

Published in *Big Hollywood*, September 29, 2009

## The Wizard of Oz: Seventy Years Later— Still Inspiring, Still Relevant

By Mary Claire Kendall

“That’s the best song ever written,” Judy Garland said of “Over the Rainbow” in an interview with Barbara Walters on March 6, 1967, almost three decades after she captured countless hearts as “Dorothy” in “The Wizard of Oz,” featuring that magical song.



So, too, “The Wizard of Oz”—released 70 years ago today—is, perhaps, the best film ever made.

Or, at least, the most quintessentially American—in terms of our struggles, hopes, aspirations, dreams, and, ultimately, unshakable confidence, that “somewhere over the rainbow... dreams... really do come true.”

<http://www.reelclassics.com/Musicals/Wizoz/rainbow-lyrics.htm>

MGM had purchased this highly popular and imaginative children’s book written by L. Frank Baum, and published in 1900, for \$75,000, specifically for Judy. During development, the silver shoes became ruby, thus undercutting Baum’s apparent allegory to “bimetallism”—currency backed by silver, replacing “the gold standard” and favoring rural farmers; in contrast to the worthless “greenbacks” some say Emerald City represents.

We all know the story.

Dorothy, an orphan, living with her aunt and uncle on their Kansas farm, is always getting into trouble, especially with cantankerous Miss Elmira Gulch, who is trying to destroy her dog, Toto. So, Auntie Em counsels Dorothy to “find a place where you won’t get into any trouble,” which Dorothy envisions in “Over the Rainbow.”

Running away, she encounters Professor Marvel, who perceives Auntie Em’s broken heart in his crystal ball, sending Dorothy scurrying back home but not in time to secure underground shelter safe from the coming

