Seeing Culture, Aging and Maturity Through the Lens of *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Makioka Sisters* in Class, Fiction, and Film

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To put it mildly, both L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's *The Makioka Sisters* (*Sasame-yuki,* literally "lightly-falling snow") are iconic books in the United States and Japan. Each has a sizable critical literature (e.g., see Hearn 1986, 2000; Rahn 2003, Updike 2000 or Slung 1984 for Oz; or Keene 1984, Chambers 1998, or Chiba 1998 for Tanizaki) and both have been made to into famous and acclaimed films. Though separated by culture, geography, and some four decades of time, they share a similar theme—the processes of maturity of a young woman as she grows into adulthood. However, these are not the usual "coming of age" stories often found in popular culture in either Japan or America—the sense of self of the heroines in each case here is already well defined, indeed, robust and self-assured in their own way. Instead, we see how these young women engage with those around them—their consociates, to use David Plath's favorite term for those among whom we age and mature together. In both cases we see how pivotal moments can affect sojourners as they travel along the life course, and how these events set the stage for later encounters in our long engagements through life.

In this paper, I want to do two things. First, I wish to compare some of these issues of maturation addressed in these two books. However, I do not wish to do so through the usual devices of literary exegesis or canons of scholarship. Instead, I would like to discuss this comparison as experienced in an introductory anthropology, general education elective offered at the University of Illinois called Culture, Aging, and Maturity, as presented in the late 1980s by David Plath. I was privileged to be the teaching assistant (TA) for this class for some four semesters, and taught it myself when Dr. Plath was on sabbatical in Japan.

The two main textbooks for this class were *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and *The Makioka Sisters* (and their film adaptations). At first, my reaction to the former book was a surprise. For most students, the reaction was, "Wizard of Oz … Sweet!"—but I soon came to see the wisdom, if not brilliance, of making these two works articulate with each other. Only someone with this kind of originality (to say nothing of expertise) could have made these connections, tying in studies of the life course, a comparison of Japan and America, reinforcing visual literacy skills, finding an emancipated female voice in the midst of patriarchy, and exploring possible worlds and utopias, to name only some. And to speak from my own personal, melodrama, as Dr. Plath was fond of saying, by being involved in this class, I myself matured in ways I was not fully aware of until much later (an accurate and prescient prediction he made upon my graduation), awareness I am finding reinforced in the writing of this paper.

"Culture, Aging, and Maturity": The Course and the Concept

Dr. Plath's "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" was not the first time I was a TA for a class as a Ph.D. student at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Since my focus was both linguistics and cultural anthropology, it was not surprising that I first became a TA for a course called, Language in Culture, under Joseph Casagrande. I learned much from him: about Hopi views of time, the roaring days of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in the 1950s, and to definitely fold if you were unsure of your hand in poker. The charming Joe Casagrande met his demise a semester or so later—the apocryphal story among the grad students being he drew the final ace for a royal flush at a high stakes game in Vegas over Christmas break, and in his excitement, passed out at the table, never to recover. Regardless—and I do hope the story is true—I was assigned for the next several semesters to supervise discussion sections of a giant lecture class on primate behavior even though I was hard-pressed to tell the difference between a lemur and a lean-to.

Several semesters later when I came back to campus from doing dissertation research in Japan, Dr. Plath asked me if I wanted to do some monkey business elsewhere besides a big auditorium in Gregory Hall. Even though by then I was starting to get a hand on things—lemurs were the small ones and chimps were the big ones, I thought his course proposal and the offer to participate in it were exciting. He was going to offer a new 100-level undergrad elective on the life course. "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" was not going to be a sociology class in gerontology (though death and dying, and end-of-life issues were sure to be touched on). Nor was this class going to be another overview of human development—childhood, adolescence, or adulthood, for instance. Numerous courses in psychology, education, human development and family studies already covered such material. But Dr. Plath felt that all these courses, fine as they were, lacked some things that he felt, from his three decades reflecting on the human life course, needed to studied.

First, at that time there was little anthropological discussion of the processes of maturation. Studies of aging or the aged certainly were common, especially in the multidisciplinary programs in gerontology found in many universities and medical schools. Also, since the Second World War there was much research on those individuals in the labeled categories of "infant," "children," or "teenagers," especially by developmental psychologists. But there seemed to little interest beyond adolescence, once one hit "adulthood." It seemed that humans were finished by then until retirement, and the supposed inevitable difficulties of transitioning to old age began. Generally, besides making the occasional remark about foolish male celebrities trying to stave off the years by driving sports cars, wearing gold chains, and chasing twenty-year old women, social scientists and social commentators had little to stay about what people did in those forty years plus between staring a new job and retiring from an old one (whether your career was inside or outside the home).

There were a few exceptions, of course, perhaps the most notable one being Gail Sheehy's best seller, *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life* (1976). Sheehy was often labeled as a member of the New Journalism movement of the 1960's and 70's which included many of the major serious American writers of day (and not just reporters): for example, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion, and Hunter S. Thompson (being among the most well-known). New Journalism, often called a kind of creative non-fiction, supposedly eschewed the objective observer in place of an involved chronicler … a nascent or incipient ethnographer, perhaps? In 1969 Sheehy—already a journalist of some renown—received a

Rockefeller Foundation fellowship to attend graduate school at Columbia and study with Margaret Mead. Mead made a lasting impression on Sheehy. At a commencement address in 2016 at the University of Vermont (her alma mater) she said, "Mead was the new American cultural prophet. She encouraged me to become a cultural interpreter: 'Whenever you hear about a great cultural phenomenon—a revolution, an assassination, a notorious trial, an attack on the country—drop everything. Get on a bus or train or plane and go there, stand at the edge of the abyss, and look down into it. You will see a culture turned inside out and revealed in a raw state'." (Weaver 2016). Sheehy hit a nerve with *Passages*. It remained on the New York Times best seller list for three years. In fact, later in the 1990's and 2000's Sheehy had a sort of small cottage industry of "Passage" books of several kinds, including volumes on men's "passages," the "passages" of those doing caregiving, or those going through the "passage of menopause."

Dr. Plath asked me to read *Passages* and wanted to know how I felt about it as text for the Culture, Aging, and Maturity class. My own feelings were mixed. It was certainly an engaging work, and Sheehy was a talented writer, but I wasn't sure I liked for a class. For one thing, I wasn't sure one could "teach" it. But I wasn't able to articulate these doubts very well. Dr. Plath, however, quickly had identified two problems (but apparently still wanted to check things out with someone a little closer in age to the students, who maybe had some insights into the undergraduate psyche).

