

A Synergy of the Visual Arts and Performing Arts: A Perspective

Wenikado S. Ganagana

*Department of Fine, Industrial and Theatre Arts, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island,
Bayelsa State, Nigeria*

E-mail: snagoro8455@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT This paper attempts to provide a perspective on the synergy of the visual arts and performing arts with particular reference to theatre arts and film. It does an overview of the meaning and significance of art and underscores the role of the visual arts in everyday life of modern man. It pays considerable attention to colour, and shows its wrong application in costuming and make-up at the personal and group levels in the society. It calls for the conscientious application of the visual arts in the theatre and film industries, stressing that a synergy of the visual and performing arts would be useful for better productions in the theatre and film industries in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The visual art has a contributory role to play in the appreciation of many subjects. It is particularly relevant in the theatre and film industries. But the synergy that should exist between the visual arts and the performing arts is yet not fully appreciated here in Nigeria. Succinctly put, visual arts is a result or an offshoot of vision and art. That is, vision as it relates to light and the use of the eyes, secondly, as an art as it relates to expression. Expression in all its ramifications, involve impression which is an internal act as well as expression, which is an outward demonstration, of what had long been internalized.

The appreciation of art is predicated on the premise that human beings exist who are capable of having emotional and aesthetic experiences which give rise to the creation of art works. Artistic resurgence can best be described as either the creation or reproduction of ideas, thoughts and imaginations into visual and practical reality from shambles and chaos (Talabi 2005). What derives from this is usually a more concise and down to earth synthesis of energies. Omoera and Aluede 2008 and Ganagana (2011) see art as the outward expression of an inner impression. Therefore, art in this sphere simply depicts an act of doing something. While the visual arts are expressed in pictures or plastic (solid) form, dramatic arts are expressed immaterially and are often referred to as performing arts.

Drama, according to Uzoagba (2000), was initially a simple affair, using only words and gestures (mime). But it has grown very elaborate, involving music and dancing, costumes, make

ups, stage-lighting, stage design, stage engineering, masks and puppets. In like manner, photography which developed from painting has led modern society to motion pictures and a return to drama in a new form with the dramatic action developed visually. Indeed, this virtually has metamorphosed into the films we are enjoying today. Despite all the diverse forms in which art is expressed, all arts are hybrids. There are some factors common to all arts. Basically, they are all emotional in their appeal; they are expressive of human emotions and in their performance capture, the actual message in wave-length from either the strings of the guitar or whirling dances cannot be got physically.

Visual arts therefore, refer to works of art that can be seen with the eyes in contrast to others that are immaterial. Such works of art are drawings, paintings, sculptures, and graphics to mention a few. On the other hand, the immaterial ones are music, dance, drama, among others. It should be understood that the products of these arts can be seen with the eye as well being heard. For instance, what emanates from the strings of the guitar, the drum and other accompaniments that constitute music cannot be seen but can only be imagined. Dance and drama have the same fit as nothing could be seen when the actor or dancer are removed from the scene. On the contrary, the art products of visual arts could be seen, criticized and appreciated even after the producer has left the scene. These products are known as silent communicators while those of music, dance and drama are known as vocal communicators. Despite attempts made by the movie industries through feelings and reactions, these could only

be seen as efforts to give organization and meaning to experience, and they are known as statements of value.

COLOUR: A MAJOR COMPONENT IN ART

Visual representation has traversed all mediums of knowledge, but not without the help of colours. Colours which have been well cherished by all, still suffer from improper and inadequate identification. Many human beings do not know the different categories of colours. These range from primary, secondary, tertiary to intermediate as well as neutral colours. That the theatre and film industry thrives today, is an eloquent testimony of an unending hand of fellowship brought to bear on it by visual art. Through a factual analysis, colour psychology reveals that, the spectrum of white light is a determinant factor of aesthetics and emotions in expression.

Colour as a visual component, plays such an important role in our daily lives especially in the performing arts. Through a factual analysis, colours have been seen to have contributed immensely in the preparation of costumes, props, stage lighting and advertisement in the film industry. This is especially true as most of the important decisions taken by playwrights, directors and actors/actresses are influenced by the colours around them. This is corroborated by Wangboje (2005), when he said; "this world would have been a dull and miserable place if we had no colours around us". The world would have been a dull and miserable place if we had no colours around us. For instance, the contrast between a black and white television and a coloured one could very well convey the emotional strings being pulled, in the human psyche when viewed. In this circumstance, one is able to remember more vividly, the colour of a human being and what he has put on, or of an object much more than the names of such objects or persons in emergency situations.

