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## Font: A Silent Individual

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**Abstract:** This study has been undertaken to investigate the temperament of Letterforms with specific focus towards usage through font and underlining the importance of appropriate understanding and implementation of those letterforms in Communication Design. Fonts individuality, its tone, psychology, emotions and its various aspects are illustrated to express the objectives and to reinforce the conceptual framework.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

When we walk inside a book fair which is brimming with various interesting themes, each book rack is packed with bundle of story telling. As you skim through the books you pick one, eyes scan the spin title, and you pause for an immediate soul connection. The title is printed in an appropriate font one that seems to speak the heart of the author.

#### Fonts Have Individuality

Like we humans, every font has a unique personality and purpose. While working on a task, its imperative to know what font matches the intended tone of communication, which justify the authors through flow.

Can we read a children's book printed in Times New Roman? This font is used in body text in any publication that needs to have a classic yet practical look. Reading a children's book printed in a formal font will take you and your interest away from the story. It would almost feel as if an unknown force is pulling you away from a vibrant atmosphere and telling you to shut and listen a man wearing a formal suit, dress shirt and tie, polished shoes singing a lullaby.

The power of typography is to turn the written word into a seamless experience. Beatrice Warde wrote sixteen essays on typography titled "The Crystal Goblet", the title itself is a reference to a clear vessel holding wine, where the vessel, the printed word, gives no obstruction to the presentation of its content the text. Wade poses a choice between two wine glasses: She quotes, Imagine that you have before you a flagon of wine. You may choose your own favourite vintage for this imaginary demonstration, so that it be a deep shimmering crimson in colour. You have two goblets before you. One is of solid gold, wrought in the most exquisite patterns. The other is of crystal-clear glass, thin as a bubble, and as transparent. Pour and drink; and according to your choice of goblet, I shall know whether or not you are connoisseur of wine. For if you have no feelings about wine one way or the other, you will want the sensation of drinking the stuff out of a vessel that may have cost thousands

of pounds; but if you are a member of that vanishing tribe, the amateurs of fine vintages, you will choose the crystal, because anything about it is calculated to reveal rather than hid the beautiful thing which it was meant to contain.

You will find that almost all the virtues of the perfect wine-glass have a parallel in typography. There is a long, thin stem that obviates fingerprints on the bowl. Why? Because no cloud must come between your eyes and the fiery heart of the liquid. Are not the margins on book pages similarly meant to obviate the necessity of fingering the type-page?.

The book typographer has the job of erecting a window between the reader inside the room and that landscape which is the author's words. He may put up a stained-glass window of marvellous beauty, but a failure as a window; that is, he may use some rich superb type like text gothic that is something to be looked at, not through. Or he may work in what is transparent or invisible typography. The third type of window is one in which the glass is broken into relatively small leaded panes; and this corresponds to what is called 'fine printing' today, in that you are at least conscious that there is a window there, and that someone has enjoyed building it. That is not objectionable, because of a very important fact which has to do with the psychology of the subconscious mind. That is that the mental eye focus through type and not upon it. The type which, through any arbitrary warping of design or excess of 'colour', gets in the way of the mental picture to be conveyed, is a bad type. Our subconsciousness is always afraid of blunders (which illogical setting, tight spacing and too-wide unleaded lines can trick us into), of boredom, and of officiousness. The running headline that keeps shouting at us, the line that looks like one long word, the capitals jammed together without hair-space, these mean subconscious squinting and loss of mental focus.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Font and Its Tone**

Let's take a moment to think about how do we grasp the font tone visually. Different fonts carry different emotional weights, if used visually in an effective way they talk, invite, attract, cry and play with us. They have a language of their own. Similar to humans, the skill of adapting to the situation and coming out as a winner. Fonts can be adapted and composed in a way that it becomes the voice of the messenger. For instance, typewriter fonts bring back memories of a bygone era. Similar, retro fonts often invoke feelings of joy and playfulness. Brands targeting nostalgia frequently use these styles to connect with their audience.

### **Font Psychology**

Font psychology is one more design science that one should thoroughly investigate to become a well-educated designer. Every font has its own personality, so you should get acquainted with it. Each font influences the way we perceive a brand and product, so you should know these hidden influences on the user's decision-making process. Each font impacts the emotions we associate with a product and bridges a certain emotional connection to a brand. So you should be able to identify a font personality and match it with the authors thought.

