

Metaphors of Color.

A bridge between reflection and an audiovisual proposal

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Abstract

This article is an extended part of the research project: *The aesthetics in university learning* presented in the master's degree in Educational Communication of the UTP and the Jaime Isaza Cadavid Polytechnic. Its objectives are first, to reflect on the rhetorical power of color in everyday life and, secondly, to sketch an educational television program about the subject. Color has the capacity to make absent emotions present. This evocative capacity allows art, audiovisuals and advertising, to arrange colors in such a way that they even modify thoughts and behaviors. The origin of this power goes back in time, in the origins of culture, in nature, settling in contemporary everyday life.

Keywords: Audiovisual communication; Color; Metaphor; Power; Education; TV.

1. Introduction

Within the framework of the Masters in Educational Communication of the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira and the Polytechnic Jaime Isaza Cadavid, it develops the research project entitled *Aesthetics in University Learning*, a project awarded by the above-mentioned university. This project addresses the perceptions that students and teachers of the Polytechnic Jaime Isaza Cadavid have about Aesthetics, this, from the perspective of Kant, in particular, the one exposed in his *Critique of Judgment*. In relation to this interest, the author of this paper has asked other questions that have to do with aesthetics. One of them is: how is one conscious or not aware of the use and power that color has in current daily life? The televised proposal in which this writing ends is fed by the seminar of Television dictated by Professor José Fernando González whose objective is to propose an educational television program.

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According to the above, this article develops the theme of color from several experiences: art, nature, culture, film and daily life, to then propose a transmedia immersion of color and its metaphors. In this sense, to achieve the objective, it is proposed to develop, in order, the following topics: justification of the theme, metaphors of color, educational paradigms and, finally, the television proposal. It is therefore necessary to go from the reflective to the proactive; thus, the justification, the metaphors and the paradigms are in a reflective first part, the last one would be focused on making a proposal outline for educational television coherent and consistent with the first three reflective themes and with the educational paradigms included in this proposal.

2. Conceptualization on color within the framework of educational paradigms

Now, the emergence of this reflection goes back to the very origin of animals on the planet and today this reflection is present in the use of chromatic codes, which semiconsciously, are built daily in personal and social life and, almost without knowing it, they take a leading role in modulating thought and behavior in everyday life. Thus, the fear of a child when he goes to bed and turns off the light, is similar to that of the adult when he is going to cross a dark street, or similar to the Paleolithic man hiding in the night behind the fire, fleeing from his animal and human enemies. The presence of warm colors in everything for example, the advertising of food is nothing more than the metaphor of the best grilled legs that humanity has seen; the use of whites in clinics and pharmacies, blue, which according to decorators are used in spaces that are too narrow to give a sense of spaciousness, are the extension of the ocean and the universe in the imagination of people; the green for places of relaxation such as a Spa or a farm, are a metaphor for the landscape of the absent vegetation. There are innumerable everyday situations in which semi-consciously everyone accepts the codes of light and color used without objection and without asking, how and why does it happen? This is the question that leads to the present written reflection, to propose a program for educational television, which interactively takes the viewer to make progressively aware of the emotions implicit in the use of color.

On a less prosaic level than daily life, such as art, questions arise in many examples: the dark Baroque, full of a rhetoric of fear, death and sin, factors that fully meet the objective to recover the lost Christian faithful during the counter-reformation; likewise, the North American Black cinema and its obscure plots of the underworld, the cinema of Tim Burton with its dark emotions and of an equally pragmatic fear. In other colors, the sunflowers of Van Gogh, of a yellow that decides to overflow the flowers and impregnate the space of the picture and that transmit an altered emotional state, a joy suspicious of madness like the one that in the moment lived its author. This solar energy that stimulates joy and celebration contrasts with the deep blue, nocturnal, starry nights painted by the same author and conveying an almost religious solemnity, which could not be painted in any other color or tone without stopping generating such solemn emotion.

