

Morten Larsen: When Colour Narrates

In the *introduction* to his Theoretical Thesis, Morten Larsen presents the idea, that colors are themselves paradoxical. The interpretation by the human brain and then the narration made by colors is very individual. The idea of Charles Riley that the interdisciplinary approach to studying colors is the only satisfactory way to deal with colors, along with the claim that color studies are difficult because color perception and its interpretation are based only on cultural constructs, suggests work towards a broader understanding of the issue of color speech. The existence of many color theories also hints at the paradox that color as such is actually a reflected part of the spectrum, not absorbed by the absorption of the object. This is, therefore, information about unwanted wavelengths of material not received. Colors are both a physical and physiological phenomenon, both objective and subjective. It looks like Morten Larsen wants to note at the beginning of his thesis, that colors are unwelcome in visual imagery in the tradition of Western culture. In the film industry, colours were for a long time the subject of criticism because of their instability over time. Blue colours are fading and changing over time, disappearing in five years and others are unstable also. Martin Scorsese and Steven Spielberg therefore started to fight for new Kodak film negatives with better color system and opened their film archives to a movement of restoration.

Morten Larsen's diploma thesis is divided into two basic chapters, *Theory on Color* and *Colors in Cinema, as Storytelling Device*.

In *Theory on Color*, in the first subchapter of *Color Cinema and Complexities*, he describes how the idea of film criticism in the West has long underestimated the color theory in cinematography, focusing more on the black and white essence of the films studied. Also in the *Anxiety of Colors subtitle*, describes the color distribution of Roland Barthes, which responds to the long-lasting tendency of color understanding as something undesirable or vulgar, called chromophobia, the opposite of chromophilia. Chromophobia has two traditional sources: "...In the first, colour is made out to be the property of some 'foreign' body – usually the feminine, the oriental, the primitive, the infantile, the vulgar, the queer or the pathological. In the second, colour is relegated to the realm of the superficial, the supplementary, the inessential or the cosmetic. In one, colour is regarded as alien and therefore dangerous; in the other, it is perceived merely as a secondary quality of experience, and thus unworthy of serious consideration. It is typical of the prejudices to conflate the sinister and the superficial...". Morten Larsen says that these tendencies are continuing to dominate today's colorful films. Only the films that use dramaturgy in the West are gradually being enlisted in the West, for example: Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire* (1987). The black and white world is an angelic world and color belongs to people.

The other sub-chapters *The Color of Black, White and Gray, The Color Colors, Color Harmony and Contrast, and Seven Color Contrast* are devoted to the unique phenomena of neutral colors, the real colors of which are described by the theoretical works of Rudolf Arnheim. He further compares the theories of Isaac Newton, Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Johannes Itten. He also describes the principle of color harmony and contrasts.

The second chapter of *Colors in Cinema as Storytelling device* contains analyzes of selected films and authors dealing with coloring. In the subchapter *Colors as Theological Symbolism in the Green Ray* is the research of work of director Eric Rohmer, based on the neo-basian concept of visual realism. Color looks more realistic than black and white. Subchapters *The Yellow as Psychological Expression in Fear Eats the Soul* describes the work of Reiner Werner Fassbinder, who uses the strong complementary effect of yellow to purple colours with yellow dominance. The next subchapter *Colors as Leitmotifs and Seeing Red in Marnie* discusses the work of Alfred Hitchcock's work with leitmotifs in colors.

At the conclusion, Morten Larsen recapitulates the previous chapters and ends the work with personal evaluation: "...What I discovered was that a great number of the filmmaker's I admire unquestionable work with colours to incorporate them into the story. I also discovered that the multiplex nature of colours gives multiple ways of employing them. There is no one right way of utilizing colours into the narrative. A good piece of work is one that sets up a system, a set of rules to underline and support the overall meaning of the work. It then stays truthful to this system in order to give meaning to the individual set of rules...".

Overall, Morten writes in an intelligent and clear manner, and brings insight into the topic. I recommend the work for defense. My evaluation of the Morten Larsen Master's thesis is B.