First, what bothered him was that there was really only one passage (in spite of the title), almost any choice being reduced to some limited inevitable outcome. This was in some ways a rehabilitation of G. Stanley Hall's old argument from the early 1900's, that the life course was a preordained, almost hardwired, inevitability. Hall is often credited with being one of the founders of the field of social psychology, and in his book *Adolescence* (2008) he argues that the teenaged angst that most American young people experience is in fact universal, and largely biological. In fact, it was testing just this question that took Margaret Mead (1928) to Samoa to study some four dozen teenaged girls. She found that adolescence was hardly a traumatic and stressful time for them. Thus was cast the "anthropological veto:" teenage trauma is not universal, but largely dependent on cultural upbringing. Samoan girls seemed to have none of the same kinds of emotional anguish and social oppression faced by American teenaged girls.

Plath pointed out that in the passages described in *Passages*, everything is crisis (or everything is reduced to a crisis). This was his second main criticism: that there are no orderly progressions. One is like a butterfly hopelessly trying to find a comforting flower to land on but unable to do so. And unlike in Hall's theory of adolescent trauma—i.e., once you made it through adolescence, you're done; or at least the worst is over—for Sheehy every adult decade is a crisis in waiting: "the trying twenties," "the catch-30," "the deadline decade," and so on.

Troubling, too—aside from the fact that the book often dipped into pop sociology or pop psychology—was the lack of a cross-cultural (or even subcultural) comparison. The characters were all the usual suspects (European-American, typically affluent, and well educated). There was no attempt to consider "passages" in other places or cultural contexts. The "emics", or local understandings of the issue, were never approached: What might have been some of the local categories of the life course that could possibly be different from those in America or the West?

The Sheehy book, then, had no anthropological or sociological theory of maturation. While the supposed problems of "aging" or "old age" seemed obvious and assumed, social scientists and the general public had few analytical tools and little symbolic vocabulary to address simply being an adult; what "adulthood" meant or how one got there. I think this represented the poverty of the study of the "life course" or "maturity" at that time.

Long Engagements and Theories of Culture

In the 1970's and 1980's, there was much tumult in anthropology. In the United States, some anthropologists were still in the thralls of objectivism, and perhaps having even a bit of science-envy of (the last vestiges of) behavioral psychology. Cognitive anthropology, with its emphasis on methodology, and elicitation frameworks and such, was an attempt to make sure anthropological data was replicable and valid. Another school of anthropologists felt that the was no anthropological truth at all, only interpretation. All things French were in fashion, too, as were the beginnings of an emphasis on power relations, hegemony, and identity that persist to this day. And in the UK, the remnants of British social anthropology—with its deep fascination with kinship and political structure—was waiting for academic decolonialism to begin.

However, in Asian Studies, particularly in the study of Japan, some of this anthropological turbulence was not felt so strongly. Perhaps due to its scholars' multidisciplinary training in area studies, there was no single "school" or approach that all could either disparage or venerate. I would say, however, that in some ways, those whose interests lie in the anthropology of Japan retained an enthusiasm for the study of the relation between culture and the individual more adamantly than other anthropologists. In fact, in Francis Hsu's 1972 summative sourcebook on psychological anthropology, we find Edward Norbeck and George DeVos unabashedly labeling their chapter simply "Culture and Personality: The Japanese" (Norbeck and De Vos 1972). Perhaps because of the lasting influence of Margaret Mead and Edward Sapir, and most importantly, the legacy of Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), Japanese anthropologists at home and abroad continued to look at such things as the individual as the locus of culture, typical or "modal" patterns of behavior, and studies of the "self." But perhaps most important for the time, Japan-style culture-and-personality theorists were concerned with behaviors in reference to antecedents and etiologies, and "could not be satisfied simply to describe its characteristics—as social psychologists are wont to do" (Hsu, 1972: 3).

In this vein, a fair bit of the anthropology practiced by American "Japan specialists" at the time could be called culture and personality studies, or at least were strongly influenced by this school. However, this was a term Plath eschewed. For one thing, much of the work in culture and personality studies was concerned with child development and childhood socialization. Plath's focus was just the opposite: the life course and adulthood. And his emphasis was less on the collectivity (the "culture" side) and more on individual maturation (the "personality" side). However, this in no way meant psychological reductionism. Plath took a much more nuanced and subtle view of the relationship between the individual and the greater cultural context than that. In our discussions, he referred to the kind of work he did as old-fashioned, old-school ethnography, with the thick description of Clifford Geertz, the objective accuracy and fairness of a good journalist (which he studied as an undergraduate), "and if I'm lucky, occasionally the flare of good novelist." Good writing was a must. I recall Dr. Plath

saying one time, just as the so-called Mead-Freeman controversy was really heating up, "Say what will about Margaret Mead, but when you read *Coming of Age in Samoa* you know what it was like to have been there. I can't say that about all the ethnographies I am seeing today."

I think what David Plath was more impressed with by the Mead-Sapir-Benedict trio was not the idea that a person was a culture's personality writ small, or a culture was an individual's personality writ large (which is maybe over-simplifying or exaggerating the whole culture and personality school). Instead, Dr. Plath, as with many Japanologists of this time, was interested in finding patterns (cf., Benedict's other lasting work, *Patterns of Culture* (2005 [1934]) in which she writes about patterns in social structure, patterns in behaviors, patterns of values). However, for Dr. Plath, one had to be *very* selective, lest we fall back into the very Western rhetoric that he distained. These patterns, then, did not mean every Japanese subscribes to every trait that is said to be somehow "Japanese." Ruth Benedict herself noted the tensions and conflicts and the internal contradictions of Japanese culture, finding "the most fantastic series of 'but also's' ever used for any nation in the world" (1946: 2).

Thus, the conversation in *Long Engagements* was refreshing and new. He rejected the Culture and Personality approach, but also recoiled at reflexive postmodernism, a type "interpretative anthropology" sometimes carried to extremes by some partisans. He saw some anthropological writing as claiming "thick description" as a substitute for careful fieldwork (and judicious and equally careful field notes). In such writings, locals were sometimes either relegated to the status of extras or walk-ons, or else acting as the mere excuse for the anthropologist to reveal something of their own inner angst or signal their own sensitivity or virtue, by being "there," Dr. Plath was never the star of his own ethnographic melodramas.

