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Cold Colours in 19th–century English Literature

The paper is a frequency survey of five colour terms (black, white, grey, green, blue) used in 55 novels by 10 foremost 19th–century British writers. Both basic colour terms and terms with motivators have been registered — the latter (123 in all) are classified according to their semantic fields and morphological–syntactical types. The number of occurrences of *white* is equal to the combined occurrences of black and grey; with *blue* 50 p.c. more motivators are used than with *green*. Usage differs considerably with the writers but no particular colour dominates the perception of any writer. The author does not see any conflict between the universalist theory of Berlin–Kay and the relativist theory of Sapir and Whorf.

In this survey of colour terms the following terminology will be used:

BC — basic colour term, also known as primary colour, i. e. an item from the series of: *black, white, grey, blue, green, yellow, red.*

MC — a colour term containing a motivator, which specifies the hue. The motivator is the name of an object or phenomenon, the exact colour of which is generally known so that it can serve as a specific colour term. The semantic range of any BC is fairly large, e. g. *blue* ranges from pale blue (*blue eyes*) to violet (*blue eggplant*), *white* from spotless white (*white wall*) to yellowish (*white wine, white currant*).

The motivator is used either alone (*jet*) or with a suffix (e. g. *–y: jetty*) or in combination MC+BC (*jet–black*). All three variants exist in some cases only, and sometimes instead of the underived form (e. g. *ash*) the forms M + *–coloured/ –hued* or *the colour of ashes* are used. E. g.: *ash–coloured* (or *the colour of ashes*), *ashen, ash–grey*.

Both a noun and an adjective can serve as motivators: *ash–grey, blue–grey*. The basic colour terms are gradable, the colour terms containing motivators can be graded very exceptionally only (*rosy — rosier*).

BC+BC — a two–base compound of two basic colour terms, e. g. *blue–grey*. Occasionally, a triple compound can be found.

BC as M — a simile. Some similes are lexicalized collocations, e. g. *black as coal*, others are ad hoc creations: *black as night at Martinmass*.

Derivative — a BC with the suffix *–ish* (*whitish, greyish*) or *–y* (*jetty*). The former contains the seme "small quantity" but can imply indistinctiveness too. The suffix *–en* is unproductive (only *ashen, flaxen, golden, silvern*). Czech, as a synthetic language, makes use of more suffixes, e. g. against *greenish, greeny* there is *zelenavé, nazelenalé, zelenkaé* and the emotional *zeleňoučké*.

In the sphere of "white", one special subcategory can be identified as "colourless", but since its connotation if often "white", it is registered in this survey under "white" as well: *blanched, bleached, livid, lurid, wan*.

The motivators can be roughly classified into the following classes or fields: natural phenomena (e. g. *smoke, sky*), minerals and metals (*slate, steel*), organic materials (*indigo, milk, wax, paper*), non–organic human products (*wall*), plants (*cornflower*), the fauna (*dove, raven*), place and time (*French, winter*), death (*cadaver, funeral*), non–colour quality (*cold, neutral*). — There are of course a few controversial cases, e. g. *indigo*, originally produced from plants, now a chemical dye, etc. and one or two colour terms with etymology unknown (*watchet*) — a case of demotivation.

This investigation is restricted to the "cold" part of the spectrum, i. e. blue and green, and to the terms black, white, and grey.

The corpus was provided by 55 volumes by ten 19th–century British writers, of whom the youngest was born in 1857: 8 novels by Walter Scott (published between 1814 and 1821), 5 novels by Jane Austen (1813–1818), 3 novels by W. M. Thackeray (1844–1852), 3 novels by Charlotte Brontë (1847–1853), 1 novel by Emily Brontë (1847), 8 novels by Charles Dickens (1837–1861), 5 novels by George Eliot (1859–1876), 8 novels by Thomas Hardy (1872–1896), 3 novels by R. L. Stevenson (1882–1893), and 9 novels by Joseph Conrad (1895–1920).

