

## COLOR SEMIOTICS IN SHORT FILM ECLIPSE

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### ABSTRACT

The following study examines the usage of color semiotics in producing the short film ‘Eclipse’, which was awarded the Grand Prize Winners of “Young Thai Artist Award 2011” in the feature film category. The film was also invited to be screened at the prestigious “Official Selection 10th World Film Festival of Bangkok” from 16 to 25 November 2012 at Esplanade Cineplex Ratchada. The primal inspiration behind the film was to implement color semiotics as a sole element to narrate the story in terms of its meaning of giving hope, reflecting sadness and tragedy, which this will subsequently mirror society of individuals in need of hope, being faced with adversity and are in a state of despair. Furthermore, these factors mentioned may even lead to commit suicide cases and individuals being in a wrath towards their parents, cousins and relatives.

Using the basis of this film’s dialogue, characters and the different dimensions of them; this study’s primary objective is to: 1) Use color semiotics in the film as a way to reflect hope, faith, sadness, love and death; 2) Use color semiotics as a way to reflect the film’s meaning in the psychoanalytical thriller genre.

### THE PROJECT’S STRUCTURE

This short film was conceptualized creatively for the purpose to produce a psychoanalytical thriller in which it doesn’t follow the traditional sequence in timing, location and the color semiotic. The length of the film is expected to be at around 30 minutes with using a High Definition (HD) camera to film it.

### THE PROJECT FRAMEWORK

1. Planning the film’s script for a psychoanalytical thriller in which color semiotics are used to narrate the story in around 30 minutes
2. Producing the film with a length approximately at 30 minutes

### OBJECTIVES

1. To produce a film that presents viewpoints towards the issue of commit suicide and revenge that then follows for the victim’s relatives.
2. To produce a psychoanalytical thriller by using semiotics.
3. To produce a film that does not follow the traditional sequence in story telling, time and place.

### CONCEPTS AND RELATED THEORIES

The integral motive in producing this film was to reflect the core concepts behind psychoanalysis theories and how it relates to the psychology of human beings. Subsequently, this concept can be examined through four main ideas, as follows: (1) Semiotic Concept (2) Color Usage Concept

### 1) Semiotic Concepts

“Semiotics” or also known as “Semiology” both come from the Greek word “Semeion” which means signs. The customs of Semiotics dates back to American philosopher Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914), where he expansively introduced this concept in his academic field. As for Semiology, it’s a study first familiarized by renowned Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and received popularity in many European academicians (Sorane Wongsebiasuj, 2001). With many explanations given towards the study of Semiotic, Ferdinand de Saussure describe it as a science that studies the foundation of signs and symbols in a social context and how it widely affects the way people lives. Therefore, we learn how these signs are initiated, developed, changes and are eliminated. This field also studies the laws behind semiotics and how humans handle them when being affected, which 8 Mark Gottidiener once explained that Semiology is a framework that helps people understand the relationships found in the world where signs and symbols are the foundation or the nature of representation. The Italian scholar Umberto Eco also divulged the boundaries found in Semiology and how everything can be cogitated as signs and represents something else. Hence, the study of Semiotics is based on communication concepts that are naturally delicate, which means that not every sign can be explicitly explained into words. This is where the social context and traditional customs then must be factored into getting a better understanding of semiology. KanjanaKaewthep (2001: 2-3) has then concluded that semiotics should carry these three attributes, as follows:

1. Semiotics should have concrete characteristics that can be perceived by the human’s five senses
2. Each semiotic should mean more than its obvious physical state
3. People using semiotic should be able to rationalize and understand that these are just signs and symbols

### 2. Color Usage Concept

In the film ECLIPSE, the color usage is able to expose different feelings for viewers that ranges from happiness, love to sadness. Furthermore, each color has the ability to become signs and symbols that evokes different emotions. For example, using the color black and white in the dressing form for certain culture means death, sadness and sorrow. Not only can color usage help arouse different emotions for viewers; it can also help the idea of distance and motion in film. In the past till present, many scholar have tried to find the linkage between color usage and emotional response of viewers in watching a film, where it can be explain as in the following factors:

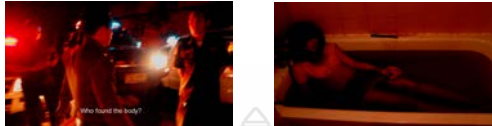
1. Feelings and Emotions

Colors have the innate ability to powerfully arouse viewers’ emotions; so therefore many designers have played with this tool. However, each person’s response will vary depending on his or her knowledge and experience. For example, hot tone colors may emit an ecstatic and lively feeling, while cool tone colors reflect a soothing and calm feeling.

Furthermore, each color are used specifically to evoke different feelings as follow:

**Red Color**

The color red is the hottest tone because of its ability to quickly grasp people’s attention for associating to power and aggressive feelings.



**Figure 1. Red Color Example Screenshots from the Film**

Additionally, the color red can also be a sign of love that vitally contradicts to the prior notion that the color is associated to negative factors such as disagreements, fighting and danger.

**Blue Color**

Blue is a vivid color tone that radiates coolness and a soothing sensation for viewers.



**Figure 2. Blue Color Example Screenshots from the Film**

**Yellow Color**

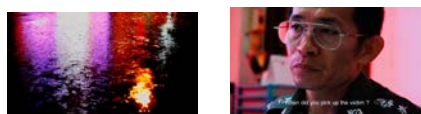
A highly vivid color tone, that with its vibrancy, it’s usually associated with sunlight, warmth and giving hope.



**Figure 3. Yellow Color Example Screenshots from the Film**

**Purple Color**

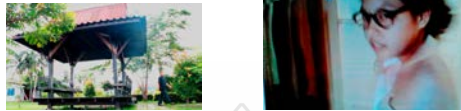
A color tone that is created by the mixture of red and blue, which therefore purple holds both of the primary color’s feeling with the power notions of red and morality of blue. Purple is also usually associated with feeling elated, lavishness and good impressions, but it can also include sadness.



**Figure 4. Purple Color Example Screenshots from the Film**

### White Color

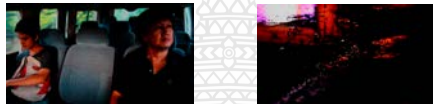
Considered to be the brightest tone, the color emits a feeling of lightness, purity, goodness, fairness and also a sense of sadness and being separated.



**Figure 5. White Color Example Screenshots from the Film**

### Black Color

Considered to be the darkest tone of all colors, it reflects feeling dismal, dark, mysterious, terrifying, evilness, immortality, sadness and also death



**Figure 6. Black Color Example Screenshots from the Film**

Color can also be a key principle in designing space and help the soul render and work towards being affected by different emotions. Because not only can color usage help give objects a livelier and more charming exterior, but it also helps in the context of emotions, feeling, size and motions in a correct suitable manner. So from this notion, we can then integrate it into analyzing each character's personality with the help of the film's color tone, the setting and the color of the clothing.

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