

The discursive configuration, from the word to the image: *Duality* of Rufino Tamayo and the origin of art

Alfredo Zarate Flores, PhD.¹, Natalia Gurieva, PhD.^{2*} and Gonzalo Gabriel Bautista Vargas³

¹University of Guanajuato, Campus Irapuato Salamanca, Carretera Salamanca - Valle de Santiago km 3.5 + 1.8 Comunidad de Palo Blanco, Salamanca, Gto. C.P. 36885, Mexico
Email: alfredo.zarate@ugto.mx

²University of Guanajuato, Campus Irapuato Salamanca, Carretera Salamanca - Valle de Santiago km 3.5 + 1.8 Comunidad de Palo Blanco, Salamanca, Gto. C.P. 36885, Mexico
Email: n.gurieva@ugto.mx

³University of Guanajuato, Campus Irapuato Salamanca, Carretera Salamanca - Valle de Santiago km 3.5 + 1.8 Comunidad de Palo Blanco, Salamanca, Gto. C.P. 36885, Mexico
Email: gonzalo.b@gmail.com

***Corresponding Autor**

Published: 19 July 2019

Copyright © Flores et al.

Abstract:

The relation between literature and the visual arts is not new and means for us the installation of a space of cultural intertextuality. The imbrication between expressive manifestations of different modalities and configurations has accompanied the history of art and is a recurring motive in artistic expression. The production of visual images or visual products from literary, narrative or poetic supports is a assemblage, that Roland Barthes identifies as the construction of a myth. In this article we analyzed mural Duality from the prospective of the model of actants of Greimas. This piece of art inaugurates a new stage of Tamayo's painting because it interprets the pre-Hispanic aesthetic system from a contemporary prospective: the totality of the work is the unification of the modern with the old. In the realization of this mural, Tamayo elaborated his own vision, combining the myths and of diverse styles belonging to pre-Hispanic art.

Keywords: Visual art, Literature, Rufino Tamayo, narrative, Duality, analisis, pre-Hispanic myths, mural.

1. Introduction

The discursive configuration of poetry and painting, the permanent production of images that become visual productions from the literature, is not only growing, but also it is absolutely necessary to reformulate this relationship from the prospective of an “imbrication between word and image, and to address the institutional dimensions of delimitation in the general framework of culture, both of the arts and disciplinary discourses on them.” as Antonio Monegal points out. (Monegal, 2000, pp. 17-18). The relationship between the visual arts and literature is manifested from the creation of an existential link between the plane of expression and the plane of content, between the imbrication of a signal, an icon or a symbol, with a discursive scope different from that in which it manifests itself.

In the *Painting Literature Analogy*, Wendy Steiner alludes to the historical difficulties existing in the justification of the relationship between painting and literature and opts for an analysis of the modalities of meaning that each develops. These modalities can be understood from the assumption of several semiological, iconological or semiotic discourses. In this sense, when Steiner returns to the phrase that Plutarch attributes to Simónides de Ceos that painting *issilent poetry* and poetry *painting that speaks*, we face a problem of meaning of what, in logic of Charles Sanders Peirce is an icon (Steiner, 2000, pp. 31-32). We believe, as Jean Laude points out in “On the Analysis of Poems and Paintings,” that it is possible to “link poetry with painting [and what is action] implies, in particular, making a choice between the elements to be considered. *Hic jacet lepus*” (Laude, 2000, p. 105).

From these reflections we want to postulate that, being expressions resulting from representation, “word and image -accused by Áaron Kibédi- can appear simultaneously or consecutively” (Kibédi Varga, 2000, p. 112). Literature and painting, literature and cinema, poetry and image, image and thought are permanently overlapped and that is why we can say that the production that takes place in one of them is part of an intercultural and dialogical configuration.

However, in the case of painting, illustration or engraving, when the text precedes the image, we can see an illustration, as it is possible to see in the engravings that Gustave Doré, has made in relation to the representation of the Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote of La Mancha, the Fables of La Fontaine, the stories of Edgar Allan Poe. On the other hand, if the image precedes the text we are confronted with what is known as an *écfrasis* and consists of a precise, detailed and animated

description of an object such as we can find in Canto XVIII of *The Iliad* where the reliefs are described Hephaestus worked on the shield of Achilles.

