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The Symbolism of Color in the Novels of Oz's by Frank L Baum

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Abstract

*This article explores about the various elements of colour in imaginative fantasy world of oz. The novels comprising the Land of Oz series penned by Frank L. Baum have captivated readers for generations with their fantastical settings and memorable characters. Amidst the whimsy and adventure, Baum intricately weaves a rich tapestry of colour symbolism, serving as a powerful narrative device throughout the series. This paper delves into the profound significance of colour within Baum's works, *The wonderful wizard of oz*, *The emerald city of oz*, and *The Glinda of oz*, exploring how specific hues are employed to convey themes, character traits, and narrative elements. This paper examines the multifaceted roles of colour symbolism in shaping the reader's interpretation and understanding of the Land of Oz. By dissecting the symbolic meanings behind colours such as yellow, green, and red, this article illuminates Baum's deliberate use of colour as a tool for enhancing the depth and complexity of his storytelling. This paper contributes to a deeper appreciation and interpretation of Baum's enduring literary legacy in the symbolism of colour.*

Keywords: Colour Symbolism, Literary Analysis, Narrative Device.

Introduction

Lyman Frank Baum was an American author who was best known for his children's book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. He was born on May 15, 1856, in Chittenango, New York, and Frank Baum led a modernized life filled with creativity and storytelling. He came from a strong entrepreneurial family, and his early years filled with a variety of endeavours, from poultry farming to managing a theatre. These multiple experiences influenced his imaginative story writing. He wrote numerous fantasy works, particularly *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is part of series. In addition to the 14 Oz books, Frank Baum wrote 41 Novels, 83 Short stories, 200 poems and 42 scripts. He also made numerous attempts to bring his work to the stage and screen.

In *The Wonderful Wizard of oz* and sequels like the emerald city of oz and Glinda of oz colours play significant symbolic roles, often reflecting various themes and character traits. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum is often interpreted as an allegory for self-discovery and enlightenment, with the yellow brick road symbolizing the path to personal growth and realization. In the story, Dorothy

embarks on a journey along the yellow brick road to reach the Emerald City, where she hopes to find the Wizard who can help her return home. Along the way, she encounters various challenges and meets new friends who assist her on her journey. The yellow brick road represents the journey of self-discovery, filled with obstacles and trials that one must overcome to attain enlightenment. Each character Dorothy encounters represents different aspects of her own personality or challenges she must face in order to grow. Ultimately, Dorothy discovers that the power to achieve her goals was within her all along, mirroring the theme of self-discovery and inner strength. Just as Dorothy follows the yellow brick road to find her way home, individuals in real life may embark on their own journeys of self-discovery and enlightenment, navigating through challenges and experiences to find their true selves and purpose.

Colour Symbols in Baum's Works

Dorothy's connection with Scarecrow is characterized by her admiration for his problem solving ability and his quest for a brain and scarecrow said to Dorothy as "No, indeed; I don't know anything. You see, I am stuffed, so I have no brains at all," he answered sadly. (Baum 38). Dorothy is moved by Tin Woodman's empathy and kindness. The Cowardly Lion and Dorothy's friendship highlights the theme of courage. Toto, her dog serves as her constant companion. These relationships illustrate the power of friendship where each character seeks something external and internal qualities, and their bond with one another. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* captures the heart and in the vivid picturization of the readers with better themes

Baum's deliberate use of colour symbolism is evident throughout the Land of Oz series, with various hues carrying distinct meanings and associations. One of the most prominent examples is the colour yellow, which recurs frequently in the form of the Yellow Brick Road that guides Dorothy on her journey. Symbolizing the path to enlightenment and self-discovery, the yellow bricks represent the quest for truth and inner transformation. Similarly, the colour green, epitomized by the Emerald City and its ruler, the Wizard of Oz, signifies growth, renewal, and the pursuit of wisdom. Through Dorothy encounters with these green-hued elements, Baum underscores the importance of personal growth and the search for authenticity. The green, yellow, red and blue plays a vital role in colour symbolism of Baum's works.

Green the Emerald City illusion refers to the iconic Emerald City from L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The Emerald City is a central location in the story, described as a magnificent, green city that dazzles visitors with its beauty. However, it is later revealed to be an illusion created by green-tinted glasses given to all who enter the city, making everything appear green. This illusion reflects themes of deception and the idea that things are not always as they seem, which are prevalent throughout the novel.