ART AS A VEHICLE OF TRUTH

Another case in point could be the stark reality of truth, as conveyed and translated by the visual arts. For instance, an accident scene depicted in red colours could be so disheartening and frightening. Whereas, another scene depicted in cool and pleasant colours could be so appealing. The emotional attachment in these

two scenes so described needs no emphasis as they appeal directly to the human conscience. A picture may not look bloody but if it is depicted in red colours, there would be the tendency of an individual being scared than another (a duplicate), depicted in cool and acceptable colours which may convey some depth of emotional attachment (Ganagana 2006). Colours may either attract or repel according to the degree and intensity of application. Inadvertently, cool and warm colours tell a lot of stories, either as truth or lies, as conveyed by illustrations, especially amongst children of ten years and below.

The above is corroborated by Agoro (2005) when he buttresses the actual characteristics of a true artist. He substantiates his stand in unequivocal terms and said; the artist represents the consciousness and memory of his time. No society can exist without the participation of the artist who cannot be bribed".

The salient aspect being portrayed here is the essence of truth and bribery. The artist cannot be bribed because, for instance, for a visual artist to capture the semblance of an individual's face, he has to portray exactly what he sees, not what he wants, or how beautiful he thinks the face should look. Any attempt at variance with whatever features that are owned by the individual is untruthfulness. At the end of the day, when this artist successfully captures the semblance and portrays this individual's face he has invariably told the truth and also escaped being bribed.

COLOUR CONTRAST AS IT AFFECTS OUR DAILY PERFORMANCES

There has been a daily misuse of colours in most human endeavours. This could be due to the lack of appropriate knowledge or ignorance in its entirety on the part of users. A quick reminder could be drawn from daily misrepresentations in the realms of our body make-ups and perhaps in our fashion design industry. These could be in two main streams of usage: colour matching as against colour contrast. Taking a scientific proof in the case of positive and negative poles (+ve and -ve), these poles though different, attract each other and can always be placed together and there would be no repulsion or spark. In the same vein, when similar colours are placed side by side or one on the other, there is bound to be absorption or monotony. There would be no matching because there is not enough contrast

(see Fig. 1 table of colours). On the other hand, putting black and white colours together or side by side brings harmony and understanding as these colours are like +ve and -ve poles. Daily experience has shown that positive and negative poles can stay for as long as nothing disturbs them. But on the other hand, positive and positive poles or negative and negative poles will never stay together as there is bound to be a spark, if at all they try to stay, it would not be long. A practical example is that of male and female human beings and even other creatures, staying together as married partners or friends if they do, there would be sustained interest and rapport because there is much contrast in their ways of life.

In the above combination of colours and the ones below, one could detect some outright defiance of natural laws and these affect our eyes. These could be referred to as monotony and sometimes colour riot. In other words, what some persons refer to as colour matching is after all colour monotony. A situation in which an individual wears a yellow dress all over, with yellow eye shadows, yellow lipsticks, yellow finger and toe nails, with a yellow handbag and yellow shoes, can be seen as either colour monotony or riot. This is no colour match; rather, it only portrays ignorance in the use of colours on the part of the user. In some other instances, some persons portray their ignorance of colours, and always wear conflicting colours which are known as complementary colours.

These colours dazzle the use eyes at the point of meeting at the boundary. Such pairs of colours are: (Walter 2007) as in Figure 2.1: Red and Blue, Red and Green, Grey and Yellow, Purple and Light Blue, Purple and Violet, Blue and Orange as seen below. To be able to identify these colours on the colour wheel is very easy as they are directly opposite each other. Another way to identify complementary colours is that, they do not agree at the borders as each struggles for supremacy as there is always a power tussle. This means that, the line at which they meet must always dazzle the eyes of the observer. Observe the following diagrams below, and authenticate what is been buttressed.

Colour psychology had also shown that human beings who are so fond of these complementary colour palettes or combinations are more often than not, short-tempered and incorrigible. They are difficult to convince or impress. This is because; their ideas and impressions in most cases are conflicting like the colours they prefer.

Colour has been found to be an inevitable tool in the use and application of colours in all human endeavours. Colours have no doubt attracted more human beings much more than black and white impressions. This attraction has further given rise to the imitation of nature, by visual artists, performing artistes and also fashion designers. Invariably, the joy many individuals derive from visual arts, video and the ever changing fashions of the dynamic world, would have been absent, but for the presence of colours.

Colour dynamism has influenced man's desire and has led to his invention of mixture and analogy in different hues known as pigments. This desire notwithstanding, many individuals who do not know or understand the actual colours, have worsened the situation by confusing so many other ignorant persons. Therefore, the above colour chart has been clearly analysed, to help those who may have imbibed the wrong principles of colours.

Oftentimes, learners have insisted on where indigo is, on the colour chart. The other name for indigo is bluish purple. In other words, there is more blue added to the purple which already has some blue colour in it. An understanding of the rainbow colours mixture, by nature itself, is a better recipe in this direction. Accordingly, we have three main categories of colour that gave rise to the several other multitudinous colours. These are the primary, secondary and tertiary colours. Each of these groups has only three colours as shown on Figure 3 on the chart. The fourth group is known as intermediate colours and they are only six in number (Walter 2007). These must not be mistaken as tertiary or secondary colours. A tertiary colour is only got when two secondary colours are mixed, but an intermediate colour is got when a primary and a secondary colour are mixed (Ganagana 2011).

