CLOTHING FOR THE FAMILY

COLOR AND COSTUME

One cannot consider the subject of dress without at the same time considering color. Daily each woman is called upon to combine colors to complete her ensemble. The combination of colors selected, through the relationship which they bear to each other and to the person may be harmonious and increase the attractiveness of the wearer—or the result may be entirely opposite.

Through an intelligent understanding of the principles of color any woman may select pleasing color combinations and may use colors to express her personality and to attain individuality. The purpose of this lesson is to present these color principles and their application to dress.

I.—Source of Color.

When sunlight strikes certain objects it is all reflected back to us and we call the object white or all the light is absorbed by the object, none being reflected back to our eyes and we speak of the object as black. Or the object may absorb all the light but the red rays and reflect those back to our eyes and we speak of the object as red. The colors which go to make up sunlight may be seen by passing the light through a glass prism or raindrops, as in the case of a rainbow, giving red, yellow, green, blue, violet. These are called simple hues.

The overlapping or mixing of these simple hues gives us five compound hues—yellow-red, green-yellow, blue-green, purple-blue, and red-purple. These ten colors form the color circle. Colors which appear opposite on the color wheel if mixed produce neutral gray in pigments or white in lights. Colors appearing opposite each other in color wheel are called complementary colors.

II.—Attributes of Colors.

All colors have certain attributes in common.

First, each color has a certain property which distinguishes it from other colors and is the property for which the color named, or the **Hue** of the color.

Second, each color has a certain amount of light or dark. This attribute is spoken of as **Value**. Those colors having much light are spoken of as high in value or as tints of the color. Those having much dark are spoken of as low in value or shades of the color.

Third, any color may be extremely bright or intense or it may be very gray. This attribute is spoken of as **Intensity** or **Chroma** and refers to the amount of pure color present in a hue.

The attributes of Value and Intensity are equally important with Hue in using colors to secure harmonious result.

Effect of Value on Personal Coloring. Dark values take away color, light values add color to the complexion. To subdue too rosy color use any dark color except the color complementary to that in the skin.

Effect of Intensity on Personal Coloring. Bright colors deaden dull colors of the same hue. To intensify blue eyes one should wear a gown which repeats the blue of the eyes or a blue which is slightly duller than the eyes. A small amount of bright blue will cause the eyes to look more blue. (Repetition of color.)

The law of areas in color states that brilliant color should be used in small amounts—Elephant and red bird.

III.—Qualities of Color.

1. Temperature.
   - Warm colors: Red, yellow, yellow-red, red-purple.
   - Cool colors: Green, blue-green, blue, blue-purple.
   - Neutral or border colors: Yellow-green, purple.

The complexion colors are yellow, yellow-red, red, purple-red. Of these colors red and yellow-red are so much warmer than red-purple and yellow that they are termed warm while red-purple and yellow are termed cool. A true blonde with golden hair, cool blue eyes, and blue-purple coloring would be a cool type. A brunette with brown hair and eyes and orange-red coloring would be a warm type. One should select colors harmonizing with their type.

2. The law of Simultaneous Contrast states that colors are modified in their appearance by the proximity to other colors.

   a. Colors are influenced in their darkness or lightness by the darkness or lightness of the colors adjoining them. Dark colors appear light upon dark background and light colors appear lighter upon a dark background. Make application to costume color. Values which are alike or similar neutralize each other.

   Dark colors on a dark ground are weak and should be separated by a line of light. Light colors on a light ground are weak and should be separated by a line of dark. Make application to costume color.

   b. Colors are influenced in their hue by adjoining colors.

   Each color throws its complement into the neighboring color. Therefore each color appears brightest when with its complement. If yellow is placed near red, red throws its complement blue-green into the yellow giving it a greenish hue and yellow adds its complement blue-purple to red making it appear purplish. Make applications to cosutme color.

IV.—To Force Colors of Hair, Eyes, or Complexion.

Use the complementary color.

Provide a value contrast.

Use same hue in large amounts if low in intensity or in small touches if brilliant colors.

To Subdue Yellow in the Skin.

Avoid bright colors in large areas, unrelieved black near the face and tans or gray near the value of the skin.

Use dull warm or cool colors to harmonize with the skin.

Use small amounts of bright trimming.

V.—Costume Color Harmonies.

Colors harmonize through likeness or contrast.

