The Zen Of Oz Essay, Research Paper

Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, a Zen master? The Tin Man an enlightenment seeker? ?Follow the Yellow Brick Road? a mantra?

Joey Green?s, The Zen of Oz, is a witty, whimsical, and surprisingly insightful introduction to Eastern Philosophy via one of the world?s most beloved movies. It delivers universal truths in a charming, non-preachy, fashion allowing you to explore Dorothy?s yellow brick road, as well as your own.

Along the way, you will discover original song lyrics, your favorite dialogue, all of the charming characters, and the amazing scenes from the motion picture, The Wizard of Oz, illustrated in a Japanese style.

Green investigates deeper interpretations, and portrayals of many aspects of the tale of Oz, and tries to establish a truth. He lays out ten spiritual lessons in an attempt to bring the story of The Wizard of Oz, as well as yourself, closer to uncovering the purpose to life, as well as to establish a relationship between the character?s experiences and your own. He offers the reader guidance, and uses the characters from the motion picture, not just to entertain, but to enlighten. Each section is filled with wonderful ideas and stories which seek to inspire audiences into finding their own spiritual enlightenment.

Does The Wizard of Oz touch a spiritual chord in all of us? Glinda, the Good Witch, is clearly a Zen master who sets Dorothy out on the Yellow Brick Road to self-awareness. When she is joined by the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion, they must all let go of their conscious leaning and free their minds to achieve a brain, a heart and courage, effortlessly. However, Dorothy?s achievement is far greater than that of the rest. She encounters her true Self, her ?Oneness with the cosmos,? (pg. 43), attains satori, the Zen experience of ?awakening? ? and ultimately, her home.

?Your happiness is

determined by your karma.? (pg.21) Right away, Green opens with some spiritual advice from over the rainbow. He embarks on a mission to explore the Law of Karma, ?what goes around comes around?, and how Isaac Newton put it, ? for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.? Simply, every choice you make has a consequence, whether or not you make that choice consciously. ?Whenever you face a choice, consider the consequences of that choice.? Will the consequences nourish happiness? Green believes that the innermost essence, ?your true self?, will alone know the answer, and that, that choice will bring you good karma. Like Dorothy, if you go through life making unconscious choices and running away from your problems, you will have to deal with the karmic consequences.

Green dives deeper into the story line to examine different characters and their buried meanings. He explores Glinda, the Good witch of the North, and aspires to breakdown her reasoning. He begins at the point where Dorothy is introduced to this character for the first time. Immediately Dorothy is asked, ?Are you a good witch or a bad witch?? Appalled by her question, Dorothy replies, ?Well I?m not a witch at all. Witches are old and ugly.? As the munchkins giggle, Glinda explains, ?They?re laughing because I am witch.? ?You are? Oh, I beg your pardon!? Replies Dorothy, ?but I?ve never heard of a beautiful witch before.? ?Only bad witches are ugly,? explains Glinda.

So, if only bad witches are ugly, as Glinda asserts, why then does she ask Dorothy if she is a good witch or a bad witch? Does Glinda consider Dorothy to be ugly? Or is Glinda talking about inner beauty and inner ugliness? What determines the inner beauty/ugliness that separates a good witch from a bad witch? Could Glinda be planting that question in Dorothy?s head to give her something to ponder while travelling down the Yellow brick road? Are you good or evil? Green distinguishes between good and evil by declaring that good is when you ?drop your leadership skills to help others get in touch with their true power.? (Pg. 109) On the other hand, the Wicked Witch of the West, is the perfect representation of evil. She refuses to give up control, is convinced that she can dominate everything and soon self-destructs. He claims that ?good always prevails over evil, because evil ultimately dissolves itself.? (Pg. 110)

Green?s fifth chapter is titled, ?Hearts will Never be Broken until they can be made Practical,? and it discusses the Tin Man?s problems in regards to his heart. The Tin Man is lacking a heart and travels down the yellow brick road, along side of Dorothy, the scarecrow and the cowardly lion, in search of the Wizard who will supply him with one. When he finally reaches the Wizard and is given a ?heart-shaped watch and chain,? he is then urged to remember that ?a heart is judged not by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others.?

What exactly does the advice, from the Wizard, mean? Is he saying that a person who does good deeds, and who is not loved by others, does not really have a heart? What about philanthropists who donate a huge amount of money to charities, and never receive recognition? Do they have a smaller heart than the egotist who gives money to charity only to have a building named after himself? Is public opinion really an accurate measure by which to judge a person?s heart? The citizens of Emerald City love the Wizard of Oz, but does that mean he has a bigger heart than the Tin Man who is only loved by Dorothy, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion?

Unknowingly, the Wizard?s advice is actually a koan. A koan, in Zen, is a riddle with no apparent meaning. ?The koan is: Is a heart judged by how deeply you are loved by others? Or is the depth of your love the true measure of a heart?? (Pg. 69) Green explains that how deeply you are loved by others does reveal the depth of your love for them. Yet he manages to forge a conflict in his reasoning. On his path to explain the koan, he comes face to face with a contradiction in his words. For instance, the Witch of the West doesn?t have any love for anyone, and doesn?t even mourn the death of her sister. Instead, she raves about her ruby slippers. She becomes obsessed with killing Dorothy, not to avenge her sister?s death, but to eliminate any possible threats to her plans to take over Oz. Her motives are selfish, and she has no heart. She loves no one, and no one loves her in return.

He then goes onto discuss the Wizard of Oz, and illustrates that he is loved by the citizens of Emerald City, as long as he protects them from the wicked Witch of the West. But the Wizard?s love for the citizens is not genuine; in fact, he only protects the city so he can maintain his power. His love is conditional and insincere. In this case, he is loved

deeply by the citizens yet returns no love in exchange. Green?s explanation of the koan exposes a contradiction in itself.

The Zen of Oz is truly inspiring! It is easy to read and profoundly interesting. It is a definite must-read! It includes fascinating tales accompanied by perfect construction, flowing from chapter to chapter never letting you take your eyes off it. It encourages you to free your mind to learn of the thoughtful lessons hidden in the magical film, The Wizard of Oz. By appealing to this famous film, all audiences