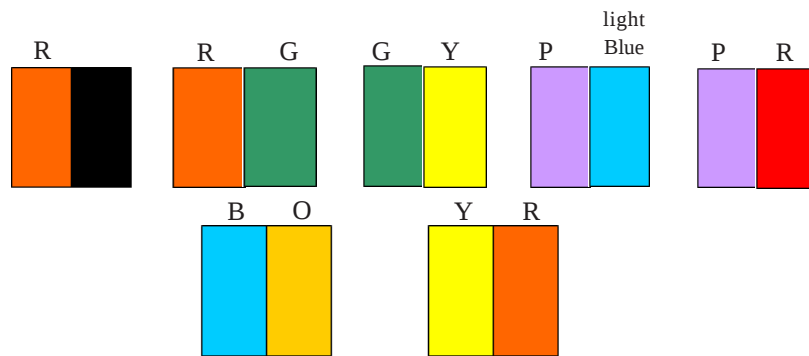
APPLICATION OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND COLOURS IN THE THEATRE AND FILM INDUSTRIES

From the few illustrations about visual arts as they relate to performing arts; we can assert that there is a positive synergy between the visual arts, and the performing arts. There can be no art without vision. You may want to agitate within you about sound and music as an outright substitute that needs no vision. In that case, who would arrange and teach the blind the keynotes if everyone was blind? Therefore, vision, colour and illustrations are

Observe the following colours below, and tell which one pair appeals to your sight most



Fig. 1. Colour contrast

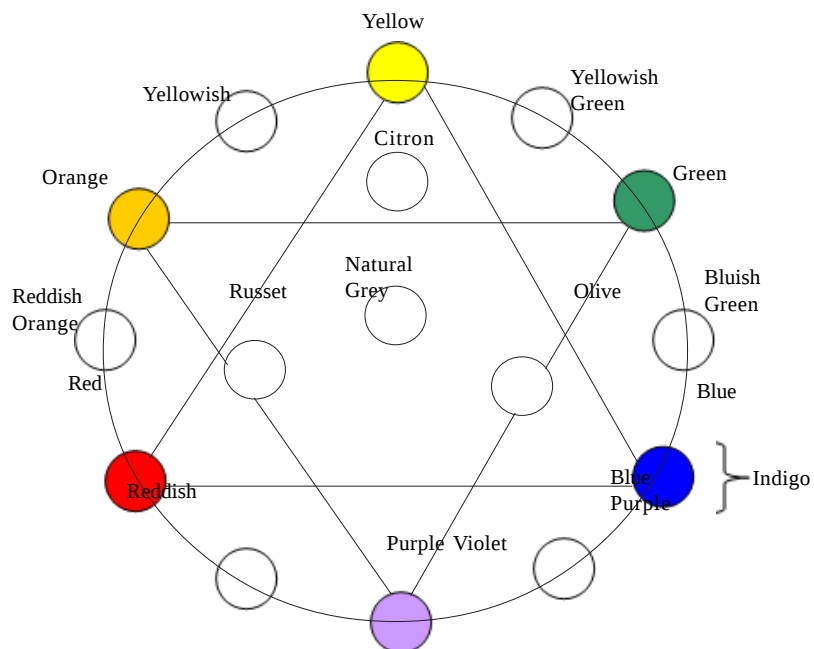


Dazzling Effect of Complementary Colours on the Eyes

Key: R= Red, B= Blue, G= Green, Y= Yellow, P= Purple, V= Violet, O= Orange

Fig. 2. Complementary colours

The Colour Chart as it Aids Colour Application



The Colour Chart Showing how Colours are got through Mixing

Fig. 3. Colour chart

basic rudiments in the production of a piece of drama in all ramifications. From the costume to the props, music, the dance steps, the rhythmic flow, the stage interior design to the stage lighting and engineering. It should be further understood that, the composition and construction of the alphabets, that today constitute any piece of writing are products of visual arts. Suffice it then to say that, all theoretical writings and gestures, have their sources from these alphabets; which have today disseminated all the giant strides of knowledge and information to humanity. All said and done, colours which help to blend illustrations and lubricate theoretical findings, only help to consolidate the fact that, the theatre and the film industries would not thrive if visual arts were absent.

CONCLUSION

In this modest attempt we have tried to provide a perspective on the synergy of the visual arts and performing arts. We have tried to show that the inability to appreciate the visual arts has impaired some productions in the performing arts as vital issues such as colour has been misapplied in costume, set décor and general performance

environment. It is the contention of the paper that the knowledge of and use of colour in particular should be brought to bear on productions for better aesthetic realization in films and play performances.

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