### **What is font psychology?**

Font psychology is the study of how typography influences human perception and emotions. Different fonts evoke distinct feelings and associations, impacting readability, trustworthiness, and overall message effectiveness. For example, serif fonts convey tradition and reliability, while sans-serif fonts appear modern and clean.

### **Serif Fonts**

The classics. They carry those little decorative strokes at the ends of letters, giving each character a timeless elegance. Within this family, the variations are fascinating. Old Style fonts, like Garamond, transport you back to the Renaissance. They have a gentle, organic feel, with low contrast between thick and thin lines. Slab serifs,

such as Rockwell, bring heft and solidity, with thick, block-like serifs. Then, there's Transitional, a bridge between Old Style and Modern, with fonts like Baskerville that have higher contrast and more vertical stress.

Modern serifs like Bodoni are stark, with extreme contrast and sharp, horizontal serifs. Finally, Glyphic serifs, like Trajan, which are inspired by ancient Roman inscriptions, featuring flared serifs and a sense of historical gravitas.

## **Serif font Psychology**

Serif is as traditional as "The Times of India" newspaper, in Indian context. It feels quite formidable, elegant and reliable. Serif is the obvious manifestation of credibility, tradition and legacy. It's often used in the designs for well-established brands that are on the market for ages and have already built the whole "empire" in the industry. Serif font impacts the human psyche motivating us to feel a certain level of trust and respectability, it associates a brand with the authority and grandeur. This font style is often used in formal and scientific contexts.

Serif fonts whisper stability and tradition. They are the intellectuals of the typeface world, exuding a sense of formality and respect. Think of them as the dignified professors, the trusted advisors, the keepers of wisdom. They ground the text in a foundation of history and trust, making them perfect for print media, law firms, or any context where authority and reliability are paramount. Serif fonts shine in long-form reading. Books, newspapers, and academic journals often rely on them for their readability. Times New Roman is the go-to for formal documents, while Georgia provides a modern twist for web readability.

## **Sans Serif Typeface**

The characterises which distinguish sans serif typefaces are that they are nearly "monoweight" which gives a perception of a friendly and approachable person, considered to be easy to read from a screen and so are very suitable for body text on websites. It can give a modern, clean and straight forward tone. The modernists. They strip away the flourishes, focusing on clean lines and simplicity.

Square sans-serifs, like Eurostile, bring a techy, futuristic vibe. Humanist sans-serifs, such as Gill Sans, have more organic, varied strokes, echoing handwritten text. Grotesque sans-serifs, like Helvetica, offer a straightforward, no-nonsense approach, while Geometric sans-serifs, like Futura, emphasize mathematical precision and perfect circles.

Sans-serifs project cleanliness and modernity. They're the efficiency experts, the minimalists who cut through the noise. These fonts are direct, making them ideal for digital screens where clarity is king. Their modern aesthetic suits forward-thinking brands and tech companies, embodying a sense of progress and innovation.

## **2. Light vs Bold fonts**

Light fonts are most often associated with Elegance and Felinity. Just remind the ever-most recognisable logo of AVON, cosmetics brand. Its tall and thin font style is obviously associated with modern women's beauty salon. These perceptual traits conveyed in AVON's logo typeface trigger the extra-wave of women's beauty admiration. That might seem almost invisible, but actually, even the slightest hints in the logo typeface can cause the different customer's attitude to a brand and associations. Does it seem to be unnecessary detail? Maybe. But, details especially matter when it comes to marketing and building customer loyalty.

## **3. Rounded vs Angular**

According to Bar, M., & Neta, M., (2006). Psychological Science, 17(8) 645-648, humans prefer curved or rounded shapes rather than sharp ones. Why? This is caused by the inherited instincts of the self-protection. Try to recall your first feeling evoked right at the moment when you've seen a big and sharp pointed object like a knife. That's a feeling of threat. The same we subconsciously experience when interacting with the sharp forms and angular fonts in the design. They can evoke the feelings of danger, masculinity, and durability what can be useful for a designer who wants to add a pinch of adrenaline and risk to a design.

One can use rounded typefaces for the brand associated with the concepts of softness, comfort, femininity, beauty and wellness products.

#### 4. Lowercase vs Uppercase

Lowercase is usually associated with the concepts of compassion or innovation. Therefore, lowercase can be effectively used in the design created for 'caregiver' companies or for 'product creator' brands.

Uppercase is most often associated with the concept of dominance and power. The worlds' famous commercial giant such as TATA, SBI, BMW, Sony, Nike have the uppercase in their logos to emphasise the power of their social influence, energy and success.