Black

Walter Scott

BC:MC 234:16 = 14:1. *Distrib. of non–BC: 5 W, 1 A, 2 OM, 6 RR, 0 K, 2 HM, 1 BL, 1 LM*
MC: jetty, raven, sable
MC+BC: jet b., rusted b.
BC+BC: 0
BC as M: black as: coal, a funeral, night, night at Martinmass, midnight

Charlotte Brontë

BC:MC 204:26 = 4:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 12 JE, 12 S, 2 V
MC: jetty, sable, raven, negro
MC+BC: cinder–b., jet–b., purple–b., raven–b., soot–b.
BC+BC: 0
BC as M: black as: death, a thundercloud

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Emily Brontë

BC:MC 43:2 = 20:1.
MC: jet
MC+BC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0
BC as M: black as the chimney

Jane Austen

BC:MC 21:0. *MC+BC, CC, BC as M*: 0

W. M. Thackeray

BC:MC 231:5 = 46:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 BL, 1 VF, 2 HE
MC: jetty
MC+BC: jet–b.
BC+BC: 0
BC as M: black as: jet, Styx, thunder

Charles Dickens

BC:MC 573:23 = 25:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 0 0T, 4 NN, 2 OCS, 2 DC, 5 BH, 1 BR, 2 GE, 6 LD
MC: coaly, inky, pitchy, raven, sable
MC+BC: cold b., deadly b., grizzled b., jet–b., raven–b., rusty b.
BC+BC: 0
BC as M: black as: jet, thunder

George Eliot

BC:MC 239:6 = 40:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 2 AB, 2 MF, 0 SM, 0 M, 1 DD
MC: jet
MC+BC: jet–b.
CC: brown–black, purplish black
BC as M: black as sloes

Thomas Hardy

BC:MC 204:20 = 10:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 0 UGT, 4 PBE, 6 FMC, 5 RN, 0 MC, 1 W, 3 TU, 1 JO
MC: ebony, inky, jet, raven, sable, sooty
MC+BC: coal–b., inky–b., jet–b.
BC+BC: blue–black, grayish–black, violety–bluey–blackish
BC as M: black as: a cave in Hinnon, my hat, jet, night, the ninth plague of Egypt

R. L. Stevenson

BC:MC 156:3 = 52:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 0 TI, 1 K, 2 MB, 0 C

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MC: inky
MC+BC: ink–b.
BC+BC: 0
BC as M: black as thunder

Joseph Conrad

BC:MC 684:47 = 14:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 AF, 3 OI, 7 LJ, 6 Y, 15 N, 3 SA, 3 Ch, 4 V, 5 R)
MC: ebony, jetty, raven, inky
MC+BC: coal–b., ink–b., jet–b., pitch–b., purple–b., raven–b.
BC+BC: blue–black
BC as M: black as: coal, a crow, commonplace death, Erebus, ink, Styx, thunder, –er than night
Derivative: blackish

Comment on "black"

Basic colour terms as against motivated colour terms prevail in ratios ranging from 4:1 (Ch. Brontë) to 52:1 (Stevenson), with 7 authors closer to Brontë rather than to Stevenson.

Motivators with frequency above three authors: *jet* 8, *raven* 4, *coal* 4, *ink* 4, *sable* 4 authors. The motivators are taken from the following fields (asterisks refer to motivators found in similes only):

  minerals (*cinder, coal, jet, pitch, rust*, soot*),
  animals (*crow*, raven, sable*),
  plants (*ebony, sloe**),
  natural phenomena (*cave*, night*, midnight*, thunder*, thundercloud**),
  death (*death*, funeral*, plague of Egypt*, Erebus*, Styx**),
  human produce (*chimney*, hat*, ink*).

Sometimes MC and MC+BC exist side by side: *inky — ink–black, jet/jetty — jet–black, pitchy — pitch–black, raven — raven–black.*

Compound colour terms (BC+BC) were infrequent: *blue–black* (Hardy), *brown–black* (Eliot), *grayish–black* (Hardy), *grizzled–black* (Eliot), *purple–black* (Ch. Brontë), *purplish–black* (Eliot), and one rare triple compound: *violety–bluey–blackish* (Hardy).

