



The Psychology of Colour

JUNE 15, 2018 BY ADITI BHAT

Feeling Blue because you got caught Red-handed with your White lie? Are you the Black sheep in your family? Or are you tickled Pink because you've come across a Golden opportunity on a Silver platter? I hadn't realized how often and how subtly colours creep into our daily conversations and our lives until I started interning and my mind started wandering. I read about it and I learnt that they also influence our emotions, and companies all over the world use this very effectively with their logos, UI/UX design, and a lot more. I view colours with a whole new perspective now; I hope that after reading this article, you will too!

One important thing to understand is that the way you perceive colours is highly influenced by your cultural upbringing, personal preferences and your experiences. For example, in the west, people dress in black to pay their respects to a departed soul, but in countries like India and China, white is worn. So it's not all black or white, there are lots of grey areas in the field, pun intended. In this article, I'll be discussing the general effect that certain colours have on us. I hope I pass with flying colours!



“Three guns and one goes off,
One's empty, one's not quick enough,
One burn, one **RED**, one grin”



There are two things most of these logos have in common. Fast food and Red! Coincidence? I think not. Red is known to increase heart and pulse rate and also increase your blood pressure. In this way, it triggers your senses and makes you feel hungry. Red is also a colour that encourages you to act fast. For example, when you're booking tickets for a movie, if the seats are filling fast, the icon is red, telling you to hurry, thus creating a sense of urgency.

Some interesting studies have been conducted to understand the effect of red on us. Boxers who wore red apparently performed 5% better than the boxers who wore blue kits. Obviously, just wearing red won't help you win a match, but if two contestants are equally skilled, wearing a red kit could just be the winning factor. Studies say that waitresses who wore red received more tips than the others. And playing with red poker chips makes people bet more than when playing with blue or white. However, Red is the colour of love, but it is also the colour of the devil. That's what I love about Red, the energy it has and the contradictions that it makes. There's something else I love about red too, baking red velvet choco chip cookies and getting caught Red Handed, literally.



“He said I'm gonna buy this place and see it go
Stand here beside me baby, watch the **ORANGE**

glow"-

A Rush of Blood to the Head, Coldplay.

Orange, the fruit being a source of Vitamin C , represents energy and excitement just like Red does. But you don't really see Orange that often in logos. That's what makes orange logos unique with a kind of modern touch!



Doesn't a Fanta bottle seem refreshing especially when you're really thirsty? That's probably because just like Red again, Orange increases your appetite. Orange is a good mix of Red's energy and Yellow's positivity, it provides a nice warmth in the right shade and in another vibrant shade it can be stimulating. Orange you glad the colour exists?!

“We all live in a **YELLOW submarine
yellow submarine, yellow submarine”- The Beatles**



Have you noticed how cartoon characters are so often Yellow? I guess it's because “It was all Yellow” (Coldplay Reference :')) There are actually other reasons though. Yellow is the most visible colour in the colour spectrum thanks to its wavelength. Also, it perfectly contrasts with blue, the colour of the sky which is the most common background for any cartoon. And it also holds in the case of who lives in a pineapple under the sea (Spongebob Squarepants!)

As I mentioned earlier, Yellow is a really positive and optimistic colour. If you think of a smiley face, you'll think of yellow. However, it can exhaust your eyes being such a bright colour. From NatGeo's minimalist logo to McDonald's eye catching Golden Arches, yellow is pretty successful in logos depending on the context and contrast of course.



“The grass was GREENer
The light was brighter
With friends surrounded
The nights of wonder”- Pink Floyd.

Well obviously you're thinking about nature right now. And lots of green logos have something to do with the environment. Check out the Animal Planet's logo for instance.



But there are green logos that don't have much to do with Nature. I found it really interesting that the Android logo is green. It represents growth and freshness. Another fascinating fact about the logo is the inspiration behind it. Irina Blok was inspired by the universal symbols on bathrooms symbolizing male and female!



Green is also known to relax the mind. That's why Starbucks has green walls; a great way to enhance the effect of coffee! They have a green logo as well, not only to as a symbol of quality and consistency but also to promote international peace.