Regarding this type of relationship Mario Praz warns, in *Mnemosyne, The parallelism between literature and the visual arts* (1970), that thanks to the *Ut pictura poesis* and the condition that we pointed out earlier of Simónides de Ceos, the painters were based on the literary texts (especially poetic), to make their compositions. This makes us think that what is at stake in the relationship between the art of words and the art of images is metaphor, as noted by Wendy Steiner (Steiner, 2000, pp. 26-27). We can say that, poetry and painting constitute series that, each separately, are linked not with each other, but with an identical sequence of a common cultural territory (Laude, 2000, p. 104). This allows us to say that literary manifestation and the visual expression of it is oriented from the prospective of a textual journey or from an intertextual journey where image and text refer to each other as a cultural intertext. A planetary intercommunication transports referents and recognitions of different characteristics.

If we assume that the notion of text can be extended indefinitely to various discursive supports, as the semiology of the hand of Roland Barthes has expressed it, it is possible to affirm, as Jesús Camarero points out, that “a work is the global synthesis of meanings located inside the text *T* (Hiptertext) and related to each other to be able to concatenate their textual components *t* (hipotext), then, intertextuality could be conceptualized as the presence of *tn* microtexts in a macro text” (Waiter, 2008, p. 42).

For us, the approach to the phenomenon of artistic inspiration comes from the forms of expression that are used in each discourse and that allow us to elaborate, from a symbolic content, the association with new horizons of interpretation or, the appearance of those expressions that we find in the literary phenomenon with diverse supports. That is, we take an expression out of a literary text to place it in another symbolic space and develop, through a different medium, what in everyday language we call, in the case of the visual arts, a metaphor of the image.

2. Art of mexican painter Rufino Tamayo.

There are a lot of approaches between literature and art in Mexican painting. Rufino Tamayo is one of the painters who has linked these expressions. In *Duality* (see image 1.) Tamayo's artistic expression manages to manifest itself as a form of performance of the pre-Hispanic myth of the creation of the world and can become an image through the action of the muralist. In his book, *Ancient Art in Mexico* (1970) Paul Westheim mention that: "Pre-Hispanic art does not want to entertain; He speaks of the old and very old, of the origin and meaning of all being "(p.77), Tamayo has discovered that condition in *Dulity* and explores it always starting from the myth of the origin to that all art refers according to Maurice Blanchot, Georges Bataille and Juan García Ponce.



Image 1. *Duality* (1964), Rufino Tamayo, mural located in the National Museum of Anthropology and History, Mexico City, Mexico.

[photo taken by author in September 2018].

According to Maurice Blanchot, if the work of art always links us with *Lascaux*, it is because there lies the origin of art and humanity. According to the French thinker: “what is satisfies us in *Lascaux* is the thought that we are witnessing the true birth of art” (p 9). The idea of origin with which Blanchot identifies *Lascaux* is also expressed in the pictorial work of Rufino Tamayo. For the Oaxacan painter, art links us with what conform us from the depths of ourselves. In this sense, we want to link the plastic work of Tamayo with *Lascaux* and the permanent remission of both manifestations to the origin of the work of art. If art is always linked to the origin and the work of Rufino Tamayo reminds us of that origin, it is because as Juan García Ponce points out: “his modernity is that of the painting of our time and its antiquity, we must go and look for it in mural” (Garcia Ponce, 1982, p.82).

We know where the origin is because, thanks to experience, we look for answers about it. These answers refer us to an infinite search for the expression of ourselves that transcends us because it surpasses us and, at the same time, anchors us to the world. Therefore, to attend the birth of art is to assist the origin of man, the expression of confrontation of the subject with the world of which he is aware and which he intends to make his own by the construction of a symbol that expresses that experience. Rufino Tamayo is aware of this expressive need and of the importance that the origin has and the permanent search that it arouses. For this, Juan García Ponce affirms that the work of Rufino Tamayo: “consists in that purpose of deciphering the meaning of the world, of everyday reality, and of one's own personal existence through its constant confrontation with the great mythical pre-images.” (p. 170). *Lascaux* is the source of that experience and for that reason, Tamayo explores the tribal condition of man to reach the goal of his expression. The search for Tamayo begins in its indigenous roots in which it finds the origin of humanity. There, in what he feels proper, in what is local for him, lies his universality. Tamayo finds in the indigenous of his condition the dichotomy of identity that is always his

own and alien at the same time. This dichotomy is expressed in a special way in *Duality*.

From our prospective, the work of the Mexican painter connects contemporary art with prehistoric art because its plastic expression is the bridge that unites primitive man with a modern man. García Ponce refers to the spaces where Tamayo's themes are developed and says that these are worlds of stone that he creates from painting. We consider that in his analysis, García Ponce, matches the work of Tamayo with the plastic expression of *Lascaux* because, using the proposal of Georges Bataille about ugliness, both expressions manifest, paradoxically, their beauty by the apparent ugliness of their contents. The grotesque acquires in both its aesthetic splendor. According to García Ponce: "all these paintings are surprising with their beauty coming out of an apparent ugliness, they give us the sensation of being entering a new world" (García Ponce, 2002, page 171). In this sense, Tamayo leads us to the birth of art and the origin of the plastic expression in which man confronts the world and is surprised by it. This is the same meaning that Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot give to *Lascaux*.

