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The symbolism of colour in the interpretation of a drawing in Gestalt

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Abstract

The article investigates the peculiarities of colour symbolism and semantics that might be applied in the interpretation of a projective drawing in Gestalt. As a result, a child's drawing is a kind of figurative art; this is something that has to evoke not just the viewer's thoughts and feelings about the depicted figurative material. In conclusion, we can supplement a diagnostic component part with a new approach of psychodiagnosis problem-solving of individual and typological features of personality peculiarities in the modern pedagogical educational process.

Keywords: Colour, Symbolism, Semantics, Projective, Drawing.

El simbolismo del color en la interpretación de un dibujo en Gestalt

Resumen

El artículo investiga las peculiaridades del simbolismo del color y la semántica que podrían aplicarse en la interpretación de un dibujo proyectivo en Gestalt. Como resultado, el dibujo de un niño es una especie de arte figurativo; Esto es algo que debe evocar no solo los pensamientos y sentimientos del espectador sobre el material figurativo representado. En conclusión, podemos complementar una parte del componente de diagnóstico con un nuevo enfoque de resolución de problemas de psicodiagnóstico de las características individuales y tipológicas de las peculiaridades de la personalidad en el proceso educativo pedagógico moderno.

Palabras clave: Color, Simbolismo, Semántica, Proyectiva, Dibujo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern rapid growth rates of volume and accumulation of information have an impact on the changing environment and society. Various means of accessing information and the necessity to successfully apply it impose high demands on the individual intellectual qualities. It is necessary to have a clear insight into the hidden potential of a person's abilities and opportunities in order to reveal their capacity. Therefore, a research approach in interpreting a projective drawing in Gestalt will further contribute to the exploration

and development of individual and typological personality peculiarities.

Yung was the one who advanced and interpreted the significance of depicted symbols in the framework of individualization. The objective setting. The search and proof of symbolism and semantics oriented methods' employment in the assessment of a projective drawing in Gestalt while solving the problems of individual and typological personality features' psychodiagnosis in the modern pedagogical educational process (DILEO, 2007).

According to MIRONOVA's (2005) definition, the essence of colour is its semantics and symbolism. Colour can be defined as some semiotic system or a language. Colour was already exploited in this meaning in pre-historic time. Colour in a human's life is a unique phenomenon. Colour is the energy that gives the light, and the energy which Life produces. It is no wonder that colour is the reflection of emotions. But, at the same time, every colour has a variety of shades as well, the fact that makes it similar to man's emotions. People can express their personal, very frequently spontaneous feelings, emotions and senses by means of colour.

The main principles of colour and shade combinations create a certain colour scheme and harmony. The colour combinations are associated with our imagination: warmth (red), a village (red-orange), home comfort (orange), tranquility (drab), the pastoral (yellow-green), nature (green), purity (sea-green), solidity (blue), contemplativeness (purple), serenity (red-violet), darkness (cold grey + cold black), a

town (warm grey), reserve (warm white). In psychodiagnosis, it is significant to have an insight into the colour semantics and symbolism, since a symbol as an ideological and image-bearing structure carries its profound sense intensity. The abstractedness of its form prompts to imagine the symbol's unique meaning in its collapsed simultaneous way which gives the perspective for an eternal development of a society; the knowledge that can be perceived and applied on a large scale.

2. METHODOLOGY

The principal feature of any symbol, or type of symbols, pinpoints the unknown via a simple and quite clear structure, but the manifestation of this quality is always different since it is dependent on the field of a symbol functioning. Thus, two groups of symbols can be identified: the esoteric, which carries some secret idea inaccessible to the layman, and the exoteric, which carries a clear idea of meanings (SURINA, 2010). The colour symbolism of diverse cultures is different in its interpretation. There are symbols of different star types, architectural types and forms, symbols of stones, plants and zoomorphic symbols in arts.

Every artist has their own style and uniqueness of the creative approach since all people see the world in different ways. The intellect peculiarities and temper, features of character and one's abilities have their impact on the interpretation of principal arts regulations. While

working with children's drawings, we applied the exoteric, accessible to everyone's understanding, meanings of symbols and the semantics of colour.