In the two previous paragraphs, it is described how color possesses the evocative power of something that is not it, in this sense; it is a metaphor because it supersedes the thing itself. The language of color has the power to mean, night, fear, madness, joy, mystery, cold, heat without being anything of the above; it evokes it, it means, but it is not. Color makes the absent present. As Lacan says "The symbol is the death of the thing". Thus, in this way, color brings night, fear, joy, hunger and other absences that come to life through the symbolic power of color. According to Tirado:

If an infant can face the task of building both his own history and his notion of the world, it is because he has taken his place as a subject from the language. To take that place means to introduce oneself into the dialectic presence-absence, in that immense universe that is language, that savior of distances in space and time that allows us to name what is not and to update what has been allowed to happen (1998, p. 27).

In this sense, the world of art, cinema, advertising, design, aware of the supplanting, evocative and metaphorical power of color, use it to persuade, convince others through their rhetoric. They manipulate the emotions of the spectator to deliver the message that underlies the work, the film or the advertising object. In this relationship of color with emotions is the work of Vincent Van Gogh, precursor of expressionism, who finds in color the way to communicate their emotions and altered psychological states. His pictorial work, in addition to naming things such as night, sky, sunflowers, person, thing, has the power to present feelings, emotions and affects on the canvas. The manifestation of this feeling is a more complex function than that of naming a thing, given the difficulty of naming or symbolizing feelings and affections. For this, sometimes, the words are short and instead the color manages to communicate them in a silent and effective way. In expressions of Tirado:

On the other hand, we must bear in mind that the words that man uses to name things in the outside world tend to be strangely closer and easier to code and share, than those he uses to manifest the affection that inhabits him inside; this happens because man receives innumerable and indescribable feelings. Thus, the words to communicate everything that affects it never reach, not even exhaust, there simply are not, which invariably leaves us with the sensation of an inescapable imperative of silence (1998, p. 30).

As we can see, the symbolic power of color is great but, despite its strength, it is below something that is still more powerful when it comes to supplanting and affecting emotions: light. The power of color to make the absent present is light. Color is a privilege of light because only the chroma appears when the optimal lighting conditions allow it. Light perception changes if this level is low. As when in the middle of the night, during the comfortable sleep, the desire to go to the toilet makes it necessary to move around the house and, perhaps, the desire of not to wake up anyone, leads to not turning on the light bulb and a decision to go in the dark. The common colors of the house disappeared; instead, there are clear and dark objects that are sufficient to facilitate the urgent need. It is for this primary reason that light and darkness are generators of the oldest positive emotions such as joy and life, or as negatives,

fear and death, which we have learned to read from our surroundings in a semi-conscious way. However, in the process of internalizing knowledge, it becomes necessary to rationalize or at least talk about emotions, to make them aware.

The night has taught humanity a message that goes on a spectrum that fluctuates between being alert and terror. There, beings feel defenseless. Darkness hides everything, including threats. The fear experienced in a horror movie and causes shivers, is an euphemistic sensation of what the man of the ancient caves could have lived, maybe when attacked by vermin or human enemies under the dark mantle of the night. Even, the passerby that in the middle of the night in a lone street is attacked by criminals who endanger his physical integrity.

In this direction, the Tenebrous style of Caravaggio, in whose work *Darkness corners the light*, is accompanied on a large number of occasions, by painful objects such as crucifixions, martyrdoms, skulls, meager candles, blood and pain as in one of the expressions of greatest drama in the history of art. Likewise, Batman, that dark, nocturnal superhero who watches over Gothic City from the roof of a tall building and a full moon, is the unconscious expression of protection in the urban night, full of bandits and jokers.

Light on the other hand is a metaphor of life, energy, power, strength. In it, everything is action and movement; is the Renaissance full of optimism and confidence. Most of the time, for this vital sensation of light to be possible, saturation is the key. In case of color desaturation, high light acquires a different connotation, vitality and positive emotion decrease. The light and the high saturation are the sea in full sunny day, full of energy, it is the field with cows, rivers, birds and animals; They are a bunch of cyclists climbing the Swiss Alps in the Tour de France, energy, bodies that persist in life.

Likewise, the lights or high keys in the works of Surrealist painters such as Salvador Dalí, Rene Magritte, Joan Miró, Max Ernst, created a semantics of the image that from then on the audiovisual would adopt as a means to communicate an intense light present in the dream. Another form of this inner light in beings, is illustrated by Dalí, when he proposes to close his eyes and tighten his eyelids with his fingers to discover the ever changing formation of saturated colors and full of light in permanent change. Technique of Surrealist creation by antonomasia. The German poet Goethe already spoke about the topic in his *Theory of color* in which he argues and discusses the presence of color both, inside and outside people.

