

Although critics have for the most part ignored the importance of green-tinted spectacles in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), close analysis reveals that they are the text's central metaphor for illusion. Seemingly functioning as corrective prosthetic devices, I propose they serve a meta-fictional function that exposes an antagonism between Baum's written text and Denslow's illustrations. On the pages, the green of the Emerald City spills into areas outside of the City, as if Denslow were contesting the written text. More importantly, blocks of written text are often colored over, forcing the reader to "read through green," as if s/he were wearing the prosthetic spectacles. The green images and blocks of text coerce the reader into participating in the illusion, much as the Wizard coerces his subjects by locking spectacles onto them. I end with a close reading of a particular Denslow image that undercuts the Wizard's, and Baum's, dominance. This green image represents the moment of exposure of the Wizard as humbug, when the Tin Woodman threateningly approaches him, stepping onto the screen that had concealed him. The screen, a tilted rectangle with a line drawn down the middle of it, resembles an open book, and represents *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. I argue that the Woodman attacks the written text, as Denslow claims dominance in this battle between word and image.