Even a cursory glance at some of the topics that interested him show the range of the human condition that David Plath wanted to explore ethnographically and cinematically: death (Plath 1964b) and fatalism (Plath 1966b); utopian visions, both collective and individual (Sugihara and Plath 1966, Plath, 1966a, Plath 1971); the quest to discover life's meaning and its enjoyment (Plath 1963, 1964a), age— old (Plath 1973, 1977), middle (Plath 1975a, 1975b), and young (Caudill and Plath 1966, Plath and Du Bois 1974.); maturity and the life course (Plath 1980, 1983); love (1984); and the individual as a signifier of identity, both in material acquisition and consumption (Plath 1990a) as well as in competition (Plath and Hill 1987). And this is to say nothing of his interest in method and field work (1990b), and theory and Japanese studies as a theoretical enterprise (Plath and Takao 1992), all of which are also represented in his ample filmography (some of which are discussed in this collection).

Long Engagements with an Aging Population and the Growth "Japan Studies"

There was one other post-war phenomenon that really was beginning to force academic researchers, journalists, policy makers, politicians, and everyday citizens to re-evaluate their views on social progress and change: the new mass-longevity being seen not only in the West and industrial societies, but also increasingly in the developing world. Dr. Plath used to like to say the first day in class, it used to be that at a certain point in time you would attend your parent's or parents' retirement party. Now chances are, they will attend *yours* as well. This was something demographers had been well aware of for several decades prior; but the implications of such a major population shift at that time (the 1980's) had only begun to be recognized in the social sciences.

But for those in Japanese studies (of almost any specialty), this was not really news. The reason was, Japan was already a long-lived society to begin with, in spite of the depravations suffered by the World War II generation. And by the 1980's the Japanese economic miracle was in full swing, and with it, came all the advantages that mass prosperity brings, among them a significant increase in life expectancy. According to 2024 World Health Organization data, the Japanese population today has one of the highest life expectancies in world (roughly 87.2 years for women and 81.7 years for men), but it has been this way for decades. With a declining birthrate, the Japanese inverted population pyramid is top-heavy (again, a trend seen since the 1980's). So anyone with even a casual concern with the life course in Japan is acutely aware of this demographic situation. Indeed, this has written about and discussed widely as a social problem in the Japanese media for decades.

In addition, any consideration of the life course must take into account particular cultural factors. In America and the West, maturation is thought to be a liability and old age itself a disease, a journey most of us want to fight every step of the way. Much of the American economy centers around this in various ways: what are the best foods, exercises, vitamins, medical interventions, etc., to slow the process down? What are the best products—cosmetics, clothes, machines—to help us cope? And this says nothing of the advertising empire that supports this. In Japan, however, respect for the aged is remarkable, comparatively speaking. In fact, though this seems to be changing, might be said that some Japanese do not dread getting old, at least in the same way Americans do. In fact, I recall Plath-sensei saying in class that in some ethnographic accounts, men and women begin to look rather elderly soon past the age of fifty, even though they were vigorous and hearty just a few years earlier. The reason for this, he suspected, is that "old age" is not just a matter of physiological change, but reflects a social situation that encourages someone to reach out openly to old age rather than fear it. That is, to enter old age early is to enjoy its advantages longer. Unconsciously, then, people start taking up the mannerisms of old age rather than remain in "middle age." Contrast this to American attitudes. Considering the number of times we hear this in book titles, commercial advertisements, and everyday conversation, one might believe the mantra "Age is just a number" to be the new national motto.

So, Dr. Plath was left trying to find books for the "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" class. He immediately mentioned Tanizaki's *The Makioka Sisters*, a book he had used in one of his classes on Japanese society and culture, and which had a fine English rendition by noted translator Edward Seidensticker. Dr. Plath thought it the one of finest ethnographies on the Japanese family ever written, though it was a work of fiction. Many other Japanologists agreed. Dr. Plath was a strong advocate of finding "ethnographic truths" in popular culture. In our discussions I remember him saying that while he agreed with contemporary so-called interpretative anthropologists like Clifford Geertz, who argued that the anthropological literature could be "read" as a text, with all the accruements and tools of literary criticism, the opposite was also possible: novels can be ethnographies. In fact, the novel can sometimes even have some distinct advantages over the works in the classic anthropological genre. For one thing, time management can be more judicious:

> The writers of fiction will take pains to heighten a character's dilemmas and to dramatize turnings in the person's awareness of self. Often the action is condensed into a span of days or even hours. By contrast, the ambiguities in a "real life"

> narrative tend to be resolved at the speed of the slow motion film, and without evident progress. (Plath 1980: 16)

Compelling fiction, even whole novels, then, could also be read as ethnography. Likewise for film, scripted or documentary. It was this device that Dr. Plath used to great service in the "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" class, and later in his most well-read book *Long Engagements.*

Long Engagements in *Long Engagements*

In 1980, Dr. Plath published what most people consider to be his most important and influential work, *Long Engagements: Maturity in Modern Japan*. It is hard to overstate how original this book was. On the surface, the book starts out as a relatively standard ethnography. He interviewed 23 *senzenha* men and women, the last generation of those born before World Wat II. He seemingly wanted to show a Japanese contrast to the rhetoric of maturity that was largely found in the contemporary sociological and gerontological literature: "The mental purchase that we already hold upon the meanings of maturity in post-industrial societies has been gained through the scrutiny of humankind in the West" (1980: 3). But in particular, he wanted to address some of the inadequacies of the rhetoric of adulthood that had too often been applied to the Japanese (and sometimes still are): compared to "individualist" Westerners, the "collectivist" Japanese are more comfortable submitting to the changes wrought by aging. Plath questioned this, especially in a society where mass-longevity has shaken any "framework of life-cycle security" (p. 4). This was a lesson that America—indeed, all post-industrial societies—was destined to learn, and he could not have been more prescient.

