

## Colonizing the Nonestic Ocean: Sweet Dictators and Imperial Pirates in L. Frank Baum's *Glinda of Oz* (1920) and Ruth Plumly Thompson's *Captain Salt in Oz* (1936)

In 1921, one year after the posthumous publication of L. Frank Baum's fourteenth book length "Oz" story, his publisher, Reilly & Lee, released *The Royal Book of Oz*, the first of nineteen additional sequels by Ruth Plumly Thompson which would appear every year through 1939. As many critics have noted, Thompson helped keep "Oz" alive as a marketable commodity, satisfying young readers' expectations of a new "Oz" book every Christmas. These new sequels share many surface similarities to Baum's originals, featuring explorations of new magical kingdoms in the fictitious Nonestic Ocean and/or battles to fight off would-be conquerors of Oz. Nevertheless, on closer examination, there are some rather marked literary and ideological differences between "Oz" as interpreted by Baum and Thompson, which may account for Baum's more enduring popularity and continued interest among scholars.

At times, Baum's books seem contradictory, particularly in apparent attitudes towards politics, racial and social equality, and gender roles. However, in spite of occasional lapses, Baum's "Oz" strives to be a utopia in which all individuals—regardless of class, race, or gender—are valued. Ironically, Thompson's "Oz" privileges the upper classes, branding various racial groups as "other," and values males over females—undermining the primarily matriarchal government of "Oz." An examination of Baum's *Glinda of Oz* and Thompson's *Captain Salt in Oz*, books with similar overall plots, highlights Thompson's transformation of Baum's Utopia into a land intent on "taking possession of new countries" and setting "the flag of Oz on far islands and mountain tops."