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1995, pp. 722–47.

*Corporeal.Pdf*. https://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/corporeal.pdf. Accessed 5 Mar. 2019.

"David Kurs - a New Leader for Deaf West." *@ This Stage*, 7 Mar. 2012, https://thisstage.la/2012/03/david-kurs-a-new-leader-for-deaf-west/.

De Kosnik, Abigail. *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom*. The MIT Press, 2016.

DERRIDA, JACQUES, and David Wills. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Fordham University, 2008, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x09fn. JSTOR.

*Duke University Press - Disintegrating the Musical*. https://www.dukeupress.edu/disintegrating-the-musical. Accessed 18 Mar. 2019.

Dyer, Richard. *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. 2nd ed, Routledge, 2004.

Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard. *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism*. Indiana University Press, 1990.

Ellen Samuels. “Critical Divides: Judith Butler’s Body Theory and the Question of Disability.” *NWSA Journal*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2002, pp. 58–76. JSTOR.

Epstein, Kayla, and Alex Needham. “Spring Awakening on Broadway: Deaf Viewers Give Their Verdict.” *The Guardian*, 29 Oct. 2015. *www.theguardian.com*, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/oct/29/spring-awakening-broadway-deaf-viewers-give-verdict.

Eyler, Joshua R. “Disability and Prosthesis in L. Frank Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2013, pp. 319–34. *Crossref*, doi:10.1353/chq.2013.0042.

Frank, Gerold. *Judy*. 1st ed, Harper & Row, 1975.

Fricke, John, et al. *The Wizard of Oz: The Official 50th Anniversary Pictorial History*. Warner Books, 1989.

Garber, Marjorie B. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing & Cultural Anxiety*. Routledge, 1992.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. “Staring at the Other.” *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 4, Sept. 2005. *dsq-sds.org*, doi:10.18061/dsq.v25i4.610.

Haller, Beth. “Yellow Brick Road.” *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, June 2006. *dsq-sds.org*, doi:10.18061/dsq.v26i3.733.

Harmetz, Aljean. *The Making of The Wizard of Oz*. Knopf, 1984.

*How SimCom Can Be Harmful to Language*. https://www.handspeak.com/kid/index.php?id=116. Accessed 29 Mar. 2019.

Howe, Blake, et al., editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

John, Emma. “Mat Fraser on Why He Felt Compelled to Write Thalidomide!! A Musical.” *The Guardian*, 7 Nov. 2005. *www.theguardian.com*, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/nov/07/theatre.

Johnson, E. Patrick, and Mae Henderson, editors. *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Judith, Halberstam. *The Anti-Social Turn in Queer Studies*. Vol. 5.2, 2008.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. “The Corporeal Turn.” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 95, no. 3, 2005, pp. 447–61. *Crossref*, doi:10.1353/jqr.2005.0058.

Knapp, Raymond. “Disabling Privilege: Further Reflections on Deaf West’s Big River.” *Studies in Musical Theatre*, vol. 9, no. 1, Mar. 2015, pp. 105–09. *Crossref*, doi:10.1386/smt.9.1.105_1.

---, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*. First issued as an Oxford University Press paperback, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Knight, Arthur. *Disintegrating the Musical: Black Performance and American Musical Film*. Duke University Press, 2002.

Kochhar-Lindgren, Kanta. “Hearing Difference across Theatres: Experimental, Disability, and Deaf Performance.” *Theatre Journal*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2006, pp. 417–36. *Crossref*, doi:10.1353/tj.2006.0159.

Koestenbaum, Wayne. *The Queen’s Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire*. Poseidon Press, 1993.

Kuppers, Petra. “Deconstructing Images: Performing Disability.” *Contemporary Theatre Review*, vol. 11, no. 3–4, Jan. 2001, pp. 25–40. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, doi:10.1080/10486800108568636.

Lerner, Neil William, and Joseph Nathan Straus, editors. *Sounding off: Theorizing Disability in Music*. Routledge, 2006.

Longmore, Paul K. *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*. Temple University Press, 2003.

Lubet, Alex. *Music, Disability, and Society*. Temple University Press, 2011.

MacDonnell, Francis. *"The Emerald City Was the New Deal": E.Y. Harburg and The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Vol. 13, 2004, doi:10.1111/j.1542-734X.1990.00071.x.

McKay, George. *Shakin' All over: Popular Music and Disability*. University of Michigan Press, 2013.

McLean, Adrienne L. "Feeling and the Filmed Body: Judy Garland and the Kinesics of Suffering." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 3, Mar. 2002, pp. 2–15. *Crossref*, doi:10.1525/fq.2002.55.3.2.

McMillin, Scott. *The Musical as Drama*. 2014. *Open WorldCat*, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400865406.

Miller, D. A. *Place for Us: Essay on the Broadway Musical*. Harvard University Press, 1998.