But the genius and originality of *Long Engagements* was to bring in four pieces of fiction with which his ethnographic material might articulate. In the end, Plath chose four key interviewee informants and paired them with the main characters in four well-known Japanese novels. This juxtaposition of the informant-biographies with literature-protagonists results in a very rich narrative arch, and is a brilliant means to explicate his theoretical ideas about the life course. As one critic mentioned (Kiefer 1981: 395), "The literary works develop the cultural dimensions of the developmental problems with which the interviewees are struggling. It is a powerful device and produces a result that is convincing (and therefore enlightening). Literature must be like life in order to engage its audience, but its function is to be more orderly than life."

This quartet, if you will, of four duets synchronically playing off one another yields a fascinating diachronic composition by the end of the symphony. Table 1 of the book summarizes in a short-hand way, this structure of *Long Engagements*. In the left-hand column are the chapter-title nicknames Plath gave to each of the interviewees he is discussing. Their names (pseudonyms or monikers) are given in the next column. After that, right in the middle in the center is the column that gives the corresponding character in the novel that will be compared to the interview. The source of the novel follows that in the next column, giving both the original Japanese title, the English translation, and year of publication and author. (It should be noted that an English translation of Ariyoshi's novel *Kōkotsu no Hito* [which Plath here referred to by its literal Japanese title, "A Man in Ecstasy"] now has appeared in English as *The Twilight Years,* 1984). Finally, in the far right column are some of the major theoretical constructs which are predominantly discussed in that chapter. For example, in the chapter titled "a spoiled daughter," the interviewee called Goryōhan is compared and contrasted with another spoiled daughter, the second eldest sister Sachiko in *The Makioka Sisters*.

Long engagements with *The Makioka Sisters*

Though the publication of *Long Engagements* occurred slightly before the "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" class was proposed, I believe Dr. Plath was planning on doing a class based on the ideas of the book, in some ways, ever since he began that seven-year project in Japan (1980: v). The book really was a unique and revolutionary undertaking for its time (and still holds up well). But Dr. Plath realized that it was not appropriate for an undergraduate general education class. Instead, he had in mind two novels, each of which describes the road to maturity of a young woman. The younger one was named Dorothy Gage, the older one was named Yukiko Makioka.

In the notes to the Criterion edition of the film version of the book *The Makioka Sisters*, the eminent western critic of Japanese cinema Audie Bock (2011) pronounced this novel to be *The Gone with the Wind* of Japan. It certainly measures up in length, weighing in at 530 pages in the English edition. In terms of pageantry of a by-gone era—and vivid and strong female characters—it matches as well, depicting life in late-1930's Japan until just before the start of the World War II. The overall plot is not especially complicated. The formerly very well-to-do Makioka family has fallen on some hard times, and while not destitute by any means, their financial and social position has taken a bit of a hit, though everyone still retains their former pretentions, to some degree. The story centers around the four sisters: Tsuruko (the eldest and the theoretical matriarch, and head of the main house in Osaka), Sachiko (the second-oldest, and head of the branch house in suburban Ashiya), the shy and reserved Yukiko (the third eldest), and the westernized and ambitious Taeko (the youngest). Tsuruko and Sachiko have been wed for years now, both their husbands having married into the Makioka family, taking on the Makioka name and position.

The problem is, the youngest sister Taeko is itching to get married and be off on her own. However, the beloved but timid third sister Yukiko (lit. "Snow-child," hence the Japanese name of the novel and its word play) seems to be in no hurry to marry in spite of her being 30, and approaching 33—a *dai-yaku-doshi,* or very dangerous year, one thought to be particularly calamitous for women. This superstition is taken very seriously by the Makioka family, and indeed even many real Japanese today may buy a charm or visit a temple on these various auspicious occasions. Nonetheless, while everyone realizes the importance of moving Yukiko along the stages of life, the family is actually of two minds about this. While almost terminally shy outside the home, inside Yukiko is the light that warms the coldest room. In some ways, no one is anxious to see her leave. Someone always finds something wrong with a potential suitor. Regardless, Taeko would like her to marry soon so she can do so next (even though she herself has mixed feelings about the fragile Yukiko leaving home). Simply put, the novel is the story of how the family conducts five different *o-miai* (or possible marriage arrangement between a potential bride and groom) beginning in 1936, and how and why they all fail until the last one succeeds in 1941, on the eve of the Second World War. In between these meetings are descriptions of various events of different kinds, such as doll festivals, Buddhist services, or formal viewings of cherry blossoms and fireflies. And perhaps, too, are detailed depiction of Japanese family life that have never been exceeded.

The *Long Engagements* with the Makioka family

In 1972 and 1973 David Plath did ethnographic work in the Hanshin area of Kansai, the south-central region of Japan that includes the large cities of Osaka and Kobe. (Significantly, or serendipitously, this area was not far linguistically, geographically, or culturally from the center of the fictional activity found in *The Makioka Sisters*). He interviewed 23 Hanshin residents who were *senzenha*, the last of the pre-World Wat II generation. He chose this particular group of cohorts because he wanted to ask: "How does one become a personality and achieve personal integrity without becoming either a social robot or a hermit? How does one cope with the necessity of profound personal change without turning against one's own past or losing sight of the things one has spent one's life struggling toward?" (Kiefer 1981: 394-395).

Chapter Nickname	**Hanshin Interviewee**	**Novel Protagonist**	**Original Novel/ Translation**	**Theoretical Construct**
"a suicide cadet	Shōji	Shōshū	*The Buddha Tree (1966)* *Bodaiju* (1956) (literally, "the Linden tree/Bodhi tree/Tree of Awakening" Niwa Fumio	pathways
"a team captain"	Beisuke	Nishimura	*Resistance at Forty-eight* (1960) *Yonjū-hassai no Teikō* Ishikawa Tatsuzō	cohorts
"a spoiled daughter	Goryōhan	Sachiko	*The Makioka Sisters* (1957) *Sasame Yuko* (1943) (literally, "light snowfall") Tanizaki Jun'ichirō	consociates, convoying
"an honors student"	Tomoko	Akiko	*The Twilight Years* (1984) *Kōkotsu no Hito* (1972) (literally, "a man in ecstasy") Ariyoshi Sawako	partnerships

Table 1. A Summary Chart of David Plath's *Long Engagements*

It is intensive, open-ended interviews with this group of self-described committed Hanshin-ites that formed the ethnographic basis of the *Long Engagements* book. But the thing was, for their part Plath let his informants talk—in their own voice, in their own narrative style, improvising their song in their own way. After they had their (sometimes lengthy) say, Dr. Plath did not "interpret," so much, what had just happened (as a so-called interpretive anthropologist might) as play counterpoint or a harmony to the melody offered by the interviewee. He did this mostly by turning to another member of this unlikely musical combo, offering a solo to one of the fictional counterparts from the novels (Table 1), someone dealing with the same chord progression of questions and challenges in their own life (albeit, one of an author's imagination). To be sure, the band leader's voice is heard as well. As with Margaret Mead, we can picture Dr. Plath in a house in Takarazuka "looking into human change in adulthood in the Hanshin milieu" (p. 22) as he approached that "continental divide in the flow of the American life course, my 40th birthday" (p. 23), while looking over a "million-dollar view." "On a clear night it can be just that. From the top of the Rokkō mountain range the panorama down the Hanshin shelf across Osaka bay … can rival the glitter and grandeur of Rio de Janeiro or Hong Kong" (p. 18).

