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# MASTER WEAVER

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## SUBJECTIVE COLOURS.

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We wrote quite a lot about colour, and we do not intend to go into still more complicated theories. What we have to say now is not very serious, but it may be practical.

The question is: do the colours exist "as a thing in itself"? Or in other words: can one colour, not compared with another one, or used on a background of another colour, be good or bad?

Let us imagine that we are in a dark room, bare of furniture, and which has grey walls, grey floor, and grey ceiling. Now we light it with electric bulbs of all imaginable colours, but always one bulb at a time. Can we say or feel that this particular colour is right, and another wrong? According to the scientific theories the answer is NO. One colour is neither good or bad, right or wrong. And yet...

Most of us are affected by single colours. We feel warm in orange light, upset by red, cold in blue, relaxed in green, active in white or pale yellow, uneasy in purple. This may not be true for everybody, but the exceptions are rare.

Such associations are not too difficult to explain. We must remember that our psychology does not change as fast as our mind, and that in many circumstances we react in the same way as a primitive man. Thus: orange suggests fire; red - sunset before a cold or windy night, and also blood; blue - a cold wintry day with snow on the ground; green - the security of a deep forest; white or yellow - the normal daylight when one has to be active; and purple or violet light hardly exists in nature, and therefore makes us wonder what is coming.

But the psychology of colour must take into account more factors than those which played such an important part in the life of a primitive man.

For instance Yellow should be the most glorious of all colours since it suggests the sunlight. And so it is up to a point. Gold - which is nothing else but shiny yellow - symbolises wealth, power, glory, spiritual values. And this is not because gold happens to be an expensive metal, but just the other way around: gold was chosen as a precious metal because it is yellow! Otherwise gold was and still is the most useless metal one can imagine. Its only value is that it retains its yellow brilliance, and is not tarnished by the weather and other chemical actions. For any practical purposes gold must be mixed with stronger metals. On the other hand platinum which is infinitely superior to gold in every respect does not symbolise anything in particular, because of its neutral colour.

But otherwise yellow is not a lucky colour. It is associated with sickness (yellow flags on quarantine ships), cowardice, and even treason.

Red is an upsetting colour all right, even in the physiological meaning (it is supposed to raise the blood pressure). But it also symbolises sex, fight, danger (traffic lights), martyrdom (probably because of blood), revolt (red banners), and what not.

Blue besides cold suggests loneliness, peace, tranquility, and this is obvious. But why should it also symbolise hope? When one is freezing he may feel lonely and peaceful, but surely not hopeful.

Green represents rest which fits our theory, and also freedom (green light) which is still not too far fetched, but it is also associated with hope, youth, lack of experience, and stupidity.

Purple and Violet, being so to speak out of this world, were very justly appropriated by the authorities: kings and caesars. But both are essentially negative. They mean resignation, melancholy, celibacy, sterility: not exactly what we would expect from an emperor.

White should be the colour of action, but it is not. It rather means perfection, purity, truth, honesty. And also death (in Asia) probably on the assumption that perfection is reached only after death, and betrothal probably because of the assumed purity.

Black is not a colour but lack of colour (a black object does not transmit or reflect any light). Thus the Negroes are the only race which is not "coloured". Logically it should symbolise

night and rest. And it does that in a rather unexpected manner: rest - yes, but only the ultimate rest (in our civilisation); and night too, but only the mysterious things which happen at night: therefore evil. Also misery, epidemics, despair, ignorance.

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One should not laugh at these associations. They are as old as the human race, and if they are not logical, it is just too bad for the logic. This is how they affect us emotionally, and our emotions cannot be reasoned away.

Thus we should not make baby blankets in pink, because pink is only diluted red, and who wants babies to get upset about sex, fight, or danger? Neither should they be "baby blue", because blue is cold, and who wants babies to freeze? The right colours for small children are: white, warm yellow, orange, warm green, and brown. They suggest security, warmth, relaxation.

The problem of colours for dresses, and for the interior decoration is extremely involved because the selection made may on one hand harmonise with the personality, or on the other hand it may be used to conceal this personality. For instance a warm-hearted individual may dress in brown, orange, and yellow with accents of red when at home, but at the office would rather like to look more aloof and dignified, and therefore affect blue, purple, white, and even black.

It is obvious then that we cannot jump to conclusions as to the character of a person judging only from his selection of colours. They may indicate the real personality or just the opposite, or even a mixture of both.

This is perhaps the reason why colours with a low chroma are so common in our civilisation: they are non-committal, and therefore save us from too much sincerity and from too much hypocrisy.

In any case when making a new weaving project it is not enough to satisfy the requirements of a colour theory. We must plan the colour scheme thinking about the psychological "value" of each colour used, particularly about the dominants and the accents. Unless of course our creativity is absolutely spontaneous: then we do not need to "think" at all!

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