

Lesson 4 Colorful Stories of Colors

The Power of COLORS in Movies

Colors are an important aspect of films. They look visually attractive and can be used to convey various emotions and messages to the audience. Film directors carefully select colors like bright yellow to bring a sense of hope, calm blue for peace, and intense red for violence. These color choices are not random; they are intentionally made to impact your experience while you watch the film, even if you don't consciously notice them. Below are several outstanding examples of how skillfully film directors can use color to add richness to the story and evoke specific emotions from the audience.

Colors Convey a Film's Message with Intensity

Like the saying "A picture is worth a thousand words," colors get a film's message across more strongly than words. A good example is the red coat in a movie about the true story of a German businessman who saved thousands of Jews from the Nazis during World War II. While the movie was mostly in black and white, the director chose one particular thing to add color to. It was the red coat of a single lost girl, alone in a crowd of frightened Jews. As such, it was the strong contrast of colors that enabled the director to powerfully symbolize the brutality of the Nazis. The young girl represents innocence while also representing the violence of the Nazis. So, what happened to this young girl? The movie never tells us for sure, but later in the film we see a dead girl in a red coat being loaded into a cart.

Colors Have Emotional Power in Storytelling

Colors strengthen the emotions of viewers due to their ability to evoke strong psychological reactions.

An excellent example can be found in an animated film where an ordinary citizen becomes a superhero to defeat a villain. At the beginning of the film, the male character, who was once a superhero but had to return to living an ordinary life, is surrounded by dull colors and gray tones. He is working as if he were an ordinary person, hiding his true power.

However, when he returns to work as a superhero, the film fills up with bold reds, yellows, and blues. These colors represent power and happiness. This shift reflects his emotional development, and viewers can grasp his mood without words. Through such a process, colors impact the emotional experience of the audience.

Colors Help a Movie Tell Its Story

Colors help audiences grasp the connections between characters, places, and important objects in films, making complex stories easier to understand. There is a film from the 1930s that shows the adventures of a girl attempting to return home after being swept away in a flash by a tornado to a land of magic.

The director uses colors to effectively communicate with the audience. The girl's life in a boring village is shown in black and white, and the world of magic is expressed in various colors in the movie. With such color differences, the audience can distinguish which world the events take place in. Audiences watching this film are immersed in the world of magic as if they were the girl when watching the scenes that turn to color in a flash.

Colors Show a Character's Journey

Film directors capture the changes in their characters' lives through changes in color. Another film from the 1990s follows the dramatic experience of a man with scissor hands who comes down to a town to live with ordinary folks. He always wears black, and the castle where he used to live was a gray and gloomy place. However, in the town where he came to live with his lover, each house is painted differently, and the people wear colorful clothes. At first, he is welcomed by the people in town, but as he becomes misunderstood and disliked, the film's colors gradually become darker. Eventually, he returns to his castle, but he fills his garden with green grass and beautiful, blooming flowers. Moreover, ice powder from his ice sculpture blows in the wind like snow. With such changes, the director shows the audience that his life has become much happier.

Film directors choose colors to give us the best possible experience. When watching movies, consider why specific colors are used in a scene. You may not know the answer, but your understanding of the film will be deeper.