According to García Ponce: "Tamayo is a complete owner of his world and he acts like so" (García Ponce, 1982, p.185), creating this new dimension by color, whose magic becomes petrified, and by obtaining this condition he refers us to the origin of art, as we have already noted with Blanchot: "what is the beginning in *Lascaux* is the beginning of an art and whose beginnings, we can say here, are lost in the night of time" (p.15) . This condition is decidedly observable in the work of the Mexican painter.

García Ponce believes that "painting gives us the world and forces us to see it as it really is: always changing. The stillness of the painting is a movement; in its eternity there is a time" (García Ponce, 1982, p.83). Raquel Tibol collects various opinions of Rufino Tamayo in his book *Texts of Rufino Tamayo* (1987). In this book, the painter affirms: "modern art, fundamentally, seeks another dimension. Modern painting seeks to express *time*, introduce it as the fourth dimension in the artworks." (Tibol, 1987, p.31). This search for a new expression is related to the search for the origin and turn the painter into a navigator of time. In that navigation we are witnesses of the immensity of the cosmos and that is why the universe imposes itself on us and forces us to see ourselves as an overflowing smallness where we are never the same.

In *Duality* Tamayo "devised one of the most significant scenes of modern Mexican painting and a synthesis of his own aesthetic ideas" (Tamayo, 2013, p.6). This painting revives the indigenous worldview lost in the conquest. The search for the origin has led Tamayo to revive the myths of pre-Hispanic Mexico and, due to this, in his painting we find his indigenous spirit as the central theme of his poetic development.

The Mexican painter represents the attitude that emerges from the aesthetic renovation. This renovation begins with the painter because, beyond representing traumatic events in the national history in that the indigenous has only triumphed in the murals; we find the rebirth of the Mexicans and daily life as a central element of its expression. That is why, in Tamayo, we accede to the universal for the representation of everyday Mexico.

Ana Torres writes an article entitled "Tamayo, a painter of rupture?" (2011), in that she states: "Tamayo calls himself an Indian to show that he did not have to look outside for the "primitive" expression." (page 10). Torres considers that the author of *Man before the infinite* (another famous work of Tamayo) proudly accepts his indigenous origin and, thanks to this condition, re-visualizes the local, his own, and is able to manifest the pre-Hispanic with a contemporary and avant-garde feature.

This allows us to observe that Tamayo develops a magical gaze focused on Mexican daily life that allows its viewers to access the mythical world and links it with its aesthetic manifestation. In this order of ideas, García Ponce points to the work as an expression that is not subject to the artistic canons of muralism even if it makes murals because it is not interested in serving political interests but personal aesthetic ideals. Tamayo finds in the search of his roots the reason for a trip to the past and the origin for that he recovers the lost: the identity. That is, Tamayo prefers to refer to the Cosmos rather than Mexican society. Under that condition begins to establish a basic idea of his pictorial expression: *Man before the infinite* is not the man of muralism, but Man that he does not know, what he does not understand. This condition of epistemological indetermination, in that the painter places the subject, allows him to begin a search of his personal configuration that leads him to make sense of his reality. Tamayo himself affirms this idea in an interview with Manuel González Casanova in 1967 when he describes art as: “the fifth essence of life”.

Rufino Tamayo is an artist who arrives at a unique style that characterizes his works. In relation to this characterization, Juan García Ponce affirms that in Tamayo's work, “[...] the tradition inherited from teachers such as Braque or Picasso, especially in regard to the use and understanding of the plastic space, soon transforms into an absolutely personal language” (García Ponce, 2002, p.168). This language is a universal language that contrasts with the predominate ideas in Mexico at the time of its production and evidences a problem that makes Tamayo a fundamental figure in the maturity of Mexican painting. In an essay titled, “Rufino Tamayo, reviving the myth”, Juan García Ponce confirms this distancing between Muralism and the painter by saying that: “the theme of Tamayo's painting is that of everyday life [...] and not the past of Mexico. Tamayo's work breaks with that past, it does not represent myths, he creates them, in order to give meaning to his reality”. (García Ponce, 2002, p.164)

The painting *Man before the infinite* (1950), for example, is a work where the reality in that we are living allows us to access a cosmic reality through a spiritual activity that leads us to the understanding of our spiritual dimension and evidence a feature that Wassily Kandinsky describes in his text of the spiritual in art when he considers that: “the general affinity of works, which does not weaken over time, but is enhanced, does not lie in form, in the external, but at the root of the roots, in the mystical content of art.” (Kandinsky, 1989, p 62). It is possible to say that, if Tamayo is the native who has found the origin, he has become a *primitive* man to begin the search of where he comes from. Man, being lost in a world he does not understand, stops and, at the same time, continues his way. This is the paradox of existence that puts Tamayo in the path of find his identity, in the infinite search of himself.

