

- HÉDONÉ – DESIGNING WITH PLEASURE -

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In this paper, I aim to reflect on my own motives and beliefs not only in design, but in my life in general. While during the years I have changed many opinions and ideas related to car design, I have not changed my initial motivation to engage in this field. It has become an integral part of my identity, a passion that has shaped the whole of my life – from drawing at an early age to probably spending 8 years studying it at educational institutions.

Nothing but this passion has ever made such an impact on my timeline, which is why I believe that passion is the most necessary value for myself as a future designer.

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1. The Dualistic Model of Passion (Vallerand, 2010)

Vallerand defines passion as an emotion to something that has a big enough value to someone to make it part of their identity.

In doing so, he splits the definition into two:

An *oppressively* passionate person believes that they must live up to standards set by inner or outer influences. They constantly compare their performance to others and feel guilt once they fail or do not invest in their passion heavily enough (Lafrenière, et al., 2011).

A *harmoniously* passionate person is driven by the pleasure they feel during the activity they value greatly. They are as enthusiastic, yet they do not feel the same psychological pressure.

During studies with professional musicians Bonneville-Rossy et.al. discovered that harmoniously passionate individuals are more likely to actively try and work towards their goals (*deliberate study*) while oppressively passionate ones are inclined to spend a lot of time working for the sake of working and try to avoid performing badly, which in turn limits their open-mindedness and conscious decision making. (Bonneville-Rossy, et al., 2011, p. 133)

Vallerand also notes that obsessive passion leads to one feeling the urge to take part in the passionate activity, eventually making every other activity not enjoyable, even negatively influencing happiness. Harmonious passion on the other hand, leads to higher subject-well-being once engaged in the passionate activity, and even spiralling happiness in case the activity is repeated. Missing out on the activity or performing badly does not negatively affect well-being. (Vallerand, 2010, pp. 129-130)

Conclusively, harmonious passion brings every positive effect of being passionate, while leading to comparatively higher performances than obsessive passion, which can often lead to stress and depression.

1.1 Applying the model to myself

I have wanted to become a car designer since the age of five, which left me another fifteen years

before I started my academic advance in this field. What started out as a child enjoying to draw cars, turned into an adolescent trying his hardest to keep up with people who have been studying and working in transportation design. My awareness of this field led to me putting pressure on myself prematurely, investing my time into emulating professionals and missing out on valuable deliberate study. An internship at an international car design studio at the age of sixteen made me believe that I was on the right path, farther steering me into making use of my time inefficiently. The internship, however, transported me into a sense of bliss, which correlates to the overly emotional euphoria obsessively passionate individuals feel.

A rejection letter from the leading transportation design school four years later broke this euphoria and caused an at least equally emotional defeat. This portrays another finding related to oppressive passion noted by Vallerand – intense depression after failure.

Realising the immense toll that was self-induced, I have let go of some of the pressure in my second year of study and since then tried to value pleasure more than achievements.

To manifest this journey, I aim to express pleasant (harmonious) passion in the form of a vehicle.

2 Hédoné – Goddess of Pleasure

An ancient Greek myth tells the story of Eros & Psyche (*Love & Soul*), who make it through various hardships filled with hate, horror and jealousy, to finally get reunited and have a daughter called Hédoné (Greek Ἡδονή, pleasure). (Apuleius, Late 2nd Century AD)

2.1 Hédoné – Project Intent

As love and sex are a passion inherited biologically in the majority of us and thus the source of most human life, I aim to translate the emotions of love and sex in a vehicle inspired by Eros & Psyche. The main focus of my project will be sculptural as opposed to functional in order to guarantee an unhibited expression of sensibility.

I will be conducting this by first defining sex and love using the Colour Wheel of Love (Lee, 1976) and referring to studies conducted about the relation of romantic love with sex (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2002)

2.2 Colour Wheel of Love (Lee, 1976)

Lee first created a circle that describes six styles of love. Hendrick and Hendrick later conducted research on these styles to explore possible differences of how both male and female perceive love.

- 1 **Eros:** Strong and early physical attraction. Intense emotion of love.
- 2 **Ludus:** Playful attitude. Deception of the lover within certain boundaries and little social responsibility.
- 3 **Storge:** Combination of love and friendship. Little intensity of Eros.
- 4 **Pragma:** Criteria-matching to find a partner. Love based on pragmatic terms.
- 5 **Mania:** Love based on low self-esteem. Often comes with strong attachment and addiction to the lover to gain self-worth.

