

## WHAT NOISE IS GARDEN?

*“Words, too, can’t do more than just evoke things.” (Pina Bauch)*

Last week a friend sent me a Bloomberg article out of the blue: ‘The Quest for the Next Billion-Dollar Colour’. It explored the industry of pigment research, with a focus on Mas Subramanian, a materials science professor at Oregon State University at Corvallis. The article explained how Subramanian invented the first new blue pigment in over 200 years, YInMn, but he is yet to create a new red. The world, apparently, ‘lacks a great all-round red’.

Maggie Nelson’s book ‘Bluets’ is a literary exploration of her relationship with the colour blue:

‘And so I fell in love with a colour—in this case, the colour blue—as if falling under a spell, a spell I fought to stay under and get out from under, in turns.’

Blue is everywhere. The sea, the sky.

‘In a picture in which a piece of paper gets its lightness from the blue sky, the sky is lighter than the white paper. And yet in another sense blue is the darker and white the lighter colour’ (Goethe)

White is considered a colour because in colour light theory white is the blending of all colours. Black absorbs all colours making it an achromatic colour—a colour without hue—it is the absence of colour. And yet Anish Kapoor recently purchased the exclusive rights to the pigment Vantablack. A pigment of black that is so dark it absorbs 99.96% of light.

Feeling blue?

‘I step into a blue funk.’ (Jarman)

According to the Bloomberg article, America’s most popular colour is blue. “Blue is that concept of hope, promise, dependability, stability, calm, and cool,” Says the Pressman of the Pantone Colour Institute. “We think of it as a colour of constancy and truth. It’s one of the most approachable colours, the colour that’s the most comfortable.”

Nelson continues,

‘I read that the colour of the universe has finally been deduced. The colour of the universe, the article says, is “pale turquoise.” *Of course*, I think, looking out wistfully over the Gulf. *I knew it all along. The heart of the world is blue.*’

A song by Madonna floats through my mind,

“True love / You’re the one I’m dreaming of / Your heart fits me like a glove / And I’m gonna be True Blue baby, I love you.”

According to Wikipedia, the human eye is capable of distinguishing around 10 million different colours.

‘As if we could scrape the colour off the iris and still see.’ (Nelson)

But someone told me that the human eye sees more shades of green than any other colour. This is due to evolution. We evolved from monkeys, who lived primarily in Jungles—an environment with endless shades of green—and needed to be able to see where their predators may be hiding.

'For me green is one special way-station on the coloured path from blue to yellow, and red is another.' (Wittgenstein)

Another friend of mine recently visited a hypnotist in order to give up smoking. The hypnotist planted the positive association of giving up smoking with a colour. My friend chose the colour red. Now whenever she sees red, she feels good. Maybe she doesn't know that the world is lacking a great all-round red.

'If one says red (the name of a colour) and there are fifty people listening, it can be expected there will be fifty reds in their mind, and one can be sure that all these reds will be different.' (Albers)

My favourite nail polish colour is called Gull Peach. Last summer, in Italy, I enjoyed the peachy terracotta used to paint buildings. It made the sunset look even more spectacular. An orangey glow amidst the green landscape.

'Where yellow dives into the red the ripples are orange.' (Jarman)

Jarman seems disappointed that Aristotle's text 'On Colour' is only concerned with nature, but doesn't all colour come from nature somehow?

'All growing things become yellow in the end.' (Jarman)

Text by Kyla McDonald

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