



AICI Connections



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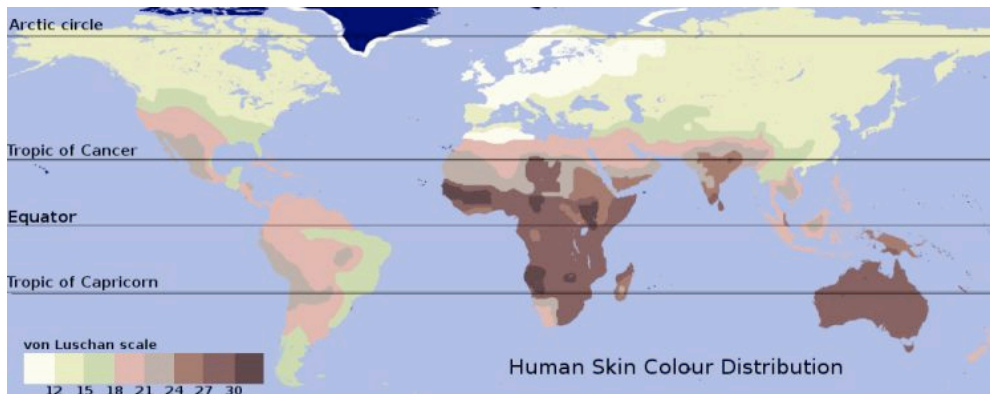
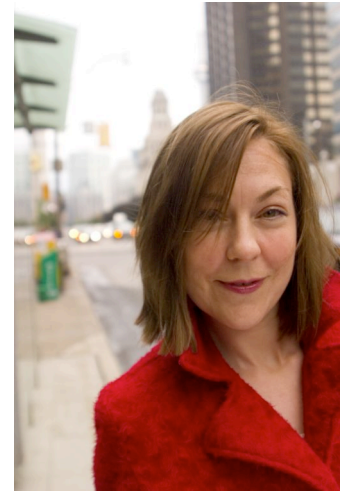
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The Complexity of Human Colouring

By Leah Morrigan

To understand human colouring, one must understand **melanin**, the cell protein that provides colouring to plants, animals, and humans. In humans, it is found in skin, hair, and the iris and comes in two forms, determined by our genetic makeup: pheomelanin (red) and eumelanin (dark brown to black).

With this in mind, anthropologists Nina Jablonski and George Chaplin split the globe into three vitamin D zones (the tropics, the subtropics, and the circumpolar regions north and south of 45 degrees latitude) and found a high correlation between the amounts of melanin in indigenous peoples and the average annual UV radiation where they live.



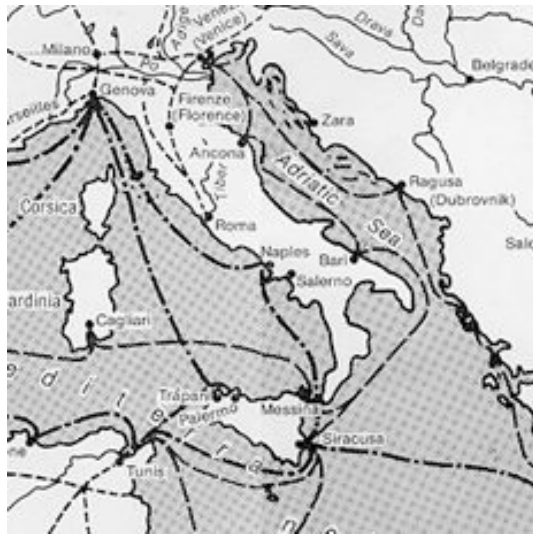
I took their theory and applied it to my own study, collecting colour palette and ethnic data from my own clients and Canadian AICI members. Of this, 52% of respondents are cool-skinned, 33% have warm undertones, and

15% are unknown. Home seasons did not differ from Jablonski and Chaplin's theories of vitamin D zones: **spring**s hail from Northern Europe and the UK, **summer**s from Eastern Europe, UK, France, and Norway, **autumn**s from Eastern Europe, France, and Italy, and **winter**s from Italy, UK, Germany, China, India, Africa, and SE Asia. The table below shows the breakdown of our ten specific palettes:

Palette	% Of Total
Spring	8.22%
Summer	8.22%
Autumn	9.60%

Winter	13.70%
Spring-summer	6.84%
Spring-autumn	8.22%
Spring-winter	0%
Summer-autumn	17.80%
Summer-winter	9.60%
Winter-autumn	17.80%

My research showed **winter-autumn** and **summer-autumn** as the most common palettes, each making up almost 18% of the ten palette possibilities. What is striking is that while summer-autumns originate from (generally Eastern) Europe, all winter-autumns come from countries surrounded or partially surrounded by **water** (India, Portugal, West Africa, Macedonia, and most prevalently, Italy, Ireland, and Jamaica), making them open to far-away and exotic influence. This fascinated me and I began to research the histories of these landmasses.



Over the centuries, **Franks, Normans, and swarthy-skinned Greeks, Arabs, and Ottomans have imprinted Italy.** Due to its position on the Mediterranean, it has been influenced by trade routes to Northern Europe, Asia Minor, and North Africa. With a history so varied, it is not surprising that the palettes of AICI survey respondents who originate from Italy vary from spring-summer (N. Italy) to winter (Sicily). The Los Angeles Fashion Academy's True Colors six-category colour system identifies AICI CIP **Joanne Blake's** Sicilian palette as "Violet" (i.e. winter with violet undertones). Joanne notes Northern or Southern Europeans, South Americans, dark-haired and light-skinned Scottish and Welsh, and the dark Irish share her colour characteristics.

Ireland's palettes are as varied as Italy's. For example, my Irish mother is blonde and blue-eyed (perhaps bred in by a genetic Viking influence), and her twin brother is dark-haired and dark-eyed. The so-called "**Black Irish**", with jet-black hair, dark eyes, and unusually white skin, prompts many theories, from origins traced to ancient Scythia (Persia), to the legend of shipwrecked Spanish sailors engendering a new interracial strain, to the theory of early Celtic explorers developing white skin to absorb Ireland's scarce solar radiation. In my experience, deep colour drapes on the dark Irish sharpen and intensify their eyes and keep true to their alabaster skin.



Every **Jamaican** I have worked with flows to winter-autumn, the palette punctuating their deep eyes, and giving just that much more saturation to their brown but distinctively greenish-toned skin. Jamaica's history is extremely complex, beginning with the Spanish, who after obliterating the original Arawak Indian island dwellers from South America, were conquered by the invading English navy, followed by the slave trade that moved millions from NW Africa into the Caribbean region. Nineteenth century Jamaica saw the arrival of small groups of Germans, a massive Indian migration, and a large Chinese settlement to further complicate Jamaica's genetic pool.

For further insight and to enhance analysis accuracy, it is important to inquire about a client's ethnic heritage. As studies continue, we move closer to understanding human colouring and the genetic map. In a groundbreaking, worldwide five-year DNA study, The National Geographic Society has unveiled the Genographic Project, in an effort to understand the human journey, giving us what may be the most definitive answers yet to the riddles of humanity. To participate, please see www.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/participate.html.

From a costume design and psychology background, Leah Morrigan is Canada's only AICI Men's Image Specialist, oft-quoted in the media, inspiring professionals, politicians, and everyday Joes to perceive themselves in a new light: confident, distinctive, comfortable in their own skins. She is the editor of Canada's Inside Image quarterly. Connect with Leah via e-mail: leah@transformyourself.ca.