Long Engagements by all accounts is a brilliant book, but not one for the faint of heart. As one reviewer said, the writing style is "vivid, engaging, literate, in places even poetic." But in spite of all that, it is not light reading: "The reader must have, I would say, some knowledge about the issues in the life-span developmental theory and enough interest in the topic to follow his subtle and complex argument. It seems well-suited for graduate students and professionals in the humanities and social sciences, and for Asian scholars with more than a dilettante's interest in Japan" (Kiefer 1981: 396).

Long, long, engagements with an undergraduate class

In the "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" class, then, not everything Plath explored in *Long Engagements* was covered. The class was not intended for graduate students or for those in Japanese studies. Instead, a few selected theoretical constructs were used while examining the life course in a single case study, the Makioka family: From the book, he drew out for his undergraduate students the concepts of consociates, convoys, cohorts, pathways, perduring self-images, and long-engagements itself. Of course none of these can be conceptualized in isolation, nor do they have much impact out of a context. He explained them as follows:

By *consociates*, Plath means our intimates: friends, lovers, kinsman, colleagues. "If 'associates' are persons you happen to encounter somewhere, sometime, 'consociates' are people you relate with across time and in some degree of intimacy (1980: 8). As we travel together down the river of time we call life, we *convoy* with our consociates, in a continuously evolving, mutually-affecting way, in interchanges that shape, define, and redefine us. We might even say this co-journeying convoy is "the committee or special-interest group that is charged with the promoting and policing any one human life" (p. 136). The main thing to keep in mind, however, is that a convoy is something more, say, than a mere "primary group" or set of "significant others." There is a time-depth implied in a convoy. "And it is these elements that I have tried to underline … by using 'convoys', as a reminder of the long mutual engagements that maturity requires" (p. 223).

When Plath refers to the influence of social generations—that is, for example, like those of the same age—he uses "what the sociologist in his technical vocabulary calls *cohorts*" (p. 116). However, as in the United States, definitions of cohorts are not always easy. For instance, two of his key interviewees were said to be *senzenha*, in the prewar generation, as they both saw military service. But by other reckonings, their seven-year difference in age put them in different Imperial reigns—Taisho and Showa. As people have various stereotypes about those born in, say, the Taisho Period vs. the Showa Period, at times your cohort membership, according to society, might vary. For example, there are similar debates about cohort lines between Gen X, Gen Z, and Millennials in the United States.

Pathways are not just cultural values in general, but the "life-course directives for one's self-realization of these values" (p. 15). In some ways, I see these as somewhat akin to the "patterns" proposed by Benedict discussed earlier. Plath prefers this term instead of the labels like "character" or "personality." He uses the phrase *perduring self-images* to mean the "major guides by which one steers one's personal course (p. 15).

As for l*ong engagement*, this is actually Plath's most subtle theoretical construct. He draws on the work of George Herbert Mead, Kenneth Burke, and Hugh Duncan to examine maturity as a discourse. George Herbert Mead suggests that society is a product of a discourse of a particular kind: collective. And for "Burke and Duncan, all of human life is a grand cosmos of discourse. To live is to engage in a never-ending courtship, an appeal to others and to oneself to act or think or feel in certain ways" (p. 223). Long engagements, then, are the continuous discourses or dialogues—"language *in use*" (p. 223, emphasis original)—between the individual and the cultural symbols that identify, define, evaluate, and reify, experience.

"Culture, Aging, and Maturity" and the four Makioka sisters

These theoretical constructs are best seen in specific examples. One of the first things we brought up when presenting the *The Makioka Sisters* to the class was the various versions of time Tanizaki uses. The first is the "artificial" time—maybe Levi-Strauss would say, "cultural" time—of men's affairs, versus the "natural" time found among women. Men's artificial time lineally centered around things in the public sphere (the economy, politics, war) while women's more natural time revolved around cycles and repetitions (menstruation, childbirth, observing the seasons and marking them with various occasions, marriage arrangements). But during the course of the novel, Yukiko enters the dangerous year, 33, reminding everyone that regardless, time, is a precious resource. Nonetheless, the youngest daughter Taeko says she will not marry out of order, both out of respect for family honor and custom, as well as genuine affection for her sister.

It is obvious that the Ashiya household is Yukiko's convoy. Your convoy judges and authenticates your actions, and gives you legitimacy and an identity. The convoy gives, and reifies, your uniqueness and individuality. Just as you are dependent on *it*, *it* has an investment in you. For example, it is not only shyness that is preventing Yukiko from marrying. The convoy only wants her to marry a man sensitive enough to appreciate her fragile and introverted nature.

As Tanizaki (1957: 8, 18-19) explains in the novel,

> Some, it would appear, look for deep and settled reasons to explain the fact that Yukiko, the third of the four sisters, had passed the marriageable age and reached thirty without a husband. There was in fact no "deep" reason worth the name. … In their hopes of finding Yukiko a worthy husband, they had refused the proposals that in earlier years had showered up on them. No one seemed quite what they wanted. … At first they [the main house] said that, since it was Yukiko's first marriage, it must also be the man's first marriage; presently they conceded that a man who had been married once would be acceptable if he had no children, and then that there should be no more than two children, and even that he might be a year or two older and then Teinosuke, Sachiko's, [the second sister's] husband provided he looked younger. Yukiko herself said that she would marry anyone her brothers-in-law and sisters agreed-upon

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz as a Class Experience

It turned out that *The Makioka Sisters* was a bit of a challenge to teach to a largely American, undergraduate audience, and after several semesters, we realized that much of the book had to be abridged. The last semester or two we had the advantage of being able to show the excellently-acted and beautifully-photographed film version by Ichikawa Kon. But we also had another book that Dr. Plath, with his wisdom and playfulness, also had selected. He sometimes like surprises, and had a well-known acute sense of humor. I had previously read *The Makioka Sisters*, but before the first time we taught the class, Dr. Plath told me we were also using another book, and suggested I go over to the Student Union and ask for a desk copy. You might imagine my reaction when I saw a picture of a lion, a tin man, a scarecrow, and a little girl in pigtails on the cover.