Through contemplation, man knows his reality and gives meaning to his existence. When man contemplates the cosmos, he realizes his place in the universe, in other words, when the man is contemplating the universe, he detaches himself from the reality that overwhelms him and finds the meaning he seeks: his origin.

3. Narratology and structural analysis.

In the narrative field, the analytical methodology of Vladimir Propp gives the way for literary and anthropological studies of a structuralist nature, as shown by the anthology titled *Structural Analysis of the Story*, in which the analysis of the literary phenomenon carried out by Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette, A.J. Greimas and others. We consider that the notion of “actant” proposed by A. J. Greimas coincides with the scheme about the spheres of action of *the hero, helper, villain, false hero, donor, dispatcher and princess* proposed by Propp. The association between Russian and French allows us to link the proposal of Greimas with the formalist analysis.

The semantic axes of Greimas are the structure, the message and the code. According to Roland Barthes, A. J. Greimas explains the function of the structure as “the classification of sets of the story that are considered as genres” (Barthes, 1990, p 41). Then, Greimas refers to the structure as the set of formal elements that any type of story manifests. If we assume this structural condition of the story we can understand the framework or structure as a basic or primary form of a story, for example, the myth. In its basic form, the myth is the story of someone creating something and this action involves areas of action in the logic of Propp or spheres of meaning of action according to Greimas.

In the opinion of Roland Barthes, Greimas considers that the message: “is what gives meaning to the succession of events through the narrative isotopy” (Barthes, 1990, p.41). That is, the objective message structure that we know as a framework. For example, in the biblical expression: “In the beginning there was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (Jn 1,1-ss); the message updates the original condition of the Christian God who is in the assumption of creating the world.

On the other hand, for Barthes, the code in proposal of Greimas supposes “the interpretation of the meaning of the text” (Barthes, 1990, p.43). With this term, Greimas, refers to the narrative system or the language that it has a cultural relationship that forces us to link the narrative expression with the context where it arises. According to Greimas, the context contains two significant properties: the first one, allows us to give meaning to the narrative from a cultural prospective and; for the second, we can mean the grammatical conditions of the actants with the functions they are developing.

Greimas groups the functions of the actants into six central axes grouped into pairs: subject-object, receiver-recipient and adjutant-opponent. As we know, he is trying to overcome the Propp model because it considers the Russian categories limited because they do not take into account the cultural content of the stories. Unlike Propp who proposes the notion of person, Greimas prefers the "subject actant" because he considers that, in the fantastic story, the subjects of the narration are not always people. This means that a character can perform various actantial functions in a story or that an actant can involve several characters in a story in their sphere of meaning.

Within the structural analysis of the story we find two fundamental elements in the understanding of the actantial structure: the context and the dictionary, that is, the framework of the narrative model. The context has two properties: the grammatical, to which the actants and their predicates belong, and the narrative, thanks to which the actants assume their function in the narrative syntagma. The context is presented as independent contents of the story, resulting in the mythological dictionary that is responsible for classifying the structural elements of the myth. This means that, according to specific cultural contents, the updating of the meaning of the actants is more or less precise according to the identification of the cultural meaning of the characters in the story.

Once the characterization of the analytical mechanisms proposed by Greimas and its implications for the story have been elaborated, we want to identify the notion of actant and its narrative implications in the work of Rufino Tamayo *Duality*.

4. Scheme of actants in *Duality* of Rufino Tamayo.

We are interested in highlighting the narrative elements present in *Duality*. This will allow us to carry out a semiology-narratological analysis of the mural that adorns the lobby of the National Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City.

It is important to say that we consider the work of Rufino Tamayo as a watershed in Mexican art due to its opposition to the muralist aesthetic and the importance it attaches to the cultural

universalism of our country in its aesthetic creed. We also need to say that the mural contains enough elements to identify a story in the structural sense in which we place the proposal of Greimas.

