

I must admit that I was very surprised to read the book version of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and to find out that a book version existed in the first place! I had loved the movie growing up and remember acting out many of the scenes with my sister, especially skipping down the street while singing ‘you’re off to see the wizard, the wonderful wizard of oz...’ I was most surprised by many of the differences between the book and movie.

After reading the book and watching the movie again I noticed that Dorothy appeared to be a lot older in the movie version. In the book, she is usually referred to as a young child, or young girl, but her age is never really given. In the movie I would say that she would pass as being 15 or 16. I think this difference was made in part due to the beginning when Dorothy wants to find her heart’s desire and decides to run away. With Dorothy being older, than say 6 or 7, it was easier to believe that she would run away because she was unhappy. This also helped set in motion the overall theme of the book which is of course “there is no place like home.

Another major difference between the book and movie was the introduction to each character. In the book, the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion tell stories of how they became what they are and why they seek a brain, heart or courage. The Tin Man’s story is quite gruesome with finding out that his legs and arms were chopped off one by one due to a curse on his axe and then replaced by tin ones. If that isn’t gruesome enough, he goes on to tell how his head was chopped off and then his body chopped in half. I was quite shocked to read this, knowing that this is a children’s fairytale and then remembered that most in fact are pretty gruesome. I really enjoyed how the movie introduced each of the characters. Of course we first meet each character

of the story in the beginning of the movie and see how they are related to Dorothy's life; the men working on her farm, her neighbor, and the Marvelous Marvel. They each foreshadow who they represent, which was clearer seeing it this time around. What the movie really succeeded in doing was turning the story into a Musical. This is how each character told Dorothy why they wanted what they were seeking. The Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion each sang to the same tune. This change helps lighten up the mood in the movie.

In the book the Wicked Witch of the West (who lives in the Country of the Winkies) was not really a main part of the story until the Wizard of Oz sent Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion to kill her. Even then, the Witch sent wolves, wild crows, and bees after them. When this happened in the book, it was described how the Tin Man chopped the heads off the wolves and how the Scarecrow snapped the necks of the wild crows (and later how the Lion clawed off the Spider's head in the forest). It is clear to see why these parts of the book were left out, the message being less violence and frightening scenes. The Wicked Witch was also less traditional in the way she appeared in the book, having one eye and carrying around an umbrella. In the movie she is a more prominent character and looks more like how witches are described and perceived in contemporary culture; black robe, black pointed hat, broomstick, green face, wicked laugh. The Witch happened to be sisters with the Wicked Witch of the East and became quite angry when she learned Dorothy had killed her. The Witch follows Dorothy on her quest to the Emerald City and continually tries to prevent her from succeeding. The Wizard of Oz also changes his request in the movie to just having Dorothy bring the broomstick of the Wicked Witch of the West. Again the message here is implied and stated by the Scarecrow that the Witch would have to be killed, but the Wizard never actually tells Dorothy she needs to kill another person.

In the book there are two separate Witches for the North and South, both being good witches. The Witch of the North meets Dorothy in munchkin land and Dorothy has to travel to see Glinda, the Witch of the South. In the movie they combined these two witches into one, being Glinda the good Witch of the North. In the book the Witch of the North was much older, with wrinkly skin and in the movie Glinda was young and beautiful (more like the description for Glinda in the book). I believe the witches were combined for convenience and the younger more beautiful witch chosen to represent good witches as beautiful and evil witches as ugly.

Another main difference was towards the end when Dorothy found out the true magic of her ruby slippers (versus silver shoes from the book). In the book Dorothy clicked her heels together three times and said “take me home to Aunt Em” and in the movie Dorothy clicked her heels together three times and repeated “there’s no place like home”. I think this was done to put more emphasis on the overall theme of both the book and movie.

One of the last changes that I thought was a substantial difference was the ending. In the book, Dorothy returned to Kansas to find a new farm house built by her Uncle Henry and Aunt Em wondering ‘where in the world she had come from’. From the way the book ended, you would assume that she really did go to the Land of Oz. In the movie, Dorothy awoke on her bed with a wet cloth on her head to suggest a fever. All of her family and friends were around her and just suggested to her that it was a bad dream she had encountered. This change still does not change the overall theme of the book that there is no place like home, but the message that strange lands can only be visited in your dreams or imagination, not in real life.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz takes us on a journey in which Dorothy tries to find her way home. Through this episodic plot, we are able to get a better idea of who the characters really are, what they are thinking and how they are feeling. The author is able to help his audience understand why certain things happen or to explain how certain things would look. We see the characters face different challenges (in nearly every chapter) on the way to Oz and also when finding the Wicked Witch. Each chapter builds us up on a dilemma and then provides a resolution not too long after.