White

Walter Scott

BC:MC 129:42 = 3:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 3 W, 5 A, 4 OM, 10 RR, 8 HM, 6 K, 5 BL, 0 LM
MC: cadaverous, hoary, silver, snowy, colour of moonshine in the water, tallow
MC+BC: dingy–w., fleecy–w., ghastly–w., lily–w., milk–w., snow–w.
BC+BC: 0

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BC as M: white as: lamb, the purest statuary marble, milk, snow, driven snow
Derivative: whitish
"colourless": bleach, livid, lurid

Jane Austen

BC: *MC* 20:0. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 0
MC: 0, *MC+BC*: 0, *CC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, "colourless": 0

W. M. Thackeray

BC:MC 127:22 = 6:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 4 BL, 13 VF, 5 HE
MC: silver, snowy, waxy
MC+BC: ghastly w.
BC+BC: 0, *derivative*: 0
BC as M: white as silver, white as snow in sunshine, snowy as camellias
"colourless": livid, wan

Charles Dickens

BC:MC 388:63 = 6:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 7 OT, 5 NN, 8 OCS, 5 DC, 13 BH, 6 GE, 4 LD, 14 BR
MC: cadaverous, dead–coloured, frosty, hoary, silvery, silver(ed), waxen
MC+BC: deadly w., marble w., snow w., snowy w., virgin w.
BC+BC: brownish white, yellow white, yellowish white
BC as M: white as: marble, milk, a tablecloth, the colour of light summer clouds
"Colourless": blanched, bleach, livid, lurid, wan, white

Charlotte Brontë

BC:MC 262:101 = 2.5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 39 JE, 44 S, 18 V
MC: hoary, ivory, North Pole colouring, pearly, silver, silvery, snow(y), whey
MC+BC: death–w., dew–w., foam–w., frost–w., ivory–w., pearl(y) w., pinky–w., silver–w., snow–w.
BC+BC: 0; *derivative*: whitish
BC as M: white as: an avalanche, bone, clay, death, glacier, lily, hue of lily, the wall, whiter than ashes, white like: alabaster, May–blossom, silver
"Colourless": blanched, bleached, livid, lurid, wan

Emily Brontë

BC:MC 29:12 = 2:1
MC: hoary, silvery, waxen, whey(–faced)
MC+BC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0
"Colourless": blanched, livid, wan

George Eliot

BC:MC 283:34 = 8:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 12 AB, 9 MF, 2 SM, 7 M, 4 DD
MC: colour of the dough–tub, ivory, lily, pasty, silver(y), snowy, waxen
MC+BC: lily–w., snow–w., woolen w.
BC+BC: 0, *derivative*: 0
BC as M: white as a sheet
"Colourless": blanched, bleached, livid

Thomas Hardy

BC:MC 340:85 = 4:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 3 UGT, 15 PBE, 19 FMC, 10 RN, 10
  MC, 10 (tint), 15 TU, 3 JO
MC: cadaverous, hoary, ivory, milk(–hued), milky, quicksilvery, silver(y), skim–
  milky, snowy
MC+BC: frosty–w., lily–w., milk–w., sickly w., snow(y)–w.
BC+BC: gray–white, greenish–white, pink–white
BC as M: white as: death itself, a lily, marblestone, a sheet, snow, the wall,
  winter
Derivative: whitish
"Colourless": blanch, bleach, livid, lurid, wan

R. L. Stevenson

BC:MC 75:25 = 3:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 9 TI, 4 K, 10 MB, 1 C
MC: silver(y), tallowy, tallow–faced
MC+BC: deadly w., waxy w.
BC+BC: 0, *derivative*: 0
BC as M: white as: dead folk, dead man's face, paper, a rag, a sheet, snow, a
  tallow candle, wax, like the snow
"Colourless":

Joseph Conrad

BC:MC: 1264:92 = 14:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 4 AF, 3 OJ, 7 LJ, 19 Y, 24 N, 11
  SA, 11 Ch, 4 V, 9 R
MC: hoary, ivory, milky, pasty, silver(y), snowy
MC+BC: dead(ly) w., ghostly w., papery w., pearly–w., sickly whitish, silvery
  w., snow(y)–w., unearthly w.
BC+BC: greyish–whitish, yellowy–white
BC as M: white as: a ghost, marble, a sheet, whiter than lilies, be like alabas-
  ter
Derivative: whitish
"Colourless": blanched, bleach, florid, livid, lurid, wan

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Comment on "white"

The BC:MC ratio ranges from 2–3:1 in the Brontë sisters and Scott through 6–8:1 in Thackeray, Eliot, Dickens to 20:0 in Austen.