Mercifully, Dr. Plath never mentioned the term *bildungsroman* in class, but he used it with me, assuming I knew what it meant (I didn't). It turns out that he had felt that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was one of America's quintessential *coming-of-age novels*, and thought it would be a great text for the kind of class he hoped "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" might be. I had my doubts initially, having never actually read the book before, but knowing the gist of the story through the general *zeitgeist* of late twentieth-century America. All I remembered was my baby sister being terrified by the flying monkeys watching the movie on TV. And there were a bunch of songs that had become standards. In his book *Totemism* (1963: 89) Levi-Strauss said (according to Needham's translation) that "We can understand, too, that natural species are chosen not because they are 'good to eat' [*bonnes à manger*] but because they are 'good to think' [*bonnes à penser*]." Likewise, Dr. Plath thought that the porcelain figurines of the land of Oz were for "good to think," helping us "express some of the mystery in human cultivation, in the transformations of the ungrown into the grown-up, and making over raw animal into improved human" (1986: 166).

Aging *per se* is not something that is really depicted in any of the forty Oz books, so at first glance it might seem that *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* had little to offer a class on the maturation process. Yes, there are way more than one Oz book, the first being just a start. But the fact that there have been so many sequels, films, musicals, etc., since suggests that author L. Frank Baum's narrative (Baum 1900) has tapped into a "pool of widely held popular ideas" about the yellow brick road of human life. As Plath noted (1986: 174), "Just what ideas are in the pool we can only guess from the appeal of the story itself. And analysis of the pool in any

empirical detail would require the energies of an international battalion of investigators ... I am only suggesting that if the story makes sense … it may be because Dorothy is a believable figure who is struggling to prepare herself for a possible future."

It is almost a foregone conclusion that even the most inattentive student will note that Dorothy has her Plath-ian consociates with her as they convoy along their way together as they go "off to seek the Wizard, the Wonderful Wizard of Oz" (according to hit song). This is of course true. The quartet help each other with all their trials they encounter on their journey. When they meet the Great Wizard, the Lion finds his courage, the Tin Woodman finds his heart, and the Scarecrow, in his quest to find a brain, discovers that he was always smarter than he thought. And Dorothy gets home to Kansas. The immediate interpretation offered by the students, was that all the things we desire are within us, or all around us within our reach. Dorothy could have gotten home to Kansas the minute she got to Oz had she only known that that ability lay at her feet. Courage, intelligence, and love all lie within us (apparently whether you are human or not, or even sentient). In fact, this discovery was made along the way on their journey by each them (with perhaps Dorothy excepted) before they even reached Oz. The Tin Woodsman showed compassion for a trapped field mouse saving him from a wildcat, showing that he really has a heart. The Scarecrow came up with an escape plan he thought up himself, showing that he really had a brain. The Lion stood his ground and his roar warded off danger, showing that he is brave after all.

So, all of the characters find their inner resources inside themselves. It is just matter of believing in one's self enough, learning how discover and foster that inner strength. In fact, this may be the mantra and the real Horatio Alger message. It is *not* that hard work and perseverance are the secret to success. A quick look around shows the poverty of that belief, and for that alone we do not deserve success. We deserve—and obtain—success by having faith in ourselves, and finding our inner strength. As the Army says, "Be all you can be." The corollary of course is, those who are not successful are flawed or lack a character trait in some way. ("If he only had it in 'im …").

These were the immediate conclusions that students were quick to find and point out. But one of Plath's insights was that this is not the main message behind the Oz story. Whether Baum intended it or not, the real message is that everything in *adult* life, at least, is a very two-edged sword, a mixed blessing with advantages and disadvantages. Life is a trade-off. Becoming an adult, for example, is not—just—gaining experience about the world and learning to trust one's self, … and traveling. Adulting—to borrow a Gen Z term—can sometimes be a really dirty business. Consider this interaction when Dorothy meets Oz for the first time:

> OZ: I am Oz, the Great and Terrible. Who are you, and why do you seek me?
> DOROTHY: I am Dorothy, the Small and Meek. I have come to ask you for help.
> OZ: What do you wish me to do?
> DOROTHY: Send me back to Kansas, where my Aunt Em and Uncle Henry are. I don't like your country although it is so beautiful. And I am sure Aunt Em will be dreadfully worried over my being away so long.
> OZ: Why should I do this for you?
> DOROTHY: Because you are strong and I am weak; because you are a Great Wizard I am only helpless little girl.
> OZ: You have no right to expect me to send you back to Kansas unless you do

something for me in return. In this country everyone must pay for everything he gets. Help me and I will help you.
DOROTHY: What I do?
OZ: Kill the Wicked Witch of the West.
(Baum 1900: 129-130, edited into dialogue format)

Even though this scene occurs only around page 130 of a 260-page book, it probably is the most significant part of the book. Here Dorothy learns the first law of adult reciprocity: Help me and I will help you. As Plath notices (1986: 170-171), Dorothy's "part of the bargain is to become a hit woman; she must kill the wicked Witch of the West. She must acknowledge her strength, and she must use that strength to slay, must deliberately do what is wrong even though her actions may be for the sake of a greater good." The four set off, then, on a new quest. But things go badly, and they are captured. In all the chaos of being a prisoner, Dorothy spills a bucket of water on the Wicked Witch, which makes the Witch melt away. Dorothy had no idea of the lethality of water on witches. Nonetheless, she committed negligent-Wiccan-cide, albeit with extenuating circumstances. "She had left the Emerald City with a contract on the Witch, and her actions resulted in the woman's death. And with this self-admission Dorothy moves to a new level of self-assertion" (p. 171). And self-awareness.

