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Prospectus for The Wizard of Oz

For my research paper I would like to analyze the film The Wizard of Oz. This film entails the story of a girl named Dorothy who endures a tornado storm and ends up in the land of Oz. While in the land of Oz, Dorothy meets people along the way who share a common goal with her. She meets, a tin man, a scarecrow, and a lion. They all want something that they think only the Wizard of Oz can give them. This conflict sets the stage for the hoax of the Wizard of Oz.

This film is interesting to analyze because it has a different intent compared to other hoaxes we’ve read in class. The main intent is not to fool the audience into believing the hoax of the Wizard of Oz, it is to entertain them with Dorothy’s journey back home. Although the plot centers around the hoax itself, that is not the main focus for the director.

The research question I would like to ask is, how is the screenwriter disrupting hoax tropes to influence the audience. This question is significant to this film because the layout of the story surrounding the hoax is unorthodox compared to other stories. In other stories, there is an aspect of skepticism concerning whether the hoax is real or not. In the Wizard of Oz, that aspect is not the forefront issue the audience is concerned about. The thought of the Wizard being fake does not cross their mind, which is what makes this hoax so unique and believable. To answer this question, I plan to use evidence of the director’s use of multiple characters, another story line, Dorothy vs the wicked witch, and the effect these techniques have on the audience. Secondly, I plan to research what was happening in the world during the time the movie was made. Doing this will give me a better sense of the audience the director is intending to target. It also will give me an idea of the influence of historical events on the making of this movie. Thirdly, I plan to research the author of the Wizard of Oz books. Even though I am doing my analysis on the film, I want to find out the intentions of the man who originally created the story. I want to research his background and find out his influences on the story. What aspects of his life made an impact on the lay out of the story and the different nuances he used to create it? Lastly, I plan to research reviews of the movie and reactions from the audience. Did the author and director achieve the effect they wanted. If so, why were they able to achieve this effect and how did they do it?