6 Agape: Selfless, non-demanding love.

In recent studies researching the perception of love and sex, no major differences could be found as between male and female individuals. It has been argued, that the acceptance of gender-equality has reduced traditional societal norms (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986) (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2002)

As I aim to express personal views of sex and love, I will only make use of Lee's six styles of love. I will consider gender differences in relation to design and art and create a method deducted from Norman & Ortony's model of emotional responses to products in order to translate these into a sculptural vehicle (Norman & Ortony, 2004).

2.3 Gender & Design

The way one draws something reveals how they perceive things around them. The use of space on the drawing medium, the colour of the medium, the line quality and its emotional expression show their emotional state of mind and their personality in general. For this reason, I want to research if there are noticeable differences in the way female and male individuals draw, design and perceive.

Firstly, I am researching studies done to explore differences in handwriting, as handwriting is a combination of self-expression and interpretation of already existing forms (symbols).

Various studies point to a noticeable difference in the way men and women write (Muller & Enskat, 1961) (Beech & Mackintosh, 2005).

Whilst male handwriting has become messier and less definite in the period of 1961 to 2005, the qualities of strokes seems to have stayed similar.

Women tend to have more rounded and soft curves, whilst men make use of hard and angular shapes. The female writing style is being described as *warm* and *natural*, opposed to the *cool* writing style of men (Moss, 2009).

It is argued that female hormones move women to express themselves in a more feminine way which is perceptible in their general movement as well as in their handwriting (Beech & Mackintosh, 2005, p. 467).

Another branch I want to consider is graphic/web design as it incorporates colour and (two-dimensional) proportion. Moss and Miche & Noirhomme-Fraiture concluded that men prefer webpages with few, darker colours whilst women prefer many, lighter colours. Again, women make use of soft and round shapes while men use straight lines and shapes, replicating their apparent styles in handwriting in shape and choice of colour. (Moss, 2009) (Noirhomme-Fraiture & Miche, 2009).

"[...] the findings, repeated over several experiments, suggest that for optimum results, websites should mimic the web preferences of the target market." (Moss, 2009, p. 145)

Moss also mentions a study conducted in Cambridge in 1932, which explored gender differences in the perception of colour and form (Oeser, 1931-1932a).

The results show that men are predominantly responsive to form first, whilst women are predominantly responsive to colour (Moss, 2009, pp. 79-80).

2.4 Emotions & Products

Norman & Ortony state that there cannot be a product that does not cause any emotional response. They base this on their idea of three different stages of emotional responses.

Visceral response

A reaction to visual qualities of an object. A sharp-edged object for example will look dangerous, whilst a soft-looking one will encourage an individual to touch it. Warm colours will look inviting, while cold ones will not. These responses are based on evolutionary self-protection and sensory qualities and they are inevitable, making every product emotion-causing.

Behavioural response

A behavioural response is caused by the way an object makes the individual feel. A sports car will make the passengers feel excited while a sturdy SUV will make them feel safe.

Reflective Response

Reflective responses are based on learned assumptions. A power-on-button that starts a computer will please the user, while a malfunctioning button will cause dissatisfaction and anger.

Cultural connotations also belong to reflective responses. A sports-car might elevate the sex-appeal of a person, while an e-bike might put them in an eco-friendly context.

Visceral and behavioural responses can turn into reflective responses once the user has made a meaningful connection (such as the sound of a Harley-Davidson being the trademark of the brand).

As designers we can influence these responses by designing consciously of them and

promoting/preventing certain emotions.

Taking on the earlier-mentioned revelations on love, sex, gender and perception, I will design a vehicle that stresses the inherent duality of humanity.

3 Renault Hédoné – Project Definition

What is it?

Renault Hédoné is a celebration of love and romanticism. It is a two-seater aimed at middle-aged couples who enjoy their mutual presence more than anything. The vehicle is fully autonomous, leaving room and time for special and comfortable voyages. There is no target year and no detailed technical specification as this project is meant to be a statement more than a manufacturable product. Whilst the exterior is purely sculptural, the interior focuses on the interaction between male and female passengers.

Why Renault?

With the introduction of its *life-cycle-philosophy* in 2010, Renault has acknowledged the importance of emotion in car design. The cycle is made up of Wisdom, Play, Work, Family, Explore and Love, with one concept vehicle attributed to each. (Cinti, 2016)

With the literal translation of emotion into form, I believe that I can move Renault design into the next stage, which would ideally be accompanied by other emotions like euphoria or adrenaline.

Also, French companies have always been avantgarde and experimental, even with their production vehicles, such as the Vel Satis Concept and its production version (**V**élocite et **S**atisfaction). I would like to pay respect to this great brand and its courageous past and present.

3.1 Renault Hédoné – Design Values

Form Follows Emotion

Whilst the sculpture should resemble a car in its broadest sense, it must not let function determine its shape. This would alter the strength of the expression.

