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Comparative Paper

The Wizard of Oz: Book by L. Frank Baum and Film by Victor Fleming

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is a true American fairy tale written by L. Frank published in 1900, while the film adaptation by Victor Fleming made its debut in 1939. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* follows the misadventures of Dorothy and her dog Toto, who are picked up in a tornado that lands in Oz. There they meet a scarecrow, a tin woodsman, and a cowardly lion together they set off on a journey to Emerald City. Each of them seeking some help for their inadequacy's a brain, a heart, courage, and finding the way back home. *The Wizard of Oz* film by Victor Fleming is an adaptation film that chronicles the characters and themes in Baum's novel. However, both the book and the movie have various differences in explaining the internal and external obstacles they faced and providing a look at the unconventional use of a female heroine.

Baum's novel describes a terrifying scene of Dorothy being gulped by a cyclone whisking her away from her uncle and aunt farm Kansas, she is thrust into a strange and magical world of wizards and witches. In the film a tornado does indeed come tearing through the farm there Dorothy takes refuge inside and is knocked unconscious sending her into the dreamland which is Oz. Upon arrival Dorothy unintentionally kills the cruel Witch of the East, which leads us to the next comparison the slippers. As written by Baum "*two feet were sticking out, shod in silver shoes hoes with pointed toes.*" (Pg. 22) Therefore the magic slippers Dorothy picks up in Oz are silver. Unlike in the film the slippers ruby red, the reasoning behind it was that the filmed better against

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the yellow brick road, not knowing the power that she possessed. In Flemings version Dorothy goes skipping her off crossing paths with travel companions, The Scarecrow, The Tinman, and the Lion. What the book offers, is more in-depth look of the characters' back stories, most striking the tale of lost love and dismemberment suffered by Tin Woodman. There are also a lot of other creatures and strange lands Dorothy encountered in the book, The Stork, the Queen of the Field Mice, tinted spectacles used in Emerald City, the goodness of the flying monkeys, the Golden Cap, the Dainty China Country, etc.

Although there are several differences, the similarities are many and visible. Both Fleming and Baum visions displayed similar perspectives about female authority the entire country was governed by the Witches of the North South East and West. Baum's version of Dorothy which translated on the screen as an all-American girl literally straight off farm in Kansas. Dorothy is a brave, heroic character with a take charge attitude with the ability of fighting her own battles despite being a child. Notably when Dorothy reaches The Wizard and request her wish of wanting to go home, in order for it to be "granted" she is tasked to descend on a murderous mission to destroy the Wicked Witch of the West. Although he was "powerful," the Wizard possessed nothing and was soon exposed for the fraud. Dorothy's destruction of the witch derived in two different fashions Baum's rendition it transpired through a fit thrown after one of her slippers was taken, and Fleming depiction of her trying to save her new friend The Scarecrow, similarly a splash of water was the weapon. Through all the adversities faced Dorothy committed to the quest eventually finding her way home. This story also has an inspirational message for children, especially young girls' teaching the importance of having self-confidence, and self-reliance.

To conclude, the similarities still maintain the overall theme of self-sufficiency, with some differences arising in characterization, plot, and setting. Fleming's film covers the crucial elements

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of the story, characters, themes, and setting in the novel in a condensed form. The film director ensures almost everything is done according to the book. The comparisons offered by the essay is worth noting although the book might be dated, it is relevant in today cultural climate.

Encouraging women of all ages through lasting impress that in a male dominated world, woman are a mighty force that leads the way just like the cyclone and Dorothy.

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References

Baum, L. F. (1900). *The wonderful wizard of oz*. Oxford University Press.

"The Wizard of Oz (1939)."