Films

Both *The Makioka Sisters* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* were successfully adapted in to other media numerous times. *The Makioka Sisters* was made into a television series some five times, and into film three times, the last by the famous director Ichikawa Kon in 1983. The Oz story has been adapted so many times, and in? so many different formats, it impossible to keep count. In 1902, just a few years after its initial publication, Baum's book became a successful Broadway musical, and three silent feature films followed soon thereafter. Since then, there have been television shows, other musical adaptations, comic books, and numerous foreign language translations. Probably the most iconic and well-known adaption is the 1939 MGM film *The Wizard of Oz* starring Judy Garland.

Both the Ichikawa Kon film and the MGM film are probably the most well-known cinematic versions of their respective novels. It is unfair to expect a two-hour film to be able to faithfully render all the complexities presented in a 530 page or 260 page book. For the most part, however, both these films are close to the broad outlines of the original plots. Nonetheless, there a few subtle differences, which some might say, make rather different stories.

For example, Tuma and Hazell (2012) argue that is a "great difference between the plot, characters, imagery, and ideology" between the Oz book and the film. For instance, Oz is a different place in the book than in the movie. According to Baum, Oz was an actual—though fantastical—venue, with geographical boundaries, and consistent laws of physics and meteorology (some of which were elaborated on in later books in the series). There were ways to ride the winds to get back and forth between Kansas and Oz, even if known only to a chosen few. However, in the film version, MGM made Oz not a real "place" but a figment of Dorothy's imagination. In the tornado that starts the whole adventure, Dorothy hits her head, inducing a delirious dream. All the characters in the land of Oz have real counterparts back in Kansas. For example, the convoying Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion were actually hired hands who worked on Aunt Em's and Uncle Henry's family farm, and who all knew and cared for

Dorothy before the cyclone hit. The "Wizard," it turned out, was a traveling snake oil salesman whom Dorothy met while she was running away from home. The Wicked Witch was a nasty neighbor who wanted her little dog Toto impounded.

Along with this, in the MGM film Dorothy is a damsel in distress, unlike the strong-willed little girl in the book. And the theme that is emphasized in the film is much more singular: "There is no place like home." But maybe there is more? In spite of not being home, Oz is not too bad a place, especially after the Wicked Witch has been eliminated, and the good guys have taken over, overseen by the benevolent Good Witch, Glinda. A utopia, perhaps? If so, in the hard economic times in America, with a depression still lingering in the late 1930s, any talk of a real utopia might have been subversive, even within a children's tale. And what is "home" anyway? Were Aunt Em and Uncle Henry real blood relatives or a foster family?

Likewise, the film *The Makiola Sisters* takes some very deliberate liberties with the novel, the most important one being the feelings of attraction that Teinosuke, the husband of the second sister Sachiko, has for the unmarried Yukiko. This is something that does not appear in the novel. Though a physical relationship never materialized in the film, sexual tension is suggested at the outset in the opening scene, with Teinosuke unabashedly staring while Yukiko delicately eats a snack when he and the three sisters wait for the eldest sister to arrive so they can all go cherry-blossom viewing. Innocently, Teinosuke says that Yukiko naturally eats like a careful geisha—who make sure the tofu squares they eat never rub off their lipstick when they put them in the mouths. While neither Sachiko nor Yukiko pay much attention to this remark, the rather worldly and cynical youngest sister Taeko sarcastically says, "My, aren't you so knowledgeable!" Thus begins a series of small subtle tableaus and spoken innuendos indicating Teinosuke's infatuation for Yukiko is rather deep, climaxing in the final scene when he is seen drinking his pain away in a lonely bar the day Yukiko leaves home to get married.

Showing one or the other of these films was another rhetorical device we used in the "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" class. We discussed how they were more—or less—effective than the novels in helping us reflect on the points made in lectures and discussion sections about adulthood, maturation, and the life-course. Again, this was consistent with the "multi-rhetorical" approach Dr Plath used in *Long Engagements*, mixing ethnography together with fiction. Dr. Plath had also been interested in film as both an anthropological tool and pedagogical device since the 1970s when he worked on various projects with the Asian Educational Media Service and the University of Mid-America as a Senior Content Advisor for the *Japan: The Living Tradition* and *Japan: The Changing Tradition* television series. He had the eye of a cinematographer and as he watched these films with us, he shared his insights. I don't believe he ever repeated a previous semester's comments. For example, most students (and I!) picked up on the obvious symbolism of showing Kansas in black and white, while depicting Oz in Technicolor, in the *Wizard* film. But who else noticed how Dorothy's Toto and Santa Claus's reindeer fly through the air in similar ways? Or what must happen to the "little people" to make them "big people"—i.e. go from Munchkins to human adults? These discussions were often quite fascinating, especially when comparing how the filmmakers changed the novels, and why. We even sometimes heard references to past and contemporary political events like the Iran hostage crisis or Reagan's Contra-Sandinista Scandal in Nicaragua. More than once was a president compared to a wizard.

Dorothy back home in Bloomington

It is fitting that the story of my personal melodrama and long engagement with the Dorothy Gale of the *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* end this piece. This paper is in essence my reconsideration of my own procession along my professional life course which began working under David Plath. When he and I were teaching the "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" class, we were not aware of some of the serendipity that might make our whole endeavor closer to home, at least for me, literally and figuratively.

After teaching Japanese and Japanese Studies in the Institute for Asian Studies at St. John's University in New York City for several years, I had an opportunity to come back to the Midwest when a job offer came up at Illinois State University in Normal to teach anthropology and linguistics. ISU is in many ways the University of Illinois writ small, being about half the size of U of I's 40,000 students. Both are located in "twin cities:" U of I in Champaign-Urbana, ISU in Bloomington-Normal. Both campuses have beautiful quads, close agriculture connections, and sandy-white limestone "castle" buildings constructed around the end of the 19th century during the reign of Governor John Altgeld. Being the public architectural rage of the day, apparently all state land-grant universities in Illinois had one, with some like ours, still in use. I had a huge office in such a building. While I wasn't getting back to Kansas, I was returning to my central Illinois roots. Like Dorothy, I had proven myself to myself. As the song says of New York, if you can make it there, you can make anywhere. I could now go in search of fresh air, cheap rents, and ample parking, all of which are at a premium in the Big Apple.