After the optimization of the lighting conditions, the color springs up. The chromatic spectrum presents itself as life: the flowers, the sky, the blood, the fire, the grass, everything is a vital expression. The impact of color on perception is so strong that in one experiment, the white wall reflects the opposite color. In another one, the observation of any color for one minute, and when it disappeared, the white wall reflected the opposite color. Its effect lasts in the eyes as something real and for a long time, enough, to perceive it as real, even if we know it is unreal. Thus, a blue paper will show the wall in a yellow-orange color and a green one will show something close to red in the white wall. This effect is also explained from the theory of Goethe when he argues that color exists both outside and inside the body, thus the brain tries to weigh the excess presence of a color by generating the vision of its opposite on the white wall. This is what Wassily Kandinski expresses:

For example, light colors attract the view with an intensity and strength that is even greater in warm colors; the vermilion attracts and excites like the flame to which it is avidly contemplated. The strident yellow lemon hurts the sight like the high tone of a trumpet in the ear; the look cannot be fixed and will look for the deep calm of blue or green. At a higher level of sensitivity, this elemental effect brings with it a deeper one: an emotional shock. We enter into consideration of the psychological effect produced by color. The psychological force of color provokes a psychic vibration. The elemental physical force is the way by which color reaches the soul (Kandinsky 1979, p. 49).

Blue is the first color proposed to initiate a succinct metaphorical reflection of colors. Blue is the symbol of planet earth. The Blue planet. Blue is the color of the sky in a clear climate, the infinite universe has blue color. The great question of the Baroque, in the sense of wanting to know the color of the air, found an answer in blue. Example of this, is that distant mountains are dressed in blue, even knowing that we know they are green if we are close to them. The perception of distance then is not an issue that explains the psychology of color. It is not a matter of certain individuals. The distant blue does not open in *Kieslowski Blue* to express loneliness, or in the blue period of Picasso to talk about poverty, abandonment and loneliness. The distant effect of blue comes from a relation as real and ancient as the blue sky has over our heads and the immense sea at our feet.

Another relationship as old as real, has to do with the orange: From the yellow chrome, ochres, browns, siennas and reddish oranges, have the power to stimulate the digestive tract. Few foods have colors that are not warm. Orange, unlike blue, appears to us as close, warm, fleshy, has touch and skin; Except legumes, almost all foods are warm as the same warmth that accompanies food. Fire is a catalyzer because raw food lives a transformation due to it: the cooking. Unlike blue (darkness), light orange does not have such a prominent reference in art or cinema. Perhaps, its physical use in food has overshadowed its metaphors in the world of emotions and the intellectual messages that art and cinema develop. Nevertheless, its neighbor, the yellow chrome, has been the protagonist of the works of artists as Watteau or Delacroix. Both spoke since the perspective of opulence of the nascent bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century. Likewise, the infinity of examples found in the world of cinema in the perception of burnt yellows, as amber, help with a look of life of opulence and visual richness.

Red is the metaphor of fire, blood, lava, embers, diverse forms according to the context in which they occur. Green is a metaphor for tranquility and that we usually assign to nature, which acts as a stimulus of harmony in people. The naturalistic style of French Impressionism has been able to take advantage of saturated colors in its palette, but especially green, given the tendency of impressionist art to paint outdoors and present for example in the work of Monet and his blue-green water lilies, precisely, as a symbol of life.

It is expected so far to have made a sufficient exhibition within a general outline of the metaphors of color in art, the power of its effects on perception and the ability to move towards the formulation of educational paradigms. To take this reflection as the genesis of an educational television proposal. To get there, it is necessary to reference some educational

models that are coherent with the learning of color within a thought that assumes a subject that is going to be transformed by learning., allowing the subject to be able to transform the color of his or her intimate and immediate environment. As Gerardo Hernández points out:

For Vygotsky, the problem of knowledge between the subject and the object is solved with the dialectical interactionist approach (S - O), where there is a relationship of reciprocal influence between both. This interaction in two directions, Yaroshevsky (1979) calls objectual activity, since it transforms the object (reality) and the carrier of the activity: the subject (man). They are materialized and developed in the objectual activity as social-historical practices (the production process) (1997, p. 73).

