

## USE OF THE COLORATIVE "RED" IN THE WORK OF SILVER AGE POETS IN THE PERIOD OF REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATIONS IN RUSSIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XX CENTURY

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the research of historical epoch perception of the 20th century by such writers as V. Mayakovsky, A. Blok and N. Gumilev, using the colorative "red" in their works as an example. The author aims at analyzing the poems of the writers of the Silver Age and at finding out the authors' attitude to the revolutionary events of the 20th century through the use of the colorative "red". The article is intended for a wide range of readers who are interested not only in the literature of the Silver Age, but also in the historical situation which Russia experienced in the middle of the last century.

**Keywords:** colorative vocabulary, poets of the Silver Age, semantics of color, Mayakovsky, Blok, Gumilev.

At the beginning of the twentieth century a series of revolutions swept through Russia: the First Revolution of 1905-1907, the February Revolution of 1917 and the October Revolution of 1917. The influence of such grand events could not but affect the work of writers and artists. They began to express their attitude to the events through creativity. According to a famous artist Vincent Van Gogh: «Colors themselves express something». Color can also be represented as emotionality, «enriched with a variety of associations anchored in linguistic and social practice» [Zharkynbekova 2003: 110]. Color is a feature of the human eye's perception of the environment. A person when creating a certain object gives it a characteristic form and endows it with color, investing it with a certain meaning. Colors are also reflected in fiction. Thanks to the use of coloratives by poets and writers in their literary works, the reader understands both the emotional state of the writer and his thoughts and feelings. Coloratives are words that have the meaning of color. A colorative is a linguistic or speech unit which root morpheme is semantically or etymologically related to color-naming [Zubareva 2013]. «No one, never perceives color without these and similar impressions...the color red causes arousal, it is it, not ourselves. Excitement is its objective property», notes Russian philosopher and mythologist A.F. Losev [Losev 1991: 46]. The use of the colorative "red" reflects the different perception of the historical era of the twentieth century in the works of V. Mayakovsky, A. Blok and N. Gumilev.

One of the most active colors in the poems of Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilev in the revolutionary years becomes red. This color becomes a sign of anxiety, aggression, danger, reminiscent of fire, evil and blood:

*To the singer I gave a **bloody** flower*

*As a reward for my insolent speech.*

("The Song of the Singer and the King") [Gumilev 1991: 28].

After the October Revolution of 1917, at the time of which Nikolai Gumilev was 31, the image of blood often occurs in the poet's works, coloring the poems in bright red, for example, in the "Worker" (1916):

*I shall fall, deathly drown,*

*I shall see the past for real,*

*The **blood will gush** out on the dry,*

*Dusty and crumpled grass.*

Flowers and tree leaves are often painted in bloody color, for example, in the works "Autumn" (1917) and "Rain" (1915):

*An **orange-red** sky...*

*The intermittent wind sways*

***Bloody bunch of rowanberries...***

("Autumn").

*Only the greens are a little ominous,*

*As if spilled with vitriol,*

*But it's more sharply drawn.*

***The round bush of bloody roses.***

("Rain")

Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilev's use of red as a reflection of revolutionary events, which caused suffering and hardship to the Russian people, is seen in negative connotations.

Researcher L.P. Prokofieva says in her paper "Alexander Blok's Lingvo-color picture of the world": «Blok believed that certain words, poetic moods and views correspond to certain colors» [Prokofieva 2004: 237]. For Alexander Blok the color red correlates with such a concept as death. In this context, red can be interpreted as bloody. For example, in the poem "Snowy Spring Storms" (1914) and the poem "The Twelve" (1918):

*And I forgot all the days, all the nights,*

*And my heart **bleeds**,*

*Washing away the memory of my homeland...*

("Snowy Spring Storms")

*We'll make the bourgeoisie's world go up in flames.*

*We'll blow up the world's fire,*

*The world's fire **of blood**...*

*God bless!*

*And so they march in great march.*

*Behind a hungry dog.*

*Ahead, with a **bloody flag**...*

("The Twelve")

When red is used to refer to the color of fire, the lexemes in red most often carry a negative associative series. This is due to the fact that fire for the poet corresponds with the destructive component, with the victim, as can be seen in the poem "Fresh" (1906) and the poem "Twelve" (1918).

*Here the child falls asleep.*

*At your bosom, sister.*

*The game begins!*

*See, he sighs in his sleep.*

*He sees the **red light** of the fire:*

*It's time to go to the bonfire! [Blok 1997: 366]*

("Fresh ")

*- Who's waving the **red flag**?*

*- Look, look at the darkness!*

*- Who's out there walking at a runaway pace?*

*Hiding behind all the houses?*

("Twelve").

In the works of Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Blok the red color symbolizes mainly fire, blood and destruction. In this way the author shows his attitude to revolutionary changes.

The color palette of Mayakovsky's work can be called bright and varied. Mayakovsky is considered a poet of the revolution, so his works often use red color and its shades [Chistyakova 1969: 208]. Since Vladimir Mayakovsky accepted the revolution, was fascinated by it, the colorative "red" is used in his works not only in the sense of "bloody", but also in the sense of "festive", "honorable". The poet takes pride in his country:

*The **red color** of my republics*

*Should flame, too.*

("Letter to Tatiana Yakovleva," 1928)

*...I'll take my soul out, I'll trample it.*

*A big one! - And give it **bloody** as a banner.*

("A Cloud in My Pants", 1914-15)

Such words as "bloody" and "banner" are associated with the color red, which allows the reader to observe a bright red picture of what is happening. The same methods of constructing associations in Mayakovsky's works are encountered quite often, for example, "At one hundred and forty suns the sunset was blazing" ("An Extraordinary Adventure," 1920) or "Among the Thin Legs, Liquid with Blood" ("Hymn to Health," 1915). Also in the works the colorative "red" is used with words connected with the building of the socialist state: "Red people's teacher"; "red Spartakiade"; "red officer"; "Let us raise the glory - to the red village, to the red city, - to the Red Army men's iron alloy" [Mayakovsky 1957: 24]. Mayakovsky metaphorically uses "red" to mean "honourable, pure, untainted": «But there is no place for a malicious smear, do not smear red souls»; «We Voikov's red name and thousands of others above us as a banner» [Mayakovsky 1958b: 133]. Also "red" takes on the poet's meaning "festive": «the calendar, but in today's red day the legendary years are revived» [Mayakovsky 1958a: 133]. In V. Mayakovsky's view, the revolution symbolized cardinal changes in the structure of the state, which the poet saw as necessary, hence the revolutionary events were justified, so Mayakovsky uