

ROLE OF GREY COLOUR IN COLOR CLASSIFICATIONS

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ABSTRACT: RESEARCHERS HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PIN DOWN ANY UNIVERSAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM THAT WILL BE ABLE TO PREDICT HOW PEOPLE WILL INTERPRET AND RESPOND TO THE COLOURS AROUND THEM. THIS IS BECAUSE A PERSON'S CULTURE, GENDER, AGE, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL STATE, SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES, MOOD - AS WELL AS THE APPEARANCE AND COMBINATION OF THE COLOURS THEMSELVES - CAN ALL AFFECT THE REACTION. AS FOR THE ATTITUDE TO THE GREY COLOUR, PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT CULTURES REACT TO THIS COLOUR IN A DIFFERENT WAY. AND THIS REACTION VARIES IN INTENSITY FROM PERSON TO PERSON.

KEY WORDS: COLOUR, GREY COLOUR, COLOUR CLASSIFICATIONS, PRIMARY COLOURS, INTERPRETATION OF COLOUR, REACTION TO COLOUR.

AMONG the sensations received from an outside world, the huge role is played by visual perception, and colour perception is great among the last. Total number of the colours distinguished by someone's eye, is more than 10 000. But not all the names can be expressed verbally. So, there are only those combinations of names which correspond to the order of our colour vision. How can colour be classified?

ALL colours can be divided into chromatic and achromatic, coloured and neutral. But at the same time scientists insist that there are no neutral colours in nature. All of them have elements of any colour shade. And that's the idea! Achromatic colours, differentiating only on luminosity, form a succession from absolutely black to dazzling white, though there is no absolutely black colour.

FROM the physics point of view colour is a collective concept. There are three aspects of colour. They are physical, physiological and psychological. We are interested in the third aspect - psychological, i.e. colour perception, and in the first place we are interested in grey colour.

THE most interesting thing is that grey colour is one of the few colours to which there is no definite attitude. Some people think that grey colour is "uncertain and also it is not perceived in any way" [2]. Others believe that grey colour influences mentality very actively. The monotonous grey causes oppressed, somber mood; and on the contrary red-grey gives warm, pleasant sensation.

GREY colour is not so unpopular. You can see it in the European suit, an interior of apartments and houses, in the modern drawing, in painting (rococo of the 18th century, a modernist style of the 19th-20th centuries), in colouring of architectural constructions.

LET'S examine some colour classifications and the role of grey colour in them.

PRIMARY colours of ancient times were red, white and black as colours of the most important things and elements such as blood, milk, fire, earth. Green and dark blue colours were also important because of vegetation and the sky in China and Egypt.

LET'S turn our informed mind to medieval Europe. There was a hierarchy in the system of colours. The main, divine colours are white, gold, purple, red, dark blue, and yellow. Then green and black come. Theology scholars pay no attention to such colours as grey, brown, other composite unsaturated colours, and painters avoid using them (only in certain cases) because there is no divinity or antdivinity as in black, for example. Grey colour was the colour of people in rags and tatters, the colour of isolation from the Christian world. It was not the colour, it was just its absence.

IN the Middle Ages two colours such as grey and brown were considered to be completely negative in the Middle East since both of them represent degrading and darkening of two finest and shining colours: white and yellow. White colour shows light shining, divinity, cleanliness, and spirituality in its best way; and yellow colour represents brilliance, glory, the sun, and undecayedness. In Al-Hariri's makama it is said that the happy world is green, and unhappy one is grey. In fairy tales "One thousand and one night" one Franc (of course from Europe) is described as a villain and sly fellow, and his characteristic feature is his "ashy" (grey) face.

IT is interesting to see the attitude to grey colour in China. As the colouring of imperial palaces is extremely various you can find not only "blinding colours", but also soft, exquisite ones such as grey, woody, terracotta. All this restrained general tone is diversified with small bright spots of the Moon light and many-coloured birds. In unison with nature the human soul is tuned. The nature tunes itself by the same principle.

IN a colour aesthetics of Leon Batista Alberti there is a bit different classification of colours, and it includes grey colour. As there are four elements, there are four true colours. Red is for fire, blue is for air, green is for water, grey (or ashy) is for the earth. Other colours are appeared from these four true ones and multiplied gradually. It is necessary to notice that Leonardo da Vinci has excluded grey colour from the classification, having corrected this "mistake" (or may be it is not a "mistake" since absolutely black colour does not exist).

IT may be strange, but colour is significant in the alchemical world as well as during aboriginal times, if not more. However, grey colour is not the most important. As spirits and demons take part the closest participation in alchemical manufacture they inspire the person their will by means of colour. Alchemists divided all colours into two groups. The first one includes red, white, black, green; and the second group consists of all the other colours and grey is among them.

LET'S examine one more interpretation of colour. According to Lomatstso colour is connected with characteristics of human soul. That's why colour plays an important role in stimulation of various feelings. Dark, earthy, lead colours provoke grief, anxiety, melancholy, thoughtfulness.

COLOUR plays an important role in any kind of information. Complexion defined mental condition, for example, terror-struck cowards had lead-coloured skin. Not only colour, but also light is in the person's faces... Silvery light is coming from wise old men's appearance. Colour of clothes tells a lot about thoughts and mood. Orlando's clothes from "As you like it"

by W.Shakespeare consist of a white shirt which symbolizes belief and purity, grey suit with green trimmings is for grief and love and a black raincoat is for a fidelity.

It is necessary to notice that colour preferences in one society always depended on a class belonging. In the 19th century working class people chose bright and pure colours, and intelligency and an exploiter class preferred muted achromatic scale. When the development of commodity-money relations began grey colour was considered to be the most suitable for business conditions. It is appreciated for its practicality and moderateness.

In the 20th century the attitude to grey colour has also changed a lot from distinctly negative to enthusiastic. Wars in the first half of the 20th century have worsened the impression of grey colour by the great mass of the population all over the world. However the post-war tired state of mind demands bright joyful colours, and it is given "carnival" of all shades of a rainbow in fashion, art, and interior. Some years later, at the end of the 20th century, a new round of a "taste spiral" repeats. All the Europe and America finds elegancy in simplicity and rationality again. And simplicity and rationality is a distinctive feature of grey colour.

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