Green, The Emerald City Illusion is a theatrical production that draws inspiration from L. Frank Baum's *The Emerald City of Oz*, which was first published in 1910. It likely explores themes and elements from Baum's imaginative world, particularly focusing on the iconic Emerald City and its illusions. In *The Emerald City of Oz* (1910), the characters Blue, Loyalty, Scarecrow, and Tin are part of the wonderful world created by L. Frank Baum. Blue is likely a reference to the Blue City, one of the colourful areas of Oz, while Loyalty could be associated with the themes of friendship and loyalty prevalent throughout the series. The Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman are two iconic characters who accompany Dorothy on her adventures in the Land of Oz. The Scarecrow is wise but lacks a brain, while the Tin Woodman is kind-hearted but lacks a heart. Together, they embody different aspects of humanity and friendship.

The Emerald City illusion is a popular concept from L. Frank Baum's book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and its subsequent sequels, including "The Glinda of Oz" published in 1920. In the

stories, the Emerald City is portrayed as a magnificent and vibrant place, dazzling visitors with its green architecture and opulence. It serves as a central location in the Land of Oz and is ruled by the Wizard, later Princess Ozma. The illusion aspect comes from the fact that the city appears green due to everyone wearing green-tinted glasses provided by the city's ruler, making everything seem emerald-coloured. This symbolizes the idea of perception and reality, as the true nature of the city is concealed by the glasses until they are removed. This illusionary aspect adds depth to the themes of the stories, exploring concepts of deception, power, and the search for truth.

Blue Loyalty, This character could represent the loyal and steadfast nature of Dorothy's companions, particularly the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow. "Blue" might symbolize trust worthiness or constancy, highlighting the unwavering support these characters offer Dorothy on her journey to the Emerald City. Scarecrow, The Scarecrow is one of Dorothy's companions she meets on the yellow brick road. He desires a brain, as he believes he lacks intelligence. Throughout the story, he demonstrates wisdom and cleverness despite not having a formal brain. He represents the idea that intelligence comes in many forms and that having a heart is more important than having a brain. Tin Woodman, The Tin Woodman, also known as the Tin Man, is another of Dorothy's companions. He seeks a heart, as he believes he lacks compassion and empathy due to his metal exterior. However, throughout the story, he proves himself to be one of the most compassionate characters, demonstrating that one's capacity to love is not determined by physical attributes. These characters, along with the Cowardly Lion, represent different aspects of human nature and serve as companions and guides for Dorothy on her journey to find the Wizard of Oz. The Wicked Witch of the West is a classic villain from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. She's known for her green skin, pointy hat, and broomstick, and she's one of the primary antagonists Dorothy encounters on her journey.

The character Omby Amby from *The Emerald City of Oz*, which was published in 1910 by L. Frank Baum. Omby Amby is portrayed as a loyal servant to Princess Ozma in the Land of Oz. He symbolizes purity and goodness through his steadfast loyalty and dedication to his duties. The characters from L. Frank Baum's *The Emerald City of Oz*. In the story, Princess Ozma rules over the Emerald City with wisdom and royalty, and she is associated with the colour purple

In *The Glinda of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, purple is often associated with royalty and wisdom, especially in the character of Ozma. As the ruler of Oz, Ozma embodies both regal authority and profound wisdom, which are symbolized by her attire and the colours associated with her. Purple, traditionally associated with royalty, underscores Ozma's status as the rightful ruler of the land. Additionally, it signifies her wisdom and fairness in governing the realm, reflecting her ability to make just and wise decisions for the benefit of her subjects.

The yellow brick road in *The Wizard of Oz* has been interpreted in various ways, including symbolizing the path to enlightenment and self-discovery. It represents the journey Dorothy takes to find her true self and inner strength, encountering challenges and learning valuable lessons along the way. Just as the characters in the story seek wisdom and fulfilment in the Emerald City, individuals on their own personal journeys seek understanding and growth.

In *The Glinda of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, the yellow brick road represents a journey of enlightenment and self-discovery for the characters. Just like in *The Wizard of Oz*, where Dorothy follows the yellow brick road to find the Wizard, the characters in *The Glinda of Oz* embark on a similar path, facing challenges and learning important lessons along the way. The symbolism of the yellow brick road highlights the idea that the journey itself is often more valuable than the destination, as it allows individuals to grow and discover their true selves.