The lowercase and uppercase can be easily combined in one text making it more readable for users. When you mix these two typefaces you unintentionally create a so-called expectation congruence effect. It means that people more easily perceive the text format if it's congruent with their expectations. Mixed case letters have different heights what allows users to perceive more distinction between letters. This combination can evoke both strength and elegance.

#### 5. Condensed vs Expanded

Condensed and extended fonts are two design extremes. Usually, we perceive condensed fonts as something related to the concept of tightness. This typeface creates a feeling of limited space, tension, and precision. It can be perceived as something cramped, overcrowded, restrictive in movement. However, playing a game with the user's feelings and emotions caused by a strict condensed font personality, you can add a specific note of extravagance and boldness to your design.

On the contrary, expanded fonts convey the concepts of spaciousness and relaxation. Wide typefaces make the design breathing and light-weighted. They are usually applied in the designs for brands that aim to look positive and light for their target audience.

#### 6. Short vs Tall

Short fonts usually convey the feeling of heaviness and stability, while tall fonts convey the idea of lightness and luxury. We subconsciously associate the font height with the metaphorical concepts of gravity. For example, the horizontal orientation emphasised in the short fonts suggests heaviness and stability. It embodies the concepts of durability, solidity and something immovable. Someone like the Indian cricket great batsmen who ones famously said we the short fellows are more closer to earth, thus difficult to get out easily.

Tall fonts portray lightness and quickness. It can also be metaphorically associated with aspiration and ambition. On the other hand, many people associate the verticality and emphasised in tall fonts with the concept of growth, success and luxury. This is why many designers often use tall fonts in the designs for luxury brands.

#### Find your Right Font

Font psychology is a very logical and intuitive science that can be perfectly applied in the creative design process. Each typeface has its own personality, its hidden traits, and influences on the user's psyche. The designer's main task is to discover that personality and match it with the mood of the brand. Create a perfect pairing of the brand and its native typeface that will become a logical continuation of the company culture and style.

#### Typography and Emotion: Making Words Feel Alive

There's a fascinating discovery of how various fonts conjure different emotions. Visualise a poem about tragic event, with every sentence set in a fragile, light weight font. The letters evoke delicate feel, virtually as if they could evaporate from the page, matching the emotions of brittleness and conciseness in the poem's content.



Now imagine that same poem composed in a heavy bold font. The words become hefty, and the lightness of the passion is overshadowed by the physicality of the letterforms.

Fonts are like actors on a stage. Some are subtle and let the story shine, while others take centre stage, shaping the mood and amplifying the emotions. They have the power to make a story feel alive as if the letters themselves are breathing with the narrative.

### **The Reader's Communion with Fonts**

As readers, unknowingly we develop compatibility with fonts, whether we realise it or not. We all have that one font that feels comforting, perhaps the one we are comfortably habitual to and grew up reading in our favourite books and novels. Some fonts arouse nostalgia, while others push us towards the future. It's no coincidence that science fiction often uses sleek, futuristic fonts, or that horror novels lean on jagged, unsettling typography. These choices are far from random. They connect us emotionally to the content. Think about your own reading experience. Have you ever felt a sense of calm when reading a book printed in familiar font? Or perhaps felt an uneasy tension when the typography didn't match the tone of the story?

It's all part of the reading experience, a silent collaboration between you, the author, and the type designer.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Next time you pick up a book, take a moment to appreciate not just the words, but how those words are presented to you. The font is a silent storyteller, working behind the scenes to ensure the narrative reaches you in just the right way. Typography may be easy to overlook, but once you start paying attention, you'll realise it's the invisible hand that guides your reading journey.

A public speaker is more audible in that sense when he bellows. But a good speaking voice is one which is inaudible as a voice. It is the transparent goblet again! I need not warn you that if you begin listening to the inflections and speaking rhythms of voice from a platform, you are falling asleep. When you listen to song in a language you do not understand, part of your mind actually does fall asleep, leaving your quite separate aesthetic sensibilities to enjoy themselves unimpeded by your reasoning faculties. The fine arts do that; but that is not the purpose of printing. Type well used is invisible as type, just as the perfect talking voice is the unnoticed vehicle for the transmission of words, ideas. In a world of endless books and stories, fonts are the subtle art that transforms letters on a page into an unforgettable experience. The next time you open a book, notice the font and remember: it's quietly shaping the story, one letter at a time.

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