I met with all my old University of Illinois gang—teachers, friends, bartenders— after my triumphant return; most were unimpressed, or had forgotten that I had been gone. With other consociates we continued our journey, Dr. Plath being one of them. In one of our post-New York conversations, the topic of our old class came up. Dr. Plath said he wasn't teaching it anymore. "I just grew tired of trying to teach freshman and sophomores about death and dying." "But," I countered, "the course is really not about that. It's so much more! It is about maturation and culture, and enculturation, and self-discovery, and process. It is about how we all grow and travel together, and how we *become* adults *to the* point of aging and meeting death." As someone 30-plus years old who still hadn't really decided—or knew—what he wanted to be when he grew up, I felt some embarrassment saying this. Dr. Plath said, that yes, that was all true, but the pedagogical expectations were becoming more proscribed, as well as digitized. "Learning is basically an analog activity, especially 'Great Learning,' "—referring to one of the four classic books in Chinese philosophy, where cultivating a deeper understanding of the world, and one's own moral character, was stressed. This is in contrast to small learning—paying attention to what Confucians feel is more superficial, irrelevant, mundane, and distracting. "And besides, I have never lost a file on my IBM Selectric," Dr. Plath added.

The truth was, however, Dr. Plath was actually becoming more technologically literate, but in another field, turning his attention to the visual media of TV and film documentaries. He taught less, and soon retired, devoting the rest of his life to his new career as filmmaker. My new teaching responsibilities were pretty much all laid out for me, for the immediate future at least: big lecture classes of 300 people on introductory anthropology, and required majors classes in linguistics and social theory. I have always wanted to revitalize a culture, aging, and maturity class, but the opportunity has never arisen. I have resigned myself to never again seeing the look of shock and joy on the faces of students as we read from our required textbook, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. However, ISU has not fired me yet, and my hairline is now such

that my obvious seniority gives me a little more say in what classes I teach. I believe I will try and talk about culture, aging, and maturity to a group of students at least one more time before I get to try and teach Elvis the fine points of phonemic theory.

In one of my previous writing endeavors, I thanked Dr. Plath for his help through the years, and that I was still often truly amazed at the lessons he imparted to me on not only "culture"—that was his job, after all!—but also about "aging" and "maturity." I am no longer the boy-wonder at ISU, and in fact, one of these days, they may "thank me for my service" as they point me out the door. I have no doubt aged. As for maturity, those closest to me will tell you that the jury is still out. But I do know that due to some unknown good deed in a previous life I was blessed to be able to work with Dr. Plath at a critical time in both my professional and personal life. They say kids are impressionable, but to my mind, no one is more confused than a mid-stage graduate student. I can only be grateful to whatever powers that be that I could work with Dr. Plath in the capacity I did. If I am any kind of good teacher today (in spite of those student evaluations that claim otherwise), it is largely due to his influence, and the example that he set.

And if I am any kind of decent human being, Dr. Plath contributed much to that as well. They say that one advantage of getting older is that you discover that few things in life are black and white. And sometimes not even grey. I continue to be surprised how this simple and obvious lesson is so often ignored, or dismissed. Many of Dr. Plath's witticisms – might I even say, words of wisdom? – which were sprinkled daily in class, come back to haunt me.

But I am also surprised how often the words of Sachiko Makioka, the Cowardly Lion, or little Dorothy linger in my mind as well. Which brings me to one final act of reminiscence. Dr. Plath also taught that we should enjoy the serendipity of life, and its wonderful Jungian synchronicities. After it was pretty clear that I would not be teaching a "Culture, Aging, and Maturity" class for the foreseeable future, I thought Dorothy was out of my life, at least for a while, if not forever. It turns out that life courses are full of wonderful surprises, big and small.

Dorothy Louise Gage was born in Bloomington, Illinois, on Saturday, June 11 1898, the first daughter of Sophie (Jewell) Gage and Thomas Gage. The family lived at a house that is still standing here in town. Five months after her birth, Dorothy was struck down suddenly with some kind of inflammation of the brain. The young family was heartbroken, especially the mother's sister-on-law, Maud (Gage) Baum, who wrote that she "could have taken [Dorothy] for [her] very own and loved her devotedly" (Elleson 2016). Dorothy was buried in Bloomington on November 16, 1898. Maud's husband, Dorothy's uncle, was L. Frank Baum.

Baum was the author of numerous children's books, including, of course, the later series of fourteen full-length books written from 1900 to 1920 set in the land of Oz. He and Maud had always wanted a baby girl (but instead they had a houseful of four boys). He decided to immortalize the name of Dorothy in his next children's fantasy, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,* taking poetic license changing her name from Dorothy Gage to Dorothy Gale. (These last names are in mentioned in the third book, *Ozma of Oz* – Dorothy being "one of the Gales from Kansas"—being an obvious windy semiotic pun). Unbeknownst to David Plath or me at the time we were teaching classes, Dorothy's own yellow brick road ends in Bloomington (as one local newspaper account describes it). She is buried here in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery at a site that was all but forgotten for some seventy years.

Dorothy's grave was discovered by an historian actually doing research on Maud's mother, a noted suffragette and associate of Susan B. Anthony. After this, Micky Carroll, an actor who played a Munchkin in the 1939 Judy Garland film, donated a new tombstone on May 31, 1997, and now the cemetery has a new children's section named "The Dorothy L. Gage Memorial Garden" (Elleson 2016). The house that was the Gage place (at 1008 North McLean Street) is now the Oz House Airbnb (https://www.facebook.com/ChaunceyCenteral/).

As said on the McLean County Museum of History's website, "Though her life was cut short, Dorothy Louise Gage has been immortalized through the tale of a young farm girl who traveled to Oz. L. Frank Baum ensured that her memory lives on by providing a gateway to her life through an extension of the young girl she may have become." (Elleson 2016).

David Plath said (1986: 175) that the adults in Kanas have learned to operate in accord with what Edward Sapir termed "the useful tyranny of the normal." That is, they have learned a certain "reality principle," and cultural—dare I say, it?—norms. Perhaps this is why everything in Kansas looks so grey compared to Oz. But Sapir also said they while cultural anthropology doesn't "deny the validity of the concept 'normal behavior' … [and] … cannot deny the useful tyranny of the normal in a given society … it believes the external form of normal adjustment to be an exceedingly elastic thing" (1932 [1985]: 235). So I wonder if Dorothy—who, in spite of all her adventures and adversities, and now rests peacefully here in Bloomington—has come back to Normal? David Plath, with all his love of wordplay and whimsy and verbal dexterity would probably think so.

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