In the case of the color, and as we said in previous paragraphs, the physiological power that it has on the perception is immediate. After a minute of observing a certain color, the perception compensates for this color with the opposite, and although there is no such color outside, the vision perceives it as real. The objectual activity, in the words of Hernández, is immediate, in this sense, the transformation occurs initially in the subject and, later, in the object.

In the transformation that color generates in the subject, it is necessary that this subject, the same viewer must be aware of the transformation that color will produce in him. For this reason, the TV program will have a color as the protagonist of each emission. At the beginning there will be performed an experiment on the color consisting in the perception of it for one minute. The viewer experiences it and verifies that this perception of a “ghost” color on the white wall is a sign of the power of color over people; how sensitive the organism is to it. After the experience, the viewer will want to have a scientific explanation of the phenomenon experienced, which is set on the website of the program in which text and video are expanded in detail.

Differentiate, recognize and adopt the codes of color in social life and interpersonal relationships, is something that is learned in the life of a person. Nevertheless, not always this inter psychological process or between people about color, becomes intra psychological to the way in which Hernández defines the evolution of dialectical interaction. The relationship between the development of higher psychological functions and the process that goes from the inter to the intra, is direct. From this perspective, the television program seeks to promote the development of personal awareness about color; a process in which the project will provide element, knowledge and tools that lead the viewer to greater intra-psychological development. In such a way that finally the prosumer, besides consuming the color that the medium gives him, critically, will be able to propose and choose the colors that will surround his intimate life in such a way that communicates what the subject is, feels, dreams and desires to communicate. In the words of Hernández:

From this general law of development, we can explain the genesis of higher psychological functions, which are subject to a process of progressive internalization, is also reconstructive, since in this process of transition from the Inter to the Intra psychological. They present structural and functional changes (the intra is not a simple copy of the inter, but there is a qualitatively different reconstruction) (1997, p. 16).

3. TV Program Color Metaphors

At this point of introspection of the object of learning, the socio-cultural paradigm recognizes the importance of transformation for the subject. The humanist and sociocultural paradigms, find in this level a dialogue, recognizing the subject in the learning process, but as well as adding an introspection of the sociocultural paradigm of integrality, the holistic, the importance of the socio affective relationships which fulfill a primordial role. The importance of an interactive communication between the television program and the website lies in the fact that the contents and methods of the program can be fed back, but above all, the reception in the viewer and the transformation from the given data. The program will then have three levels for the spectators, in the second and the third one it will be possible to know by means of interviews to the viewers that have the same interest, is the level of appropriation of the knowledge. It is expected that the third level allow having propositive elements in the environment of the intimate life, of the choices and the level of consciousness of the receiver. In short, as Hernandez states: "In general, we can say that the efforts of the humanist approach to education are about achieving an integral education, highlighting what the other proposals have marginalized: the development of the person (self-realization) and education of affective and emotional processes" (1997, p. 57).

The humanist paradigm recognizes what for the aesthetics of the eighteenth century was already the basis of the experience of the human being against color. For Kant, the pleasure and emotion that is felt in the aesthetic judgment, is the cause that give legitimacy to the beautiful and sublime. He adds that the pleasure and emotion not only felt in the aesthetic, is also pleasure and emotion in front of the good act of oneself or others, in front of the feelings that admiration and love produce in a kind of interrelations between the ethical and aesthetic world. This interrelation between ethics and aesthetics occurs in a double way because it also has another connection and relationship that arises with value judgments when giving color qualities such as: happy, sad, innocent, off, and so on. In expressions of Kant: "Of beauty as morality".

The consideration of this analogy is frequent, even among vulgar intelligences, and beautiful objects of nature or art that are often designated by means of names that seem to have a moral judgment at the beginning. It is described as majestic and magnificent trees or buildings: we speak of graceful and laughing fields: the colors themselves are called innocent, modest, tender, because they excite sensations that contain something analogous to the awareness of a disposition of spirit produced by moral judgments. Taste thus, allow us to pass, without a sudden jump, the appeal of the senses to a habitual moral interest is representing the imagination in its freedom and being able to determine, according to the understanding, and even learning to find in sensitive objects a free and independent satisfaction of all sensible attractiveness (1977, LVIII).

