

Introducing Use of Colour Reference As a New Dynamics of Sonnet Writing by Shakespeare

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Taste of life seemed to find its place when a man of genius in world literary circle felt the need to write poems containing fourteen lines what we call sonnets today. Thanks to Thomas Thorpe who did the job of publishing Shakespearean sonnets in 1609 just before seven years we lost this great literary architect that the world of literature ever produced. There are variations from the component perspective in his sonnets writing that have already taken into account by many eminent scholars and critics. Enough light is shown to the theme and motive that instigated Shakespeare to write sonnets when he already had achieved the crown of fame by writing tragedies or comedies. But what distinguishes Shakespeare from his early predecessors specially Edmund Spenser, Philip Sydney or Thomas Wyatt are not his usual stylistics or representation of theme but his use of colour reference.

From the early days of literary composition, colour is inevitable when it comes to printed or non printed version. Even our existence on earth can be symbolized within the specific time span where we imagine day in white colour and night in black. And when we talk about our life it is Alex Morritt who rightly said – “ Life is indeed colourful , we can feel in the pink one day , with our bank balances comfortably in the black and grass seemingly no greener on the other side of the fence. Then out of the blue something tiresome happens that makes us see red, turn as he is white, even purple with rage. May be controlling our varying emotions is just colour management by another name .” Shakespeare’s uses of colour words remind us about expressionism. It was a movement in Germany very early in the 20th century in which a number of painters sought to avoid the representation of external reality and instead to project themselves and a highly personal vision of the world. This can be applied to literature. Briefly the main principle involved is that expression determines form and therefore imagery, punctuation, syntax and so forth. Infact any of the formal rules and elements of writing can be bent or disjointed to suit the purpose. And it is true when we go through the sonnets of Shakespeare one after another. The synaesthatic flavour is immense in his writings when we read the sonnets which produce not only melodic ambience but also a visual screening with his colour mention method. The world history of painting become changed with the new dialectics initiated by Rembrandt .With the advent of renaissance, the common notion of using

colour in paintings saw some radical changes. This is prominent if we take the paintings of Rembrandt for particular. He will be remembered for his use of light and shade method as well as the use of yellow in almost all his paintings. Shakespearean sonnets in this context are to be mentioned. These are completely different because first time after his predecessor's works as we see in 'loving in truth' by Philip Sidney, and 'Amoretti' by Edmund Spenser, Shakespeare used direct colour reference like 'golden', 'Silvery' etc. Just like a painter, he took different types of colour from his colourbox and used it to draw picturesque portrait with a fine composition of words to make it a finished and beautiful artistic exponent in a single frame within fourteen lines boundary.

To have a look at the different coloured flower in the whole garden of Shakespeare, we must take an entrance just for having a unique experience one after another. Sonnet no-17 titled 'who will believe my verse in time to come' comes with its first colour reference. Here he actually wanted to portray sapless and mature condition of his verse which was written in praise of his friend when he uttered—"So should my papers (yellow with their age)". He believed that with the ongoing span of time, his work will lose its charm as it is with the general laws of nature in this mundane world. So here 'yellow' symbolized the phase of decay in this sonnet. The same colour as a symbol of impending decay finds its place in sonnet no-73 titled 'That time of year thou mayst in me behold'. The lines are—"When yellow leaves or none, or few do hang upon those boughs which shake against the cold". It is very interesting fact findings that in both sonnets i.e. Sonnet no-17 and sonnet no-73, the colour 'yellow' is associated with the leaves. The first one is with the paper or book and the second is with the tree. In sonnet no-104 titled 'To me fair friend year never can be old', he infused that particular colour yellow with the season autumn in the line—"Three beautiful springs to yellow autumn turned". The spring which is a season of prosperity in every aspect gradually changes with the advent of autumn which is a season of lackness. The 'green' which is a contrasting colour symbol is used in couple of his sonnets. In sonnet no-33 titled 'Full many a glorious morning have I seen', he draws a beautiful picture of fertility and freshness all around when he experiences the reflection of sun upon the meadows green in the line—"kissing with golden face the meadows green". In sonnet no-63 titled 'Against my love shall be, as I am now,' he expressed his heartfelt wish that the beauty of his friend lover will be immortalized as he wanted to give life and divinity to the freshness of his love by writing verses which would be printed in 'black' to convey green i.e. vitality. This is indicated in the last two lines of the sonnet—"His beauty shall in these black lines be seen/ And they shall live and he in them still green". In sonnet no-104 with the title 'To me fair friend you never can be old', Shakespeare thinks that his fair friend is ever green and can never be old. In this sonnet, Shakespeare sees him as a symbol of 'source of life' like greens, when he meets him for the first time. He said—"Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green". The next important colour which he uses in his sonnets are 'black' which is generally treated as a symbol of hopelessness and despair. In sonnet no-73 titled 'that time of year thou mayst in me behold', he sees night as the death's second self and associates the colour black with it. The particular line is—"which by and by black night doth take away". In sonnet no-130 titled 'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun', he compares the hairs of his ladylove with that of the black wires which grow on head while depicting the beauty of his mistress in the line—"If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head". And the same colour symbol is used in sonnet no-132 titled 'Thine eyes, I love, and they, as pitying me' to characterise his ladylove within all