Motivators with frequency above 3 authors: *silver* 8, *snow* 6, *hoar* 5, *ivory* 4, *wax* 4 authors.

Motivators are taken from the following fields (those that are found in similes only are marked with an asterisk):

minerals (*alabaster*, ashes*, clay*, ivory, marble, pearl, silver*),

natural phenomena (*avalanche*, dew, foam, frost, glacier*, hoar, moonshine in the water, snow, summer clouds*, winter**),

animals (*lamb**), humans (*virgin*),

plants (*cammelia*, lily, May blossom**),

organic and human products (*dough–tub, fleece, milk, paper, paste, rag*, sheet*, table–cloth*, tallow, wall*, wax, whey*)

death (*cadaver, death*, dead folk*, dead man's face*, dead–coloured, ghost*, ghastly, unearthly*),

place (*North Pole*).

— "Camellia" was used with an MC (snowy as —), not with the BC white.

White compounds (BC+BC) are no more numerous than black compounds: *brownish white, gray–white, greyish–whitish, greenish–white, pink–white, yellow/ yellowish/ yellowy–white*. They are found in 3 authors only (Dickens, Hardy, Conrad).

The derivative *whitish* is used by one half of the writers (Scott, Ch. Brontë, Eliot, Hardy, Conrad).

Gray

Walter Scott

BC:MC 121:18 = 6:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 0 W, 6 A, 2 OM, 1 RR, 3 HM, 4 BL, 2 LM, 0 K
MC: ashen, grizzled, leaden
MC+BC: iron–g., pearl–g.
BC+BC: whitish–grey
BC as M: pale as ashes, *derivative*: greyish

Jane Austen

BC:MC 5:1
MC+BC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

W. M. Thackeray

BC:MC 30:7 = 4:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 BL, 5 VF, 1 HE
MC: dove–coloured, grizzled, pearly, pepper–and–salt

MC+BC: French grey
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

Charles Dickens

BC:MC 203:46 = 4:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 5 OT, 6 NN, 5 OCS, 6 DC, 3 BH, 10 GE, 5 LD, 6 BR
MC: ashy, dust–coloured, leaden/lead–coloured, grizzled/grizzly, pepper–and–salt, smoke–coloured
MC+BC: iron–g.
BC+BC: bluish grey, greenish grey, reddish grey
BC as M: a colour like the colour of the smoke, *derivative*: 0

Ch. Brontë

BC:MC 91:20 = 4.5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 5 JE, 9 S, 6 V
MC: ashen, dust (its hue was gris de poussiere), iron, mother–of–pearl, pearl(y), stone
MC+BC: French g., iron–g., pearl g., purple g., silver g.
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

E. Brontë

BC:MC 11:0
MC: 0, *MC+BC*: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

George Eliot

BC:MC 129:23 = 5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 4 AB, 8 MF, 0 S, 6 M, 5 DD
MC: a tint of ashes, dove–coloured, grizzled, leaden, pearly, salt–and–pepper, slate
MC+BC: iron–g., silver–g.
BC+BC: blue–grey
NC as M: 0, *derivative*: 0

Thomas Hardy

BC:MC 90:31 = 3:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 UGT, 10 PBE, 4 FMC, 1 RN, 6 MC, 2 W, 5 TU, 2 JO
MC: ashy, dove–coloured, lead–coloured/leaden, grizzled/grizzel, pepper–and–salt, colour of stone, slaty, steely
MC+BC: aerial–g., ashy g., iron–g., muddy–g., purplish–g., slaty g.
BC+BC: blackish–grey, blue–grey, green–grey, reddish–grey
BC as M: 0, *derivative*: 0

R. L. Stevenson

BC:MC 22:4 = 5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 2 TI, 2 MB
MC: grizzled, leaden

MC+BC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *derivative*: 0
BC as M: be like ashes

Joseph Conrad

BC:MC 141:43 = 3:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 2 AF, 0 OJ, 8 LJ, 8 Y, 15 N, 6 SA, 3 Ch, 0 V, 1 R
MC: ashy, colour of lead, grizzled, pearly, pepper–and–salt, slaty/slate–coloured, colour of smoke
MC+BC: pearl(y)–g., silver(y)–g., steel–g.
BC+BC: 0
BC as M: grey as ashes
Derivative: greyish, dirty greyish

Comment on "grey"

In the BC:MC ratio, unlike in the other colour terms, with one exception (E. Brontë 11:0), all the writers have much the same ratio, 3–6:1.