Julio Amador Bech believes that in *Duality* there are all the aesthetic ideals of the Oaxacan painter since in this mural: “he creates an unprecedented and modern vision of the cosmogony and aesthetics of the ancient Mexicans”. (Bech, 2011, p.99). *Duality* addresses themes of pre-Hispanic mythology. To support this, Amador Bech states that: “the mural depicts a fundamental cosmogonic theme of ancient Nahua mythology: the eternal conflict between Quetzalcoatl, under the figure of the feathered serpent, and the god Tezcatlipoca, in his zoomorphic manifestation of jaguar.” (Bech, 2011, p.98).

The painting is divided into two opposite parts. It relates the Nahua cosmogony that consists of the cosmic struggle of good and evil, day and night, Quetzalcoatl versus Tezcatlipoca. *Duality* is the struggle of opposites, symbolically and chromatically, the discourse of painting focuses on this opposition of elements that constitute it. On the one hand, the sun is rising and, on the other, the moon is falling. For us, besides the characters, color is an actant in Tamayo's mural. The chromatic contrast in the background shows the condition of struggle in the mural thanks to the opposition generated by the presence of warm and cold tones. In the characters we also find that opposition, first between them and later, with respect to the background. One of the aspects that draw attention in the mural is the opposition of the green with which Tamayo paints Quetzalcoatl juxtaposed to the red background and the chromatic opposition that it generates for the figure of Tezcatlipoca that is painted in warm colors and installed in relation to the Cold colors of the night sky.

The dynamic shape of the feathered serpent contrasts with the almost sculptural and static of the jaguar. In the axis of the jaguar, the lines and cuts manifested in the moon and the representation of the greater bear are rigid. On the side of the serpent, the circumference of the sun highlights the dynamism of the snake because it is in perfect harmony with the forms that accompany it. The silhouettes of the serpent and the jaguar form a triangle, their vertices are at the ends of the tail and the legs of the jaguar traverse the painting like a dagger. From this chromatic confrontation between the axes of the serpent and the jaguar is that we understand that Tamayo wants to reactivate the Nahua myth of the origin of the universe in *Duality*. According to Bech, in Tamayo's mural, we can see with precision that “the mythological combat between the principles that represent Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca gives rise to the success of the great cosmic eras” (Bech, 2011, p.101).

In the model of actants of Greimas there are six actants: *subject, object, opponent, assistant, sender and recipient*. Bech states that, in Nahua mythology, the myth of the creation of man occurs when Omeotl, “being dual, god and goddess, begot four sons: Tezcatlipoca red, identified with the east; Tezcatlipoca negro, identified with the north, the night and the place of the dead; Quetzalcoatl, identified with the color white, the west, the region of fertility and life and Huitzilopochtli, identified with the color blue and the southern region.” (Bech, 2011, p.103). Of these four gods, Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca will be responsible for the creation of the world and, to create it, they must kill Cipactli, who is a half-crocodile and half-fish deity.

To fulfill their mission, both gods must devise a plan that consists of a sacrifice on the part of Tezcatlipoca. He offers his foot to Cipactli to set a trap and his plan works by getting Cipactli to approach them and they immediately launch a fierce attack on her, managing to kill her by splitting her in two. From the death of Cipactli and its dismemberment, heaven and earth are formed.

Once this is accomplished, Omeotl hands the ancient bones to Quetzalcoatl and orders him to create man. There were four failed attempts at the creation of man and the ancient bones are sheltered

in the Mictlán. Bech describes this in the following terms: “Quetzalcoatl and Xolotl descend to the world of the dead and run through it facing different tests to which the gods of the underworld submit them. One of the most important myths of this heroic cycle is the one that tells how they recovered the bones of dead men going down to the underworld and created, from them, the humanity of the last cycle of creation.” (Bech, 2011, p.101). This last cycle is governed by the fifth sun that will ultimately be Quetzalcoatl.

Starting from this brief synthesis of the Nahua cosmogony, we can identify the two main actants in *Duality* and the role they have within the painting. Quetzalcoatl is the *subject* while Tezcatlipocatl is the *opponent*, the *object of desire* is the Sun, the *sender* is Omeotl, the *recipient* is the Man and the *assistant* is Xolotl.

It is necessary to notice that in *Duality* all the actantes are not represented explicitly. Xolotl does not appear, for example, in its zoomorphic manifestation as a Xoloitzcuintle, however, alludes to this figure with the red planet or evening Venus. In the Nahua cosmogony there is a moment when Venus and the Big Dipper coincide in the firmament. In this way, it is possible to link the mural with the original ritual of the Nahua world. In the Nahua worldview, the sun that represents Quetzalcoatl emerges on the horizon because he has defeated his brother. In this way, Tamayo links the Nahua universe with the origin and makes *Duality* the representation of this permanent search with which we have identified art from the prospective of Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, and Juan García Ponce.

