MONY ALMALECH

ADVERTISEMENTS:
SIGNS OF FEMININITY AND THEIR CORRESPONDING COLOR MEANINGS

АКАДЕМИЧНО ИЗДАТЕЛСТВО „Проф. МАРИН ДРИНОВ“
MONY ALMALECH

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PREFACE

ALMALECH’S THEORY OF COLORS

This book is submitted by Professor Mony Almalech, Dr. Habil. – Institute for Bulgarian Language, Bulgarian academy of science under the financial support of the Bulgarian academy of science and Israeli academy of science. From the Israeli side the participant was Prof. Sasha Weitman, Ph.D. from Tel-Aviv University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department for Sociology and Anthropology.

The monograph represents an example of the unique partnership and the high moral support of the participants. Almalech sites scrupulously whenever he uses slots of the manuscript of Weitman on signs of femininity.

The final result is a monograph of Prof. Almalech consisting of two main parts – the first one can serves as a textbook on Semiotics of colors, the second is a research on the color meanings and their corresponding meanings to the signs of femininity.

The contribution of Almalech is the developing of the Semiotics of colors and its application to the world of advertisements.

Almalech draws our attention on the semiotic differences between visual colors and the linguistic color terms. He recognized two forms of existence of the language of the colors – Verbalized and Visual (non-verbalized). The visual colors are percept by the ocular perception, i.e. all colors are percept simultaneously. The verbalized form is when we use the natural language to designate color. The verbalized Color language is subordinate to the linear or syntax order of the natural language. Almalech used the Test of Free Linguistic Associations (of Kent-Rossanof) to form the Bulgarian Norm of associations on colors (Appendix 1). The list of word-associations (Appendix 1) is taken as a dictionary of non-color meanings of colors. In his previous book in English – Balkan Folk Color Language Almalech proves a list of universal and non-universal color meanings of Visual colors in folklore marriage and burial. He used the Prototype theory of Rosch and Lakoff to comment the Norm of associations and the list of visual color meanings.

Almalech relates the verbalized associative non-color meanings of different words (basic color terms white, black, red, etc.; prototype terms light, darkness, sun, fire, blood, sky, sea, etc.; prototype rival terms linen, cherry, duckling, ruby, wine, sapphire, etc.; terms for the basic features of the prototypes clean, pure, immaculate for light; hot, warm for fire; fresh for plants etc.) to the non-
color meanings of the visual colors in folklore. He finds a small kern of mutual universal meanings which become a semiotic key for decoding the messages of advertisements.

The colors and the signs of femininity are described by Almalech as independent sign systems in terms of the semiotic triangle of Frege. The previous researches of Almalech on colors gave him the possibility to trace semantic and semiotic links between the signs of femininity and the colors. The analysis of 44 advertisements (pictures in Appendix 2) is the second main part of the book.

We become participants in a live and dynamic process of decoding the relations between the two sign systems such as synonymy and antonymy. Some of these relations are unique for every ad, and some of them are universal. Here our suspicions are unclouded by the use of the prototype theory of Rosch and Lakoff. Almalech arises an important problem—“How we should think about Sapir-Whorf hypothesis vs. Prototype theory?” His answer is we can recognize elements of validity of linguistic relativity where at the area of advertisements a bunch of national cultural features could be observed (Bulgaria, Israel). At the same time some universal prototype motivated meanings of the colors are in function.

According to Almalech the synonymy and antonymy between colors and between colors and the signs of femininity are part of subconscious communication among humans. This fact is bolded by Almalech in his effort to unveil some of the manipulative channels and social importance of advertisement industry. One of these manipulative channels is ‘saying twice the same thing’ borrowed by talented ad-makers from mystical and sign content of the folklore. In his previous books Almalech proves the high effectiveness of this semiotic tool widely used in rural and primitive cultures.

May be the most valuable result of this book of Mony Almalech is the conclusion that despite the successful use of folklore matrices such as ‘saying twice the same thing’ the world of advertisements misses the most important intention and semantics of the ritual’ colors – the preserving and reproducing power of their positive magic. The ads are manipulating us by subconsciously readable messages which are not pinpointed on our survival but on buying goods. The pragmatic principle of lie works here excellent because, as Almalech points out, we all know subconsciously the universal meanings of colors. Finally, many ads work on our soul but not on our pocket.

In his books Mony Almalech showed that he is quite familiar with the color theories of Plato, Goethe, Schopenhauer. Now, Almalech draws current cognitive, ethnolinguistic, psycholinguistic methods and theories to build his complex semiotic theory of color as a communication system.

The book can be used both by students of semiotics or by advertisement specialists. It might be of interest for semioticians, anthropologists, modern linguistic orientated persons, philosophers or readers angry with the advertisement industry.

Prof. Vassil Rainov, Dr. Habil.
Mony Almalech

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About the author
Mony Almalech (1954) is a professor at the New Bulgarian University and a guest professor at the Institute for Bulgarian Language with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. His Ph.D. Dissertation (1990) is on Bulgarian Grammar and his Dr. Habil. Dissertation (2006) is on the Semiotics of color in the Pentateuch. The scientific interests of Almalech are in the fields of Bulgarian language, Hebraic studies and Semiotics. His development was influenced by a two-year specialization with Prof. Dimitri Segal at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1993-94). In Jerusalem, Almalech created his first book in English - Balkan Folk Color Language (1996). Almalech is author of the first Hebrew-Bulgarian Dictionary (2004). His knowledge of Hebrew has allowed him to analyse the original text of the Bible in comparison with various translations, applying the tools of linguistics, semiotics, linguistic anthropology, ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, cognitive linguistics. The first volume of his Biblical Hermeneutic project, Color in the Torah, was published in 2006, the second volume, The Light in The Old Testament – in 2010. The interdisciplinary semiotic analysis of color is a distinctive feature of his monographs on color in folklore, literature, Bible and advertising: Balkan Folk Color Language (1996); Color and Word: Psycholinguistic and Pragmatic Aspects (2001); Roots: Semiotics of Color (2006); The Language of Color (2007). His first monograph, Semantics and Syntax, back in 1993 was on Bulgarian grammar, and he has never abandoned the subject: Language and Idiolect: The Language of Bulgarian Jews in Israel (2006). His last books are Biblical Donkey (2011) and Semiotic Researches of Brands: Semiotics of Color in the Advertisement (2011).

About the book
Mony Almalech draws our attention on the semiotic differences between visual colors and the linguistic color terms. He recognized two forms of existence of the language of the colors – Verbalized and Visual (non-verbalized). The visual colors are percept by the ocular perception, i.e. all colors are percept simultaneously. The verbalized form is when we use the natural language to designate color. The verbalized Color language is subordinate to the linear or syntax order of the natural language. Almalech used the Test of Free Linguistic Associations (of Kent-Rossanof) to form the Bulgarian Norm of associations on colors (ApPENDIX 1). The list of word-associations (ApPENDIX 1) is taken as a dictionary of non-color meanings of colors. In his previous book in English – Balkan Folk Color Language – Almalech proves a list of universal and non-universal color meanings of Visual colors in folklore marriage and burial. He used the Prototype theory of Rosch and Lakoff to comment the Norm of associations and the list of visual color meanings.

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Prof. Vassil Raynov, Dr. Habil.