Red-Danger, Wicked Witch of the West could be a modern retelling or reinterpretation of L. Frank Baum's *The Glinda of Oz*, where the character Red-Danger takes on the role of the

antagonist, embodying the wickedness and malevolence associated with the Wicked Witch of the West from Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. In this adaptation, Red-Danger could be portrayed as a formidable foe, utilizing dark magic and cunning schemes to thwart Glinda and her companions on their journey through the magical Land of Oz. The story could explore themes of power, redemption, and the battle between good and evil in a fresh and contemporary way.

In Baum's Oz novels, colour serves as a powerful symbol, often representing various themes and concepts. The vivid hues of the Land of Oz itself, such as the yellow brick road and the Emerald City, are emblematic of the fantastical nature of Baum's world and the journey of self-discovery undertaken by his characters. Each colour encountered by Dorothy and her companions carries its own significance, from the cowardly lion's quest for courage represented by the colour yellow, to the wisdom and intelligence embodied by the Scarecrow's desire for a brain, symbolized by the colour blue. Through the use of colour symbolism, Baum adds depth and layers of meaning to his tales, inviting readers to explore the rich tapestry of themes woven throughout his iconic series.

Baum masterfully imbues his narratives with vivid descriptions of colour, painting a rich tapestry that captivates readers of all ages. In "*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*," Dorothy's first glimpse of the Emerald City encapsulates the awe-inspiring power of colour: "The sun shone upon the bright green land of the Emerald City, and the sight banished all sorrow from her heart." This evocative imagery not only transports readers to the fantastical world of Oz but also underscores the symbolic significance of colour in Baum's storytelling. Moreover, when the Scarecrow ponders his desire for a brain, he muses, "Only people without brains would think of such a thing as digging up the road." This simple yet profound observation highlights the thematic depth woven into Baum's narrative, where colour serves as a conduit for exploring complex themes such as courage, wisdom, and self-discovery.

In addition to yellow and green, Baum employs other colours to enrich his narratives and deepen the reader's engagement with his fictional world. For instance, the colour red, embodied by characters like the Wicked Witch of the West and her ruby slippers, conveys themes of power, passion, and danger. By contrasting the red of the witch's malevolent presence with the innocence of Dorothy's ruby footwear, Baum underscores the transformative potential of goodness and courage.

Interplay of Colour and Character

Beyond their symbolic significance, colours in Baum's novels are intricately linked to the characterization of key figures. Take, for example, the Scarecrow, whose primary colour is straw-yellow. While initially perceived as lacking intelligence due to his straw-filled form, the Scarecrow proves himself to be wise and resourceful throughout Dorothy's journey. Through this juxtaposition of appearance and reality, Baum challenges stereotypes and underscores the importance of looking beyond surface impressions.

Similarly, the character of the Tin Woodman, with his metallic silver exterior, symbolizes resilience and endurance. Despite his outwardly rigid appearance, the Tin Woodman possesses a tender heart and deep capacity for love, highlighting the disconnect between external appearances and inner qualities. By associating characters with specific colours, Baum adds nuance and complexity to his storytelling, inviting readers to contemplate the nature of identity and perception.

Cultural and Historical Context

To reward the Baum's use of colour symbolism, it is essential to consider the cultural and historical context in which his novels were written. Published at the turn of the 20th century, the Land of Oz series emerged during a period of rapid social and technological change. Against this

backdrop, Baum's imaginative portrayal of a fantastical realm filled with vibrant colours served as a form of escapism for readers grappling with the uncertainties of modernity.

Moreover, Baum's incorporation of colour symbolism may have been influenced by contemporary artistic movements such as symbolism and surrealism, which sought to convey abstract concepts through visual imagery. By drawing upon these artistic currents, Baum infuses his novels with a timeless quality that resonates with readers across generations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the symbolism of colour in Frank L. Baum's novels plays a crucial role in shaping the reader's interpretation and understanding of the Land of Oz. Through the strategic use of colour imagery, Baum enriches his narratives with themes of growth, transformation, and identity. Moreover, by interweaving colour symbolism with character development and plot progression, Baum creates a cohesive and immersive fictional world that continues to captivate readers to this day. As we delve deeper into the colourful tapestry of Baum's imagination, we gain a deeper appreciation for the enduring power and relevance of his literary legacy.

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