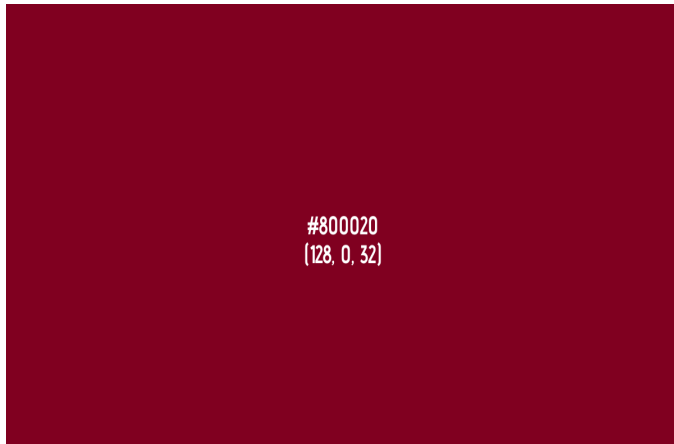


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Midterm Essay



The color Burgundy is a hue encompassing a dark shade of red with a little bit of green and blue color (purple). It is known as one of the many shades deriving from the primary color red and with the addition of purple it results in a cool undertone. It can often be confused with the shade of maroon because it appears to have some brown undertones. Burgundy was given its name after finding out about its similarity with the red wine color that derived from the Burgundy vineyards in

France. Being that Burgundy is the name of this region in France, it was picked up as the name to represent this color in the 1800's. The rich hue in Burgundy led to its association with the high class society. Its hue is also associated with adjectives such as sophistication, ambition, power, prosperity, and class. Since the color indicated powerful energy and high ambition, it was a color that was used within the clothing worn by high class. Women of high status would wear dresses with solid colors of Burgundy at big events or at meetings. Anyone who tried to display their power would use this color to demonstrate that standing. Due to its cool undertone, Burgundy became popular in the 1990s in both fashion and beauty. It was one of the popular shades used for lipstick especially amongst women in the goth culture. In the present time, Burgundy is found in everything from clothing to furniture to artwork. One of the other symbolisms it resonates with is that because of its rich dark hue, it is also seen as a representation of Jesus' blood. So, in religious form, Burgundy is also mostly used in Catholic school's uniform or sometimes in the Pope's shoes.

An artwork that uses Burgundy in its piece is Mark Rothko's *Untitled* in 1960. Mark Rothko was born in Russia in 1903 and moved to the United States with his family in 1913. Rothko is known to be an abstract painter and most of his work dealt with elements of color, shape, depth, composition and scale. In 1949, he created this compositional format that he continued using throughout his career. These compositions consisted of rectangular forms aligned on top of each other on a vertical rectangular canvas. In each of these pieces,



Rothko would either play around with color, large scales, and space. This became known as a Color Field painting technique. With color he would create space by using large scales and using color contrast between similar hues. He would experiment by layering various colored rectangles on top of colored backgrounds, to see how it reacts. He wanted to create that sense of deep space when the viewer stands in front of it. He wanted the viewer to feel as if they were falling into the painting.

His piece *Untitled*, 1960 is said to be the peak of his career standing at 5 foot 9 inches high. In this piece, Rothko has left the bright color tones behind and started using deep reds and burgundies to give off a more romantic and spiritual feeling. This piece fits along with his other contemporary pieces he has done. These other pieces contained brighter hues focusing on its luminosity. Determined to bring out strong emotions from the viewer, Rothko used the rich hues of burgundy and royal blue black against blush pink and cloud white. The pink tone stands aligned on top of the burgundy and it is an analogous color which helps bring out the dominance in Burgundy. Below those two colors we find the cloud white hue which gives off a sense of floating or standing on clouds. By using the warm tone of pink and the cool tone of white, the burgundy is found in the center and its scale is bigger in comparison to the other two. Rothko had mentioned that the bright hues in his previous works were easy and he wanted to focus more on how to portray tragedy and doom. This works because burgundy is used in reference to ambition, power, malice, and deep blood. So, by having this be in larger scale and in the center it allows the viewer to see this color first. Rothko also uses a dark background which also brings out the different hues even though they are not so bright. The shapes he uses are rectangular form but they are not sharp on the edges and this was a blending technique he used. This method of stacking rectangular forms on top of each other brought forward even more the layering of colors. With these deep hues, Rothko tried to infuse the sense of tranquility mixed in with challenges, anxiety erupting, pressure and most importantly claustrophobia. The burgundy pulls all these emotions in and the large scale of it brings it back out to the viewer.