According to Bech, Quetzalcoatl is a representation of the divinity, which mixes ethereal and earthly realms, which is the dichotomy sky-earth of the Mesoamerican deity. According to Amador Bech: Quetzalcoatl “appears as the main benefactor god of humanity. In addition to having created it, he is the one who gives human beings their food and teaches them science, particularly astronomy and the main leisures. Quetzalcoatl is the archetype of the wise man who practices right moral behavior” (Bech, 2011, p.101).

From the prospective of Amador Bech, Tezcatlipoca possesses the most diverse attributes of the Mexican pantheon: “He was related to the star gods, the moon and the gods of death, with evil and destruction. He was the “eternally young,” patron of sorcerers and warriors, as well as possessing the gift of ubiquity and omniscience.” (Bech, 2011, p.101).

In the model, the actant is, according to Greimas, that person who fulfills a certain role within the narrative development that can be individual or collective. The French theorist refers to this collective condition of the actant saying that: “in a story that was nothing more than a trivial love story that ended, without the intervention of the parents, with the marriage, the subject is at the same time the recipient, while the object is at the same time the sender of love. The four actants are there, symmetrical and inverted but synchronized in the form of two actors.” (Greimas, 1987, p 271). The previous thing supposes that, a single personage, concentrates two actants. In his article *The Actantial Scheme Explained* (2008), Ligia Saniz Balderrama suggests that an actant is defined: “not by a character but by the principles and means of action, a desire, a duty, a knowledge, nature and of variable intensity” (Saniz Balderrama, 2008, p.93).

In the proposal of Greimas, the subject actant is the one that wants an object. In the Nahua myth Quetzalcoatl wishes to defeat Tezcatlipocatl, but the desire of the first is not to defeat the second but to obtain by that struggle what he desires. If we place this narrative in the logic of Greimas, Quetzalcoatl is the subject, Tezcatlipocatl is the opponent, while the Sun the object of desire that articulates the whole story.

Greimas not only defines the actants also makes them interact with each other in different levels or axes. These axes are modes of articulation of the relationship between the actants and are described as: axis of desire, axis of communication and axis of power.

The French semiologist defines the *axis of desire* as the relation between *subject-object*. On this axis lies the action of the subject in his search for the object. The relationship between the *object* and the *subject* that defines this axis allows us to identify the obstacles that the subject faces and to which it must overcome. This axis corresponds to the *axis of desire*. This relationship corresponds to the vertical axis and articulates the relationship between the *subject* and the *object* that, in the case of the Nahua myth, occurs between Quetzalcoatl and the Sun.

The second axis corresponds to the *axis of the communication*. It establishes the relationship between the *sender* and the *recipient*, that is, between Omeotl and man. According to Sainz Balderrama, the *sender-recipient* axis is that of the control of values and as a consequence of ideology. It is the *axis of power* or *knowledge* or both at the same time.

The third axis corresponds to *power*, in this we find the relationship between the *adjutant* and the *opponent*, Xolotl and Tezcatlipocatl. This axis allows us to observe all the circumstances that the subject faces in his search for the object of desire. That is, in this axis, the actants are not necessarily characters, they can be attributes or defects.

Regarding the mythical stories, A.J. Greimas considers that: “in the mythical manifestation that interests us, we understand that the adjuvant and the opponent are no more than projections of the will to act and of the imaginary resistance of the same subject, judged beneficial or maleficent in relation to his desire” (Greimas, 1987, p 275). In this logic, Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatipocatl represent the condition with which Greimas validates the mythological story. That is, the Mesoamerican figures are nothing but projections of the will to act a certain action.

We agree with Bech in the interpretation of Tamayo's mural in the sense that, as stated by the Mexican researcher, *Duality* “refers to the essential principles that explain the origin and the foundation of all things: the dual principle that governs cosmos and is present in all its vital manifestations.” (Bech, 2011, p.99).

5. The meaning of colors in Rufino Tamayo's *Duality*.

In the work *Duality* the handling of the color is a distinctive element of Rufino Tamayo. The influences of Wassily Kandinsky, Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, the experience at the San Carlos Academy have shaped a particular way of handling tones that had not been seen in previous stages (Rodríguez, 2014, p.3). Rufino Tamayo is starting from the chromatic proposal of the simultaneous contrast. The actants work as a system of contrariety of subject-object or good-bad that Tamayo develops chromatically. Then, the color is not an underlying element and the structure of the mural but is constituted as an actant that works from the logic of pictorial discourse strengthening the narrative sense of the mural.