3. RESULTS

The red colour is the main source of associations, an accompaniment of everything which is life and capable of symbolizing virtue and evil simultaneously. In a child's drawing, the red colour is symbolic of striving for beauty, energy, valour and courage, the sign of love of life and confidence in power. Red flowers, fruits, clothes, women's lips, nails, decorations symbolize the desire to be beautiful and happy. Red encourages future victories and deeds, love and happiness. Still, in some cases, the red colour (the dominant colour of blood) can symbolize aggression, any kind of internal struggle, predisposition to confrontation, collisions and conflicts.

Yellow is the colour of the Sun itself, the source of life on Earth; it is the purest, clearest colour, bearing light, warmth and energy which means both joy, fun and festive mood. Yellow is one of the brightest in the colour scheme. It is very difficult to disperse in the atmosphere, easy to be seen from a distance, therefore it is frequently used as a warning signal (GILL, 2006).

Yellow is the colour of gold, which has always been perceived as the symbol of wealth and strife for total authority since ancient times. In psychology, yellow means the need for development and

self-discovery. People in search of changes, some liberation alter for this colour as a symbol of easing tension, an outlet of exasperation and tension. A person, striving for something new, prefers this colour, but, on the contrary, the disappointed one rejects it (VALDEZ & MEHRABIAN, 1994).

The dominance of warm tints of yellow might signify a craving for clarity, the desire to learn the truth, nobleness, wealth and fame. While using the yellow colour in drawing, a child regains one's temper, becomes relaxed, kinder and more generous, since the yellow colour has a positive impact on the functioning of the cardiovascular, digestive and nervous system (MIRHASANOV, 2018).

Yellow is considered to be the colour of an intellectual function. Numerous researches showed that it is the tints of yellow which stimulate the areas of the brain that deal with memory and mind. It is positive, stimulating impact facilitates fatigue, apathy, intellectual malfunction, an easy form of depression. If the yellow colour is smeared, with cold tints prevailing, it expresses distrust, envy, treachery, lies, doubt and an inkling of disloyalty and madness. The orange colour is considered to be supplementary because it is the product of mixing yellow and red. Therefore, the characteristics of red and yellow are combined in symbolism (JUNG, 1990).

Orange is the children's favourite. It is a warm, catalyzing and restorative colour, the colour of children's joy and warmth, comfort and bliss. It is often associated with the Sun, fire, joy and expressiveness. This colour helps a person to feel more relaxed and free, gain an emotional balance, trust to the world and a feeling of

unity with it. In children's drawings, the orange colour symbolizes creativity and enthusiasm (VIZER, 2006).

Orange is the colour of the setting sun. For adults, it personifies the sense of maturity, one's internal power and determination, a craving for development; its fans are confirmed optimists who have developed communicative skills and high power potential. They are good-natured with a positive outlook. White has been determined as positive since ancient times. It symbolizes joy, innocence and a joyful spirit, virtue, purity and health, peace and consent, maturation (festive clothes, temple architecture, dishes and decorations). This is the effect produced by the combination of the white colour with red, blue and green.

But, in the natural world, the white colour is not always kind. When combined with black, it might be symbolic of cold and fear, disease, sufferings and the still (snow, ice, frost, clouds, mountain peaks, spindrift, a pale face, grey hair). Nowadays, the white colour has been adopted as the symbol of divinity in all world religions (PLEIJ, 2004).

Darkness, black skies, caves, mud, black houses and trees, garments and objects symbolize instinctive fear, disgust, weakness and malice. The state of compression, suppression, envy, anticipation of danger and sadness can be observed in children's drawings in which black predominates. Green takes the only special place in the spectrum of the sunlight: it is positioned between the agitating and relaxing colours, the active and the passive ones, ... and therefore, it might be neutral in its impact on the nervous system of a human being. Its

semantics is determined by the position and the place of the green colour in the natural world. In children's drawings, green might express a craving for a dialogue with nature, a desire for seclusion, hope for the best, provided plant life in a drawing is painted in green when combined with red and white.

Thus, in Russian folklore green is not always positive. The dominance of dirt-green shades might represent a lack of love and joy in life, a precarious state of one's soul (being in the dumps, the demon drink). Deep-blue is the darkest, the most solemn, sad and dreary; it has a soothing and, in big amounts, even a depressing effect. In children's drawings, deep Navy-blue symbolizes the most pessimistic associations: the anticipation of hardships, sadness, alienation, irrelevance and uselessness in a social medium.