In honor of the integrality conceptualized by the humanist paradigm, and the relations between ethics and aesthetics in Kant, it is necessary that the educational program Metaphors

of color have an integral focus. That is why after the introduction of the color experiment for a minute there will come a section where the presence of the protagonist color of the emission in nature or in the experience of the human being, is explored. Here, the time factor is important. The antiquity of blue in the sea and in the sky; that of green in the vegetation of nature; the dark in the night; that of red in fire, ember and blood; that of oranges and their ranges in food will be defining arguments for the semi-conscious influence of each color in our lives. To this end, the viewer will travel throughout the world, without limits of space or time, from the lava of a volcano, through the veins of a living body, to the infinite sky. From the dark or starry nights in the old Paleolithic, to the vision that a cosmonaut when contemplating the planet earth in a walk out of its orbiting ship, all in search and exploration of the color in question. This trip will be done in the company of a character called *Croemo* (Mix of chroma and emotion) that will tell directly the qualities between color, life and the language in which it is communicated. This will be done by breaking the fourth wall of the performance, as documentary language does, by engaging the viewer.

The integrity of color and life will be total. *Croemo* is an animated, overlapping character on top of the actual image with the Chroma key or color key technique. *Croemo* will introduce the viewer in the distant, light and cold language of the blue. For that, it will travel the cerulean blue, celestial and king of the sky; the blue ones of the depths of the ocean and their variety of tones, from the green blue marine water, to the ultramarine of the great depths; in the bowels of the frozen poles you will discover the cerulean blue and in the distant mountains you will learn that the air has a cobalt blue color, of Prussia, a blue rarefied by distance. In this way, the lightness of blue is in the sky; its distance from the viewer are in the immense sea and the infinite firmament; its coldness is in the bowels of the deep polar ice.

All the above is evident in the daily practice of color, in art and advertising. Blue is the name assigned to a period of Picasso's painting characterized by the poverty of the artist and the solitude of the characters represented. Blue is the name that Kieslowski, the French filmmaker, gives to one of his three feature films: *White, Blue and Red*, where Blue, personified by Julie, undertakes a search for Freedom after a macabre accident where she loses her husband. The blue and the freedom of the sky are not exactly what we see in the starry nights of Van Gogh, in which that cobalt blue and overseas, darkened, we generate a respect towards an almost sacred sky. Art, film and advertising are presented after color in nature as a manifestation of the use of more elaborate and abstract color.

Croemo's trips in the oranges and their neighboring ranges will be mainly made in food: grains, meat, some vegetables and vegetables. Learning the cooking state of food according to the type of color they generate, will be a learning that will touch the culinary as a way to integrate knowledge into the life of the viewer. In the journey of *Croemo* through the world and the macro world to discover the color, he will ask questions, propose exercises to the viewer who will answer them through a web page. This web page then appears as an element beyond the traditional means of a single communication channel. Interacting with people, allows having a direct way with the viewer, henceforth, prosumer, given their active role. In time, it will be possible to investigate the way in which these data and educational messages of color have transformed the viewer, giving him a kind of meaningful education.

4. By way of conclusion

Metaphors of color is a program of educational television that, as seen in the previous paragraphs, integrates the data of color with the world, nature, emotion, pleasure, feelings and daily life. In this way, it is sought to integrate the information to the daily life of the prosumer and to avoid the dualism in which knowledge goes on the one hand, and sensitive experience on the other. Following Agustín García Matilla:

One of the keys to finding new answers is to ask ourselves: how to access information about the world and how to achieve the possibility of articulating and organizing it? How to perceive and conceive the context, the global, the multidimensional and the complex? For Morin, the answer can only be found in a reform of that fragmented, fragmented and disarticulated thinking. The school has been designated to address these realities and increasingly 'inter' and 'poly' disciplinary, transversal, multidimensional problems (2003, p. 154).

This article is a bridge between pedagogical thematic reflection and communicative education. This bridge is made in the style of a military bridge since it is done with the same urgency. The transition between reflection and learning about the effects of color is urgent both, in the public and in those that are beginning to specialize. The pedagogical vision of the program is to make people more aware of the origin and effects of color in everyday life; the didactic strategy based mainly on the example recreated in the real world, always illustrated in life in front of nature, the history and prehistory.

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