

RED AND BLACK THROUGH THE FILTERS OF CULTURE

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The paper focuses on the study of the red and black colors symbolic meaning in the works of English, Ukrainian and Russian writers with regard to their cultural as well as psychosemantic background. To accomplish such analysis the following tasks had to be fulfilled: to show the specificity of color as an object in psychosemantics; to shed light on the core of the ethnolinguistic investigation of color symbolism; to examine the symbolism of red and black color in different cultures; to study the semantics of red and black color in the works of English, Ukrainian (Russian) authors involving intertextual parallels traced in case of precedent phenomena; to reveal the symbolic meanings of red and black color usage in the chosen for analysis literary texts (St. Crane's novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, O. Wilde's story *The Canterville Ghost*, R. Kipling's tales from *The Jungle Book*, etc.)

The present study employed the method of cultural concepts and literary works critical analysis for the deep and comprehensive study of color symbolic meanings; the method of solid sampling to get an array of the colors; textual-interpretative analysis of red and black color usages to determine their stylistic, emotional and evaluative functions as well as their correlation with the text message; the archetypal analysis to consider the text submergence into the realm of culture; the method of cognitive mapping to represent the cultural engrainment of red and black colors usage.

To analyze color as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon the researcher should consider the following facts and factors: the meaning and the influence of color upon a person (studied by psychology and psychosemantics); the ethno-psycholinguistic, linguistic and cultural aspect of colors perception and interpretation by different cultures representatives; the literary text cultural code taking the form of stereotypes,

symbols, archetypes and precedent phenomena. The similarities in the textual realizations of all these phenomena can be observed in texts belonging to one or different cultures, and are described in text linguistics as **intertextuality**. The latter reveals itself through the allusions and reminiscence or ‘traces of other texts’ that can be found in texts. The same images and features often can be observed in texts belonging to different cultures.

The empirical data (including 540 color usages of red and black from 26 famous literary works created in the Anglo-Saxon and East-Slavic cultures) analysis reveals the intertextual features of red and black colors symbolic usage in the literary works. The research enabled to find symbolic, stereotypical, archetypal and precedential features of red and black color in literary works created by authors belonging to Anglo-Saxon and East-Slavic cultures.

Our data show that in the texts belonging to both Anglo-Saxon and East-Slavic cultures the meaning of red and black is ambivalent. Some symbolic meanings of red (a sin and shame) are more clearly manifested in the Anglo-Saxon culture. Negative symbolic meaning of the color red is common for both cultures and reveals itself through the images of war. In these cases, the color is used to describe danger, blood, death, violence. The use of the color red in the sense of precaution or evil premonition is a literary device in G. Chesterton’s detective stories, where the red sunset symbolizes a murder to happen soon. The common positive image for both cultures is a red flower with the symbolic meaning of love. In the analyzed works of English-speaking authors the image of a red flower symbolizes fire. Thus, the image in each case reaches the archetypal depths based on the basic values of fire, sleep/death, Eros. With the latter is also associated the symbolic meaning of a holiday, miracles, etc., found in the texts of both cultures, but these values are more clearly manifested in the works of Ukrainian and Russian authors.

The black color in the texts of both cultures is associated with danger, misfortune, suffering, darkness, hopelessness, etc. However, black often symbolizes mystery, wisdom, strength, wealth, elegance and restraint, as well as designates people with dark skin. It is used to describe people with attractive appearance. These

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meanings of black can be traced in the texts of both Anglo-Saxon and East-Slavic cultures.

The color red in the book of St. Crane symbolizes death, war, disagreements, flames, blood, cowardice, meanness, victory and courage which the main character was able to win, overcoming fear. Black symbolizes death, deceit and mystery of the night, watching for danger. Similar symbolic significance of red (blood, deceit, anger, worries about health) and black (danger, fear) colors occurs in O. Wilde's story, but they are reinterpreted in a humorous way. Red is also a picturesque detail in the descriptions of autumn colors. Black, in some cases, has a positive implication (elegance, good taste, prosperity, wealth). In R. Kipling's stories both colors are used mainly in a positive context for describing wildlife, its laws, physiological and emotional state of the characters.

The **theoretical implications** of the research are determined by its contribution to the contrastive study of red and black color symbolic usage in the literary works which belong to the Anglo-Saxon culture and the East-Slavic works. Its **practical application** lies in the fact that the obtained data can be used in Academic courses of Text Interpretation, Ethno-Psycholinguistics, Ethno-Cultural Study, Linguistic and Cultural Study. The research could as well serve a certain guide to another culture as it enhances better understanding of its representatives' color stereotypes, basing on color impacts upon human psychology.

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AS THE MEANS OF CROSS-BOARDER COOPERATION

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