On the contrary, pale-blue, as a light shade of blue, represents the symbol of eternity, infinity. It merges with the sky, symbolizing strife for faith in unending life. Dreams about something remote and elusive, mute apathy are coloured in light blue. The mix of red and blue paints in equal proportions brings out a purple colour. It is both magnetic and revolting because it reconstitutes the effect of red and blue colours. It can represent the feeling of abundant life, and at the same time, it can provoke melancholy and sadness. It can cause a feeling of anxiety, sorrow and oppress viewers.

DERIBERE (1964) proves it by citing some French doctor: As much as the red colour stimulates an action, so purple constraints and mitigates it. If mixed, the colour tends to be blue, the tint is called lilac, but if it is closer to red, it is violet. These colours cause light

sadness, melancholy and a feeling of romantic mystery. Amaranthine, as well as violet, is a shade of purple, it just contains redder. This colour symbolizes grandeur, majesty, wealth, magic, love and affection. Amaranthine against black and dark blue causes such negative emotions as repentance, sorrow, madness, sin, violence. This colour always represents domineering energy, either positive or negative.

Grey colour is the result of green and red optical blending. It combines the opposing features of black and white. Grey is considered to be neutral and does not strive for leadership. In arts, the grey colour is made by mixing black and white. The number of tints of grey depends on the proportions of light and dark when mixed. They have a dubious effect on one's nervous system and a person's emotions. Most researchers consider grey to be the symbol of melancholy, withering, fatigue, sorrow and uncertainty. It is the colour of poverty, boredom, crowded city life, predators and birds of prey. Medium grey and dark grey tones are very bad in oil colouring. In this form, they cause only negative emotions.

Thus, in the hands of great artists, it is the neutrality of grey that has a happy twist in its destiny. In Salviati's paintings, it looks as though all paints had faded and become more or less grey. In El Greco's works, they occupied almost the whole background of a painting, creating a frame for the precious stones of chromatic colours. Leonardo da Vinci submerges his arts into sfumato, a kind of grey mist. As for Michelangelo Buonarroti, he adds grey to all colours, subduing and bonding them.

Numerous light, fair, discreet shades of noble grey, including mouse-grey, can be a sign of good manners, high style, sophistication and elegance. Therefore, businessmen prefer the grey colour. Transparent tints of silver-grey give rest to frayed nerves. As a rule, those, who prefer grey, prioritize sense rather than emotions. They are friendly and reliable people.

Brown is quite well-spread in nature, lots of people like it, though the brown colour historically carries negative semantics, since it is associated with melancholy and fatigue, withering and sadness, uncertainty and depression. The brown colour attracts tired, disappointed people. It is preferable in cases of sheer exhaustion. There are about 200 shades of brown in its colour scheme, which results in the numerous variations and nuances of its both complicated and various impact on a person's psyche.

People of the warm brown colour scheme are known for focusing attention easier, which results in making difficult important and responsible decisions. Such a tint of brown soothes, relaxes and creates a sense of comfort and security. Plenty of scientists claim that brown calls for emotions directly related to a physical body. If a person feels unwell or has some physical discomfort, this colour becomes psychologically more and more important to them. In most cases, it is preferred by those who do not have homes, stability, physical satisfaction and security. In other words, a person is dominated by something that they are unable to cope with, and they need a safe environment. Brown colour calls for an emotional link with home, a strong need for security, belonging to a family and

having lots of good friends. People who prefer this colour want peace and quiet.

In the drawings of children with special needs, the brown colour is a tool for creating their own restricted but reliable little world. Retarded children are brown, purple and red: they combine both physical health and mental disability at the same time. They can easily get agitated to draw one's attention regardless of how they do it. In their drawings, there are often images done in the grisaille technique, which means in one colour but in its scanty tints.

4. CONCLUSION

A child's drawing is a kind of figurative art; this is something that has to evoke not just the viewer's thoughts and feelings about the depicted figurative material, e.g. events, some objects (something that is drawn), but also the feeling of colour energy, the beauty of flowing linear and colour moves – the indivisible and unchangeable harmony of a completed composition (the way a figurative, graphic and projective work is done). Having studied the major aspects of symbolism and colour semantics in pictorial arts with an insight into the interpretation of a child's project drawing in Gestalt, we can supplement a diagnostic component part with a new approach of psychodiagnosis problem-solving of individual and typological features of personality peculiarities in the modern pedagogical educational process.

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