After reading the book I actually understood why the scenes set in Kansas in the movie were sepia color. The setting is an integral part of this story. L. Frank Baum does a great job describing how Dorothy feels. We start off at the farm in Kansas, where Dorothy explains everything as gray; the ground, the grass, the house and even Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. Everything was gray, dull, bleak, and boring. There was no laughter from Aunt Em and Uncle Henry and no life in them. The Land of Oz is bright colored and magical, full of life and fun. Having color in your life provides for adventure but doesn't necessarily make you happy.

Through the book we are able to get a good description of the characters. L. Frank Baum does a great job of incorporating both round and flat characters into the story. Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion are all well developed characters where we learn about their life and what they long to have. The Wicked Witch helps add conflict to the plot and the Good Witch of the North and Glinda help to offset that and balance out the good and evil. They are less developed in the story though and do not prove to be the main characters.

The style is one of the most significant aspects that the book can provide that the movie cannot. Here L. Frank Baum is able to use figurative language to engage his readers and teach

them morals and lessons. We learn humility from Dorothy, in the way she acts towards the munchkins, and even the witches. She also presents states this to the Wizard when she announces herself as “I am Dorothy, the Small and Meek.” (pg 127) Through the actions of the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion we learn that they already possess what they each seek but do not realize it. The Scarecrow but finding solutions to most of their problems, the Tin Man not wanting to hurt anyone or anything and the Lion by willing to fight to save his friends from the Kalidahs. Through these characters, Baum tells us that each of us have many different qualities, even if we don’t know it, and you don’t need anyone else to assure you of it.

Through the movie we are able to see firsthand how the color can affect how one feels. I wasn’t exactly sure why the shoes were changed from silver shoes in the book to ruby slippers. I did a search online and came to find out that the reason was to show off the new *Technicolor* color film process. Through using this process when filming, the film was able to show the audience how Dorothy felt at first, with her life being gray and dull, and then transitioning to enter the Land of Oz where everything became colorful, bright and lively.

The movie could also help manipulate different feelings through the addition of music. When we first see Miss Gulch, the neighbor, we hear the fast paced high pitched ‘witch music’. We hear the music again when we see Miss Gulch in the tornado transforming from being on her bike to turning into the Wicked Witch on her broomstick. The music helps us to associate her as being evil and someone to dislike. The songs that Dorothy sings (except for *Somewhere over the Rainbow*) and her companions sing are cheerful, lively and catchy.

The film also provides a chance for us to see many different scenes versus a few illustrations in the book. We are able to go from Kansas to Munchkin Land and through the

forest and poppy fields to the Emerald City and so forth. The film transitions with a cut to a black screen and then back again with a new scene. I didn't really notice any fade out's or dissolves in the movie, which helps to show when that the movie was filmed awhile ago. We are also able to see what it might look like inside the cyclone. We are looking out the window through Dorothy's point of view and watching different animals and objects flying past.

Upon looking at the illustrations in the book, it is easy to see that many of the images and pictures were used in the movie. The picture of Dorothy holding Toto (pg 16) while lying on the bed inside the cyclone was pretty much the same in the movie, as well as how the Scarecrow and Tin Man looked. I thought the movie did an excellent job of portraying the Tin Man and Scarecrow and I'm glad that it was easy to see their facial expressions. In the book the Scarecrow is not able to move his mouth. I think this would have been a bit more frightening if it was portrayed the same in the movie. With these two, and even the Lion, actually looking as though the three farmers in the beginning had turned into them, it was easier to become engulfed in Dorothy's fantasy or dream or adventure.

I think that the movie became more of a classic than the book. I don't know how long the book stayed as a favorite American fairytale, but I do know that I had never known there was a book and all of my friends I've asked had also never known this. It is safe to say that these same friends have seen the movie though. I mentioned earlier why I felt a lot of the changes made from the book were done in order to make the movie more suitable and appropriate for contemporary culture. The movie is definitely better represented in popular culture and has stayed popular for many years. In my personal opinion, I believe that is because as society changed, parents no longer wanted to read (or have their children read) fairytales that included frightening aspects (such as tornados carrying you off to another land) and violence. In saying

this, I am keeping in mind what age group I assume this book was intended for, perhaps 5 and 6 year olds? I certainly wouldn't even consider reading this book cover to cover as is to any child younger than this, or even 5 or 6 for that matter. I think as far as popular culture goes, parents still want to have their young children not be exposed to too much violence at a young age (hopefully) and the movie was able to present this better. The movie flows in a light hearted manner and can capture the theme of the book in a less violent way. With the songs and certain phrases, that on their own have become important to our pop culture (Somewhere over the Rainbow; 'Lions and tigers and bears, oh my') the movie is bound to stay around for awhile longer, even if it does continue to lose popularity.