Motivators with frequency above 3 authors: *ash, grizzled, lead* (6 each), *pearl, pepper* (5 each).

The motivators are taken from the following fields:

mineral/metal (*ash, dust, iron, lead,* [*pepper–and–*]*salt, silver, slate, steel, stone*)

nature (*air, smoke*)

animal (*dove, pearl, purple*), human (*French*)

plant (*pepper–*[*and–salt*])

"Grizzled" is actually a variant of "grey" (Old French "grisel" was a diminutive of "gris" = "grey"). Now it can only be applied to hair.

In similes only one motivator is found — *ashes.*

Compound terms (BC+BC) are more frequent and varied than in other colour sections, but most of them occur in Dickens and Thackeray only: *whitish–grey, blackish–grey, bluish–grey, blue–grey, green–grey, greenish–grey, reddish–grey.* Only one of them is found in two authors ("blue–grey" — in Eliot and Thackeray).

Blue

Walter Scott

BC:MC 122:10 = 12:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 W, 0 A, OM, 1 RR, 2 HM, 1 BL, 0 LM, 5 K
MC: azure, watchet–coloured
MC+BC: azure b., sky–b.
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: bluish

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Jane Austen

BC:MC 11:0.
MC: 0, *MC+BC*: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

W. M. Thackeray

BC:MC 71:6 = 12:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 BL, 2 VF, 3 HE
MC: azure, indigo, lilac, saphire, violet
MC+BC: sky–blue
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

Charles Dickens

BC:MC 172:15 = 11:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 OT, 4 NN, 1 OCS, 0 BR, 5 DC, 2
   BH, 0 GE, 2 LD
MC: lavender, lilac, plum–coloured, violet
MC+BC: celestial–b., sky–b.
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: bluish

Charlotte Brontë

BC:MC 125:47 = 2.5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 11 JE, 19 S, 17 V
MC: amethyst, azure/azury, violet azure, cerulean, indigo, lilac, saphire, sky,
   violet
MC+BC: lilac–b., sea–b., silvery b., sky–b.
BC+BC: black–blue
BC as M: blue as the sea, bluer than the sky, *derivative*: 0

Emily Brontë

BC:MC 12:1
MC: indigo–coloured
MC+BC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

George Eliot

BC:MC 94:10 = 9:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 3 AB, 1 MF, 0 S, 4 M, 2 DD
MC: azure, indigo, lavender, plum, violet
MC+BC: heavenly blue
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

Thomas Hardy

BC:MC 108:31 = 3:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 UGT, 10 BPE, 2 FMC, 4 RN, 0
   MC, 5 W, 8 TU, 1 JO
MC: amethyst(ine), azure, indigo, lavender, lilac, ultramarine, violet, metallic
   violet
MC+BC: misty b., neutral b., shady b., steely b.

BC+BC: 0, *derivative*: bluish
BC as M: blue as: autumn distance, autumn mist, cornflower, saphire

R. L. Stevenson

BC:MC 36:0
MC: 0, *MC+BC*: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

Joseph Conrad

BC:MC 184:36 = 5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 4 AF, 5 OJ, 3 LJ, 5 Y, 8 N, 1 SA, 1 Ch, 3 V, 6 R
MC: azure, of "Bismarck malade" colour, indigo, lavender, lilac, sapphire, violet
MC+BC: metallic b., steely b., violet b.
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: bluish

Comment on "blue"

In the BC: MC ratio, three groups of authors can be distinguished: a) with no MC (Austen, Stevenson), b) with the ratio 11–12:1 (Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, E. Brontë), and c) with the ratio of 2.5–5:1 (Ch. Brontë, Hardy, Conrad).

Motivators with frequency above 3 authors: *azure, indigo, violet* (6 each), *lilac* (5), *lavender, lilac, sky* (4 each).