Here's a green fun fact! Dammit I wish it was about plants.



**“So, so you think you can tell
Heaven from hell
BLUE skies from pain?”**

- Wish You Were Here, Pink Floyd.

Trying to go on a diet? Eating on blue plates might actually help, as it makes food look quite unappealing. But then no food can give you the blues, so you might want to rethink that. Blue has another effect that's opposite to Red, it can calm you down and regulate your heart beat. In fact, quite a few airlines have blue interiors and blue logos to help people with their fear of flying. 53% of the flags in the world contain blue. No wonder it's the most common favourite colour!



Blue encourages communication which is why most social networking sites use it. Also Mark Zuckerberg is colour blind, which makes blue the richest colour for him, explaining the dominance of blue in the website and the app. Twitter's bird mascot makes perfect sense with blue. As Blue also symbolizes precision and intellect, it's very commonly found in quite a few corporate logos.



“I took my love down to VIOLET Hill
 There we sat in snow
 All that time she was silent still
 So if you love me, won’t you let me know?”-Coldplay

I'm going to refer to Violet as purple, forgive me for Violeting the Rainbow Code. Just like Hallmark's logo indicates, Purple is the colour of Royalty. That's because in the ancient times, people used to use dyes to colour fabric, and as purple is rarely found in nature, it was only worn by the royalty. The Purple Heart Award is bestowed upon members of the US Armed Forces who have been wounded or killed in the name of the President.



Yahoo's purple logo is powerful, bold and also has a sort of mystery about it. FedEx has a very clever arrow hidden between the E and the X. This wonderful combination of the stimulating red and the calming blue is also used in the logo of Taco bell which sets it apart from other fast food logos. Cadbury uses it to associate their brand with luxury and quality. In fact, they went to the extent of protecting their right to exclusively use that tone of purple.



“Swim with me into your BLACKest eyes”-Porcupine Tree.

“Tomorrow I'll be stronger, running colorful
No longer just in black and WHITE.
And I'm quite alright hiding tonight”
Hiding Tonight, Alex Turner



This logo is one very close to my heart. The logo of The Psych Club, Manipal, an integral part of my college life and the club that made me realise my love for psychology. I think black and white is the perfect combination for our logo; Black is professional, credible, classy and edgy, while white is pure, wise and fresh. There's also the whole good and evil side to it, sort of symbolizing our mind. There's also the Yin Yang theory of Taoism. Yin is the dark swirl and Yang is the light one; each side has a dot of the opposite colour, which means that everything contains its opposite. Take Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker for instance. Darth Vader has the seed of goodness and Luke has the ability to follow his father to the dark side. This doesn't mean that they're complete opposites, they're just relative to each other. We all contain the Yin and the Yang, and they're interchangeable. Understanding them will help us achieve a balance in our lives.





I find it really interesting that both black and white are used to mourn the passing of a loved one in different countries, black being tradition in the Roman Empire which continued in England and white being pure and the symbol of peace in Asian countries.

But there is something about the simplicity and elegance of these colours. White refreshes your mind, which is why Google uses it quite a bit, signifying clarity and innovation. Before 2001, earphones were mostly black, but once Apple came out with their I-pod and white earphones, they changed music from a casual leisure activity to a competitive status symbol.



When you talk about light frequencies, white is a combination of, or the presence of all colours, and black is the absence of any colour. But if you think about it in the physical form, like paint, white is the absence of colour and black is the presence of all colours. How trippy is that?

thewafflemonster:

You know how there's a theory
that no two people see a
colour the exact same way.

Does that mean colour is like
a pigment of your imagination.

YOU FUCKING DIDN'T

Huehuehue

#even that fucking laugh is a pun #
hate you all

So that's all I have on these colours. I hope the way you think about this when you're sitting in your car looking out the window, watch your tone, find your own palette(discover your true colours) and pass life with flying colours! I'll end this article with a new obsession of mine, colourful pictures of LED hooping. 😊 You can head over [here](#) to check out all the pictures!

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