Every shape shall be dictated by the emotions felt by passionate lovers.

Duality of Form, Shape and Colour

My personal understanding of sexuality through diversity shall be expressed through duality in all shapes.

French Avantgarde

Traditional rules of transportation design can be broken. The sculpture shall be clearly French and quirky.

3.2 Renault Hédoné – Design Methods

The success of the project relies heavily on the translation of emotion into form. One by one I will look at the six styles of love laid out by Lee and aim to find a corresponding stylistic theme.

Having found a visceral or haptic translation, I will relate it to Norman & Ortony's emotional response model and place it into its fitting stage (visceral, behavioural, reflective).

Doing this, I hope to develop a method that helps designers deliberately control and steer their own emotions during the design process.

Eros (Strong and early physical attraction)

This is the key component of Renault Hédoné. As noted by Oeser in 1931, men perceive form first, and colour second, while it is the other way around for women (colour first, form second).

Subsequently, the volume and proportion of the sculpture will have to cause sexual associations in men's minds, while its colour scheme should remind women of sex-appeal.

In their study, Tovée et al. researched if body mass index (BMI) or waist-hip ratio (WHR) are primary factors of female attractiveness rated by men. They concluded, that BMI is the strongest factor in rating a woman's attractiveness, dominating WHR in all cases. (Tovée, et al., 2002, pp. 2212-2213)

Translating this into my sculpture, I assume that the actual weight distribution of the volumes is more important than the waveform of it. In other words, the shape does not matter if all volumes replicate a BMI of 18-20 (moderately underweight to healthy). The sculpture should not indicate any sense of being "overweight". Instead it should be sleek and slim.

Looking at fashion magazines and women's lingerie, it is very noticeable that women wear tonal reds and shades of brown to indicate interest in sex. Bright reds are associated with aggressive sexiness while softer shades are more romantic and sensual. (Park, 2014)

As these preferences are mostly biologically sourced (fertility), this suggests that the sculpture must adhere to male preferences of proportion (sleek) and female preferences of colour (tonal reds) to create an initial visceral response.

Ludus (playful sexiness)

This is where design features take unexpected, humorous turns. Shapes and colours could be sculpted and placed in ways that are unorthodox and lively. Applying ludus, the sculpture will also gain the French quirkiness mentioned before.

Storge (love and friendship)

Support and care are essential parts of friendship. These can be translated into form by having certain features visually hold and support others. Antonio Canova's sculptural depiction of Psyche being revived with a kiss by Cupid (Eros) is a prime example (Canova, 1793).

Pragma (based on rationality)



As I do not find Pragma to be romantic, I will not include its translation.

Mania & Agape (addiction and selflessness)

I will translate addiction by having shapes pull, and sometimes lose each other to create drama as pictured in many romantic stories (Goethe, 1787).

Just like Psyche is being revived by Eros, letting herself be held by him, I will have dominant & submissive features interplay.

Duality of Forms (male & female)

Referring to the studies conducted about male and female handwriting and graphic/web design, I am splitting features into male and female counterparts. Whilst female features are round, soft, rhythmic and light, their male opposites are structural, angular and rigid.

The main body of the sculpture however, is mainly female in shape, as the traditional story of love and romanticism involves a man chasing after a desirable woman. In my case, the vehicle shall represent an object of desire for men, who mostly make up my hypothetical customer base.

4 Application to Transportation Design

I believe that technical innovations such as electric drivetrains and full autonomy will open doors to more sculptural vehicle design. Engineering packages will be becoming simpler while self-driving cars will hopefully eliminate traffic accidents, freeing transportation designers of interfering safety regulations.

Whilst many regard full autonomy as the death sentence of car-enthusiasm, I see it as a chance to discover new market spaces. Individuals who could not find any interest in the experience of driving and car ownership, will be able to fall in love with the artistic value of a vehicle.

A present-day example could be the Toyota Prius. Looked down on by petrol heads, it is valued highly

by ecologically aware people. The reflective response in the case of the Prius is based on the eco-friendliness of it, rather than on any other traditional value like sounds, performance or design.

Transportation design led by passion can result in many examples of new reflective responses. There could be cars inspired by lovers, adrenaline-junkies, musicians and painters and many other passionate doers.

Since I have discovered Canova's sculpture, I have had the desire to see it in person. I have made it my screensaver and I can relate to its idea of love and romanticism easily. There is no reason why vehicles (or products in general) should not exude that same passion and grasp people's emotional attention in the same way.

Having gone through the learning process of this project, I have concluded that I want to design to cause emotional responses, igniting the same response one has when they kiss their loved one or play an instrument passionately.

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