aspects specially in the domain of physical charm and beauty. In this context his love is something unusual and extraordinary. That's why he said, "Then will I swear beauty herself is black / And all they found that thy complexion lack". The next colour symbol which he uses very skillfully to depict the divine beauty of his mistress is 'red'. In sonnet no – 130 titled 'My mistress eyes are nothing like the sun', he gives the description of his mistress' beauty as "coral is far more red, than her lips red". The only colour which he uses in his sonnets with a contrasting mood with 'red' is 'white'. This is evident in sonnet-99 titled 'The forward violet thus did I chide'. He sees the roses fearfully stand on thorns but with something very unusual look. He said – "A third, nor red, nor white, had stolen of both". He decided to add the colour 'white' with despair in the line – "one blushing shame, another white despair." The same object rose is painted in 'red and white' in sonnet no-130 titled 'My mistress's eyes are nothing like the sun', which we may call a colourful hymn dedicated to his loved one. He gave a fine cinematographic reflection of beauty when he said – "I have seen roses damasked, red and white / but no such roses see I in her cheeks". Apart from using direct colour reference, He mentioned oblique colour references in his sonnets. In sonnet no-18 titled 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day', he used the word 'gold complexion' in the line – "And often is his gold complexion dimmed" "to sketch the sun with its changing course. The next is the word 'fair' which he used in sonnet no-54 titled 'O, How much more doth beauty beautous seen'. His intention was to put a bright and dazzling visual effect with that particular love object i.e. rose. The line is – "the rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem". It seems that the same word fair is used in his sonnets to add brightness that would surely make his sonnets colourful with an adjusted tone. He used alternative reference of black and white in sonnet no-100 titled 'Where art thou muse, that thou forget'st so long, when he said – "darkening thy power to lend loose subjects light?"

We find the same use of colour in the writings of Jibanananda Das who is an eminent poet of Bengali literature. If we take an instance from his 'windy night', it would easily understand that he did the same job as Shakespeare did by writing sonnets. The lines from windy night are – "That it was drifting like a white heron / I was almost torn asunder under last night's blue torture / My heart is overwhelmed with the scotch of green grass. There is a sudden rise and fall in his feelings and emotions which he painted through the colour symbol. That is why the torture is blue and he could feel the of green grass. The colour white is associated with birds in his poem as it is seen a white heron in windy night and yet I hear the white sound of wind driven birds in to her steady lover. Shakespeare used the colour white in a very different way in his sonnets. The alternative colour word. Gold golden was used by both poets in their writings as we already had seen in Shakespeare's sonnets. Just like Shakespeare, Jibanananda uses this word in his several poems. From his the great twilight we find – "The wheel-cart idly rolls laden with golden straw. She day eight years ago shows that he was brilliant in depicting the actual visual impression of theme in his poems when he said – the fragrance of golden corn of winter evening.

What Edward Hooper said is very significant today – "If I could say it in words there would be no reason to paint." The record of writings that started several hundred years ago shows that people kept record of their writings not with the help of words but by the way of carving or painting. With the advent of surrealism

after reissuance, we used to familiar with visual poetry. But with the resurgence of queen Elizabeth in England, we see the change of dimension when ever it comes to the representation of poems particularly sonnets .This is a full proof evidence if we compare Shakespeare an sonnets with the sonnets written by Thomas Wyatt or Henry Howard. Shakespeare maintained the treatment of singularity in theme which is love either for his fair friend or for his mistress. But what distinguishes him from almost all the other sonnet writers is his skillful use of colour words to pinpoint the particular human emotions in his sonnets with which any reader could identify himself. It is beyond question that he will be the best man forever who made his find verdict on that matter when he said – “ truth needs no colour with his colour fixed “ in sonnet no – 101 bearing the title ‘O truant muse what shall be thy amends’. This special artifact i.e. using colour reference will be remembered with the Shakespearean tradition of sonnet writings as it would surely create “wonderful fertility in structural complexity” stated by Helen Vendler in his ‘The art of Shakespeare’s sonnets’.

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