Harmonies of Likeness.

a. One hue harmony (monochromatic) made by using varying values or intensities of one hue.

b. Related color harmony (anologous)—harmony of colors which claim relationship through a common hue. Analogous colors lie next each other in the color circle.

c. Colors may also be harmonized by the addition of a common characteristic of grayness—a grayed harmony.

d. Dominant color harmony results when small bits of color are added to a background color.

Harmonies of Contrast.

a. Complementary harmony—harmony of the colors exactly opposite each other on color wheel.

Avoid using complementary colors in their fullest intensity. Also it is best not to use complementary colors in equal amounts.

Completed color harmony results through the addition to a related color harmony of the complement of the principal color of the related harmony.

VI.—Color for Types and Occasions.

A dress may be a perfect symphony of color upon the hanger but this symphony will be destroyed if the gown appears upon the wrong individual or is worn in the wrong social setting.

Color and Occasion.

The color of the gown must suit its purpose and occasion. Light, delicate and intense color belongs to carefree social hours, especially to evening wear. Neutral darker colors are more appropriate for street, office and afternoon wear. House dresses may be of any color which becomes and suits the personality of the wearer.

Color and Season.

Shades of the warm colors are beautiful for cold weather but shades and tints of the cool colors are more appropriate for warm weather.

Color and Age.

As one advances in years the dress material should increase in richness and decrease in brightness. Grayed colors harmonize with the decreasing color of skin.

Color and Size.

1. White and all tints do not absorb much light, are luminous, and therefore, increase the apparent size of an object.

2. Black and all grayed colors of low value absorb light and cause the figure to look smaller, but they emphasize the silhouette.

3. Warm, brilliant colors and strong contrasts in color increase the apparent size.

4. Warm colors in low intensity and medium or light value are kindest to the too slender figure.

Color and Personality.

Personal Clothing: The coloring of the skin, hair and eyes of a person should be considered in selecting colors for costumes. The color should never counteract but rather enhance the natural colorings. It has been said "Every color is fashionable provided it is becoming."

Color is becoming—When it harmonizes with the coloring of the wearer. When it makes the skin look clear and healthy. When it intensifies instead of neutralizes the color of hair and eyes.

Color is unbecoming—When it neutralizes natural coloring. When it emphasizes skin shadows making the wearer look older or tired.

After determining the personal colorings one has at least two safe color choices. Take, for example, the medium brunette whose eyes and hair is grayed orange, with a tint of tangerine in the color of the cheek. Harmony of self-tone would dictate orange-yellows and browns, complementary harmony would say blues for the costume color. Either color scheme would be harmonious.

Psychology of Color.

Colors seem to have a marked effect upon the wearer. Also the wearer may select colors to express certain ideas or characteristics. Colors seem to express different things to different people. Luckiesh gives the language of color as:

Scarlet—Arresting, gay, blare of trumpets.
Red or Crimson—Passion, stimulation.
Orange-red—Glowing, quality, flame, hospitality.
Deep Orange—Heat of flame, exciting, suffocation and passion.
Yellow—Gay, light, clarifying, happy, joyous.
Yellow-green—Smiling, cheerful (irritating to some).
Green—Peaceful, cool, restful, restrained.
Blue—Sedate, sober, quiet, calm, cool, tranquil, formal.
Green-blue—Stimulating.
Violet—Subduing, serious, quiet, suggesting mysticism.
Purple—Regal, pompous, stately.
White—Purity, virginity.
Black—Mourning, without hope, dignity.

Color and Texture.

Texture plays a very important part in color selection. First, it influences the becomingness of a color. Georgette, crepes, satin, velvet and cheviot represent many textures which are transparent, dull, shiny, soft and lustrous, or coarse and rough. A color which is wearable in transparent fabric may be wholly unwearable in satin, with the reflecting high lights of its surface, etc.

And then, the texture increases the value of the color. Rich, beautiful textures may become more attractive than color, but on the other hand, richness of color may compensate for the less gorgeous fabrics.

Color and the Wardrobe.

When one has not an unlimited clothing allowance greater satisfaction will result if the color scheme is planned for the entire wardrobe rather than for the individual frocks. This enables one to select one general wear garment, as coat or hat, which will be a pleasing accompaniment to several frocks. Monotony may be avoided by use of small touches of color in accessories.

How Color May be Added to the Costume.

Color accents may be added in many ways, as long as they appear a necessary part of the original plan of the frock, and the garment gains in attractiveness and does not appear spotted through such addition.

Jabots, ties and collars.
Ribbon trimmings and pipings.