Motivators are taken from the following fields (asterisks refer to motivators found in similes only):

minerals, metals (*amethyst, metal, sapphire, silver, steel, ultramarine* — the pigment was formerly made from lapis lazuli)
natural phenomena (*autumn distance*, autumn mist*, azure, cerulean* (from Latin caelum = sky), *mist, sea*, shade*)
plants (*cornflower*, indigo, lavender, lilac, plum, violet*)
humans and human products (*Bismarck–malade, watchet*)
abstract (*celestial, heaven, neutral*)

Compound colour terms (BC+BC): only *black–blue* in Ch. Brontë.

The derivative *bluish* is found in four writers only (Scott, Dickens, Hardy, Conrad).

Green

Walter Scott

BC:MC 85:10 = 8.5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 3 W, 2 RR, 3 HM, 0 A, OM, BL, LM, K
MC: verdant/verdure
MC+BC: Lincoln g., sea–g.
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: greenish

Jane Austen

BC:MC 14:2 = 7:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 NA, 1 MP
MC: verdure
MC+BC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC + M*: 0

W. P. Thackeray

BC:MC 65:5 = 13:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 1 BL, 4 VF
MC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0
MC+BC: apple–g., Lincoln g., pea–g., sea–g.

Charles Dickens

BC:MC 209:38 = 5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 2 OT, 16 NN, *0* BR, 1 OCS. 1 DC, 5
  BH, 2 GE, 11 LD
MC: lawn, olive, verdant/verdure
MC+BC: boat–g., bottle–g., Lincoln g., pea–g., sea–g.
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0

Charlotte Brontë

BC:MC 93:30 = 3:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 8 JE, 14 S, 8 V
MC: emerald, olive, verdigris, verdure/verdant, vernal
MC+BC: emerald–g., gem–g., grass–g., milky g., olive–g., pea–g., sea–g.
BC+BC: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

Emily Brontë

BC:MC 9:1
MC: verdant
MC+BC: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

George Eliot

BC:MC 103:14 = 7:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 2 AB, 0 MF, 1 S, 8 M, 3 DD
MC: verdure
MC+BC: olive–green
BC+BC: blue–green
BC as M: 0
Derivative: greenish

Thomas Hardy

BC:MC 164:17 = 10:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 0 UGT, 5 PBE, 2 FMC, 4 RN, 0
  MC, 3 W, 2 TU, 1 JO
MC: verdant/verdure
MC+BC: bottle–g., emerald–g., neutral g., olive–g., scarecrow–g., sea–g., silver–
  g.

BC+BC: blackened–green, gray–green, grayish–green, yellowish green
BC as M: green as emerald, *derivative*: greenish

R. L. Stevenson

BC–MS 31:0
MC: 0, *MC+BC*: 0, *BC+BC*: 0, *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: 0

Joseph Conrad

BC:MC 116:24 = 5:1. *Distrib. of non–BC*: 4 AF, 4 OJ, 2 LJ, 3 Y, 2 N, 3 SA, 2 Ch, 2 V, 2 R
MC: emerald, olive, verdigris, verdant/verdure
MC+BC: arsenical g., emerald g., golden g., muddy g.
BC+BC: 0 *BC as M*: 0, *derivative*: greenish

Comment on "green"

In the BC:MC ratio, three groups can be distinguished: a) with no MC (Stevenson), b) 3–7:1 (Ch. Brontë, Dickens, Conrad, Austen, Eliot, and c) 9–13:1 (E. Brontë, Hardy, Thackeray).

Motivators with frequency above 3 authors: *verdant/verdure* (7), *olive* and *sea* (5 each), *emerald* (4).

The motivators are taken from the following fields:

    minerals, metals (*arsenic, emerald, gem, gold, silver, verdigris*)
    natural phenomena (*sea, vernal*)
    plant (*apple, grass, lawn, olive, pea*)
    animal product (*milk*)
    human produce (*boat, bottle, scarecrow*)

The derivative *greenish* is found in 4 authors (Scott, Eliot, Hardy, Conrad). There was no simile (BC as M).

Compound terms (BC+BC) were found in two authors only: *blue–green* (Eliot), *blackened–green, grey–green, greyish–green, yellowish–green* (Hardy).

Conclusion

The corpus of 55 novels by ten writers contained 9,107 colour terms, of which 7,993 were basic colour terms. The distribution of motivated colour terms was as follows: 148 black, 476 white, 193 grey, 156 blue, 141 green, i. e. a total of 1,114. The total number of motivators is 123 (24 black, 43 white, 15 grey, 24 blue, 17 green).