Mitchell, David T., and Sharon L. Snyder. *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Most, Andrea. *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical*. Harvard University Press, 2004.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Myers, S. S., and J. K. Fernandes. "Deaf Studies: A Critique of the Predominant U.S. Theoretical Direction." *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, vol. 15, no. 1, Jan. 2010, pp. 30–49. *Crossref*, doi:10.1093/deafed/enp017.

Nast, Condé. “Why Ugliness Is Vital in the Age of Social Media.” *Them.*, https://www.them.us/story/ugliness-disability-mia-mingus. Accessed 15 Apr. 2019.

*Notes towards a Deformed Humanities – @samplereality*. https://www.samplereality.com/2012/05/02/notes-towards-a-deformed-humanities/. Accessed 12 Apr. 2019.

Pellegrini, Ann. “Unnatural Affinities: Me and Judy at the Lesbian Bar.” *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2 (65), Sept. 2007, pp. 127–33. *read.dukeupress.edu*, doi:10.1215/02705346-2007-006.

Pugh, Tison. “‘There Lived in the Land of Oz Two Queerly Made Men’: Queer Utopianism and Antisocial Eroticism in L. Frank Baum’s Oz Series.” *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2008, pp. 217–39.

Raabe, Meinhardt, and Daniel Kinske. *Memories of a Munchkin: An Illustrated Walk down the Yellow Brick Road*. Back Stage Books, 2005.

Rogin, Michael Paul. *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. University of California Press, 1996.

Rushdie, Salman. *The Wizard of Oz*. BFI Pub, 1992.

SANDAHL, CARRIE. “The Tyranny of Neutral.” *Bodies in Commotion*, edited by Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander, University of Michigan Press, 2005, pp. 255–68, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.92455.26. JSTOR.

“Sandra Mae Frank & Katie Boeck on Their Intense Connection as They Share the Role of Wendla in Spring Awakening.” *Broadway.Com*, https://www.broadway.com/buzz/182816/sandra-mae-

frank-katie-boeck-on-their-intense-connection-as-they-share-the-role-of-wendla-in-spring-awakening/. Accessed 29 Mar. 2019.

Savran, David. *Highbrow/Lowdown: Theater, Jazz, and the Making of the New Middle Class*. The University of Michigan Press, 2009.

Schick, Brenda S., et al., editors. *Advances in the Sign Language Development of Deaf Children*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Schweik, Susan M. *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public*. New York University, 2009.

Singer, Isaac Bashevis, and Antonio Frasconi. *Yentl the Yeshiva Boy*. 1st ed, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983.

Smith, Jeff (Jeffrey Paul). "Black Faces, White Voices: The Politics of Dubbing in Carmen Jones." *The Velvet Light Trap*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2003, pp. 29–42. *Crossref*, doi:10.1353/vlt.2003.0010.

Society for the History of Technolo, D. C. ). "'Looking Back, Looking Beyond': The Washington, D.C., Meeting, 17–21 October 2007." *Technology and Culture*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2007, pp. 179–201. *Crossref*, doi:10.1353/tech.2008.0020.

Straus, Joseph Nathan. *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Talks at Google. *Spring Awakening (Broadway Revival Cast) | Talks at Google*. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-utX-pB8Odg. Accessed 23 Apr. 2019.

TEDx Talks. *Our "Limitations" Are Actually Superpowers | DJ Kurs | TEDxBroadway*. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLX2Ms1XIwc. Accessed 29 Mar. 2019.

"The Surprising Jewish Message Behind 'Into the Woods.'" *Kveller*, 9 Jan. 2015, https://www.kveller.com/the-surprising-jewish-message-behind-into-the-woods/.

*The Truth About Spring Awakening: It's Not Sim-Com... but It's Just as Bad*. http://surdusexplores.blogspot.com/2015/12/the-truth-about-spring-awakening-its.html. Accessed 29 Mar. 2019.

Wedekind, Frank, and Jonathan Franzen. *Spring Awakening: A Children's Tragedy*. 1st ed, Faber and Faber, 2007.

Weinert-Kendt, Rob. "If a Deaf Musical Is Possible, There Is Room on Our Stages for Everyone." *AMERICAN THEATRE*, 20 Oct. 2015, https://www.americantheatre.org/2015/10/20/if-a-deaf-musical-is-possible-there-is-room-on-our-stages-for-everyone/.

Weininger, Otto, et al. *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*. Indiana University Press, 2005.

Wolf, Stacy Ellen. *A Problem like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*. University of Michigan Press, 2002.

---. *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Yates, Samuel. "Choreographing Conjoinment: Side Show's Fleshly Fixations and Disability Simulation." *Studies in Musical Theatre*, vol. 13, no. 1, Mar. 2019, pp. 67–78.