

## *The Beauty of B&W Cinematography*

The way we cognize color is through things. Things are painted in colors and we say which color is which by looking at colors on things. A painter colors on something as a graphic designer puts a shape of color on a digitally created layer. Color is a characteristic of things apart from their texture. Color takes the shape and form of its thing like water does of its container. But is there a way through which we can observe color on its own detached from things that contain it?

When we see a film filmed in black and white, rather than “not seeing color,” we *imagine colors* as if they are painted on the things that are inside the frame. Black and white cinematography makes us *experience colors detached from things that contain them* by allowing us to color the film. And because we color the black and white films as we watch them, the black and white films are much more organic and bears more weight than other films that are colored. Black and white films are heavier than those of color because it makes cinema that is already extremely psychological even more psychological by evoking our imagination.

What black and white cinematography essentially does is that it allows the cinema viewers to *re-cognize the things that they already know*. A cup projected on screen is filmed in black and white. By the contrast of it, we know that there is some color on that cup. But a significant characteristic of that cup (its color), which is a part that gives definition to its existence, is now up to the imagination of others to decide. So, the being of that cup remains mysterious.

It is a common mistake to say that black and white cinematography is a series of photographed frames that lacks in color. It does not lack in color, but rather it exhibits true color – that which is manifested by the works of our effortless imagination. Black and white cinematography is a choice, not a cheap filmmaking path.

Putting our imagination to work without effort, black and white cinematography should be the choice for directors who want to expand their vision and at the same time have a deeper understanding between cinema and the being of nature. Because cinema is a nostalgic art, filming in black and white makes us *re-cognize* the director’s vision of nostalgia rather than feeding it to us as color cinematography often does.

Instead of continue writing, I would like to finish by suggesting few cinematic masterpieces with enormous visions that are filmed in black and white:

- 1) *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman)
- 2) *8 ½* (Federico Fellini)
- 3) *L'avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni)
- 4) *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese)

If you don’t like them, then well...

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