Writers in the 19th century had a smaller repertoire of colour terms than 20th–century writers. Another survey made by the present author (covering 250 years, up to the 1970s) collected a total of over 500 English motivators (Peprník 1987). Few of the early colour terms, however, have become extinct. Another observation is that the BC+BC type (e. g. blue–green) was not much

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in use in the 19th century and has developed later. There is wide difference in the exploitation of the wealth of colour terms. Jane Austen is an example of reduced colour vision, which is rather unexpected in a woman author. Stevenson ignores any shades of blue or green, though he is strong in similes involving white. But on the whole, unlike in poetry, a single colour or a few selected colours do not dominate a particular work or writer. Writers fond of detailed descriptions of scenery and characters, such as Hardy and Conrad, used more colours than the average 19th–century writer. No colour symbolism in the stricter sense of the word was found — as distinguished from metaphorism — e. g. *black ivory* (= the slaves), *white as death*. Cultural associations that are at the bottom of symbolism differ in different cultures only, e. g. black versus white as the colour of mourning in Europe and in China.

The existing studies of colour terms (e. g. Bennett, Wyler, Škultéty) are imperfect in these respects: the corpus is not large enough, the period covered is not long enough, the frequency is not registered systematically, and little distinction is made between various styles (fiction, poetry, scientific texts, advertisements). As regards frequency, it should be pointed out that the number of texts (e. g. novels) is more relevant for the distribution of colour terms than the total number of occurrences because a colour term may repeatedly refer to one and the same object.

One methodological note: the theory of colour explains that colour is subject to three variables: hue (e. g. *green, greenish, olive–green, yellowish green, green as emerald* — these are the main morphological and syntactical patterns; *black, white* and *grey* are hueless), saturation (variations defined by *deep, rich, strong, dull*) and tonality (i. e. brightness, e. g. *dark, light, pale*). In European languages, however, colour coding is motivated foremost by hue and that is why the other two variables have been ignored in this survey.

And finally one theoretical observation: I do not see any conflict between the universalist theory of Berlin and Kay (11 terms as basic universals) and the relativist theory of Sapir and Whorf. In every language, colour terms categorize and structure the colour continuum in a different way. Environment, personal experience, and personal sensibility are the three main factors in the creation of non–basic, i. e. motivated, colour terms.

Corpus

Scott, Walter: Waverley, The Antiquary, Old Mortality, Rob Roy, The Heart of Midlothian, Kenilworth

Austen, Jane: Northanger Abbey, Mansfield Park, Pride and Prejudice, Persuasion, Emma

Thackeray, W. M.: The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon, Esq., Vanity Fair, Henry Esmond

Dickens, Charles: Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, Old Curiosity Shop, Barnaby Rudge, David Copperfield, Bleak House, Little Dorrit, Great Expectations

Brontë, Charlotte: Jane Eyre, Vilette, Shirley

Brontë, Emily: Wuthering Heights

Eliot, George: Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, Silas Marner, Middlemarch, Daniel Deronda

Hardy, Thomas: Under Greenwood Tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes, Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Woodlanders, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure

Stevenson, R. L.: Treasure Island, Kidnapped, The Master of Ballantrae, Catriona

Conrad, Joseph: Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands, Lord Jim, Youth, Nostromo, Secret Agent, Chance, Victory, the Rescue

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Hladne boje u engleskoj književnosti 19. stoljeća

U radu se daje čestotni prikaz nazivaka za boje (crnu, bijelu, sivu, zelenu, plavu) rabljenih u 55 romana desetorice znamenitih britanskih pisaca iz 19. stoljeća. Zabilježeni su kako nazivci za temeljne boje tako i nazivci s motivatorima. Ovi potonji klasificirani su s obzirom na semantička polja i morfološko–sintaktičke tipove. Broj pojavnica za *white* jednak je broju kombiniranih pojavnica za *black* i *grey*. Nazivak *blue* 50% je zastupljeniji od nazivka *green*. Poraba nazivaka značajno se razlikuje od pisca do pisca, ali nije primijećeno da bilo koja boja prevladava u percepciji pojedinoga pisca. Autor rada smatra da Berlin–Kayeva univerzalistička teorija nije u sukobu sa Sapir–Whorfovom relativističkom teorijom.