In the fraction of the right side of mural, where the jaguar is situated, the colors changed from the warm palette and their shades, to the cold colors; the floor on which the jaguar it is staying confirm a visible mixture of blue and red, both primary colors, a basic combination that gives different shades from purple to violet. Th night is presented in a blue primary color, that dominates in the entire night sky behind the jaguar. The animal is almost completely colored in orange, it is the result of the mixture of yellow and red, also two primaries colors. On the left side of mural, there is a plumed serpent resolved with cold colors - deep green and blue. The figure of the serpent attracts attention because of

its volumen. Artist used several planes at the time of drawing. This two-dimensional plane style Justino Fernández identified in the work of Rufino Tamayo as his own authentic style. The artist refined his style and found in two-dimensional painting the most appropriate mode of expression to make his sense and function of color, inventing superpositions of the colors in the most original and positively poetic way, since he remade the world, made his personal world, that gave us visions of a new and exciting balance (Fernández Justino, 1948, p.12).

In *Duality*, Rufino Tamayo resumes the use of shading that he had used intermittently in the previous decades. The fraction of the left side of mural is complemented by a firmament composed of different colors, worked again, by superposition. The first layer is dominated by *Mexican pink* or *pink of Tamayo* very popular and identified as very representative of the painter. The layers that we can see above are elaborated with orange and yellow color, and the mixture of this one with red. The use of the double dimension at the time of drawing allowed the painter to reach new chromatic horizons. To a large extent, the double plane in the works of Rufino Tamayo is one of the elements that contributed to the subject matter being subordinated to the formal qualities. In the case of *Duality*, the part of the serpent that is located in the second plane, is obscured with the application of black paint, which creates a visual game where deep green is visible in some fractions.

The dual use of color has always been one of the most demanded mechanisms in artworks of Tamayo when artist makes the color combinations by working with complementary colors that are opposite in the chromatic circle and uses also one of the contrasts of Johannes Itten - temperature contrast: cold-warm (Itten Johannes, 1960, p.94). Colors constructed from mixtures learned in the San Carlos Academy, taken from indigenous handicrafts, in creation and constant re-creation gave the result that we can observe in the paintings of Tamayo. Speaking of the functions of the colors inside the works that gives them meanings they respond to the idea of harmony and balance in composition or, in case of *Duality*, of opposition and tension.

All this allows us to say that, as an expression of an original condition of *Duality* of Rufino Tamayo has the same logic of the search for the origin of the expression and follows the same itinerary with which Bataille, Blanchot and García Ponce identify Lascaux and the art.

6. Conclusions

The Tamayo paintings refer to Lascaux caves because each painting is the entrance to those petrified universes where we find the birth of art. As for Maurice Blanchot, for Rufino Tamayo, art emerges from the darkness of the night. That is why, in *Lascaux*, man and time have consolidated in the bowels of the world. Creating a new dimension, the plastic dimension of the origin of humanity.

As we contemplate Tamayo's paintings, we enter their universes of the indigenous past where the identity of the Mexican lies. Man is inside a world that surpasses him and that he must mean to meet. That is, from our prospective, the search that Tamayo seeks to manifest in his painting. Through contemplation, man takes over the universe while understanding himself because he is who creates the reality from the search for its origin. Man becomes spirit therefore transcends and this transcendence leaves a trace that will remain impregnated in the bowels of the world.

By retaking, in *Duality*, the Nahua myth of the struggle between good and evil and the creation of world, Tamayo takes the story to a visual dimension making the relationship between the word and the image open horizons of understanding that involve endless of sensations born of the chromatic and narrative condition and updating the sentence of Simónides de Ceos while making evident that painting is *asilent poetry* and poetry a *talking painting*.

The analysis of Greimas allows us to identify the actants in the mural and establish that, in narratological terms, these actants suppose the confirmation of a narrative content of Tamayo's work and the confirmation that man is the object of desire on which he turns the pictorial configuration of Tamayo.

According to the analysis we have done, it is important to say that color is an actant in *Duality*. In the logic of Greimas, the actants work thanks to a system of opposition or contrariety. In *Duality*, Rufino Tamayo develops a chromatic proposal that strengthens our interpretation of color as a primordial narrative element in this mural. The colors that are opposed between the plane of the serpent (Quetzalcoatl) and the one of the jaguar (Tezcatipocatl) are, strictly speaking, actants and color is not an element juxtaposed to the discourse but, without that system of opposition of the chromatic palettes of these two planes where the characters interact, the sense of the mural remains inconclusive.

To conclude, we consider that Rufino Tamayo updates the pre-Hispanic condition of contemporary Mexico to link us with what we are and make us notice that *Duality* defines man, that the combat between opposites makes us what we are.

7. References

- [1] Barthes, R. (1990). *Análisis Estructural del Relato*. México: Premia.
- [2] Bataille, G. (2003). *Lascaux o el nacimiento del arte*. Cordoba, Argentina: Alcion editora.
- [3] Bech, J. (Diciembre de 2011). Figuras y narrativas míticas de lo indígena prehispánico en el mural Dualidad de Rufino Tamayo. *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, 23, 93-124.
- [4] Beristáin, H. (2003). *Diccionario de retórica y poética*. México: Porrúa.
- [5] Biemel, W. (1962). La estética de Hegel. *Convivium*.
- [6] Blanchot, M. (1976). La risa de los dioses. En *La amistad*. Madrid: Taurus.
- [7] Blanco Aguinaga, C. (1997-98). Sobre Estilística y Formalismo Ruso. *CAUCE Revista de Filología y su Didáctica*.(20-21), 29-44.
- [8] Camarero, J. (2008). *Intertextualidad, redes de textos y literaturas transversales en dinámica cultural*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
- [9] Cordero Reiman, K. (2013). *Construyendo Tamayo 1922-1935*. Fundacion Olga y Rufino Tamayo.
- [10] Garcia Ponce, J. (1982). *Las huellas de la voz*. México: Coma.
- [11] García Ponce, J. (2002). *La aparición de lo invisible*. Mexico: Aldus.
- [12] Greimas, A. J. (1987). *Semántica Estructural*. Madrid: Gredos.

- [13] Fernández, Justino (1948). *Rufino Tamayo*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)/Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas.
- [14] Itten, Johannes. (1960). *El Arte del Color*. Noriega Editores. México, D.F., 94 p.
- [15] Kandinsky, W. (1989). *De lo espiritual en el arte*. México: Premia.
- [16] Kibédi Varga, Á. (2000). Criterios para describir las relaciones entre palabra e imagen”. En A. Monegal, *Literatura y Pintura*. Madrid: ARCO/LIBRO.
- [17] Laude, J. (2000). Sobre el análisis de poemas y cuadros. En A. M. (1972), *Literatura y pintura* (págs. 89-108). Madrid: ARCO/LIBROS.
- [18] Literatura, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y. (2012). *Trayectos*. México: Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo.
- [19] Marcuse, M. (1983). *Eros y Civilización*. Madrid: Sarpe.
- [20] Monegal, A. (2000). Diálogo y comparación entre las artes. En A. Monegal, & A. Monegal (Ed.), *Literatura y pintura* (págs. 9-21). Madrid: ARCO/LIBROS.
- [21] Posada, C. C. (1998). Estudio morfológico del cuento maravilloso, de Vladimir Propp. En C. C. Posada, *Manual de teoría literaria* (págs. 21-43). Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia
- [22] Rodríguez, Arturo (2014). *Tamayo y la Evolución del Color*. Published at <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2014/01/12/sem-arturo.html> visitedat [01.04.2019]
- [23] Saniz Balderrama, L. (1 de 2008). El esquema actancial explicado. *Punto Cero*, 13(16), 91-97.
- [24] Shklovsky, V. (2002). El arte como artificio. En T. Todorov, *Teoría de la Literatura de los formalistas Rusos* (págs. 55-70). México: Siglo XXI editores.
- [25] Steiner, W. (2000). “La analogía entre la Pintura y la literatura”. En A. Monegal, & A. Monegal (Ed.), *Literatura y pintura* (págs. 25-49). Madrid: Arco/Libros.
- [26] Tamayo, M. (11 de 02 de 2013). *Museo Tamayo*. Obtenido de Museo Tamayo: <http://museotamayo.org/uploads/publicaciones/Semblanza-Tamayo-2013-es.pdf>
- [27] The Museum of Modern Art. (1993). *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.
- [28] Tíbol, R. (1987). *Textos de Rufino Tamayo*. México: UNAM.
- [29] Todorov, T. (1978). *Teoría de la literatura de los formalistas rusos*. Madrid: Siglo veintiuno editores.

- [30] Torres, A. (2011). *Rufino Tamayo. ¿Un pintor de ruptura?* México.
- [31] Traba, M. (1994). *Arte de América Latina 1900-1980*. Washington: Banco Interamericano de desarrollo.
- [32] Vasconcelos, J. (1948). *La raza cósmica*. Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe.
- [33] Westheim, P. (1970). *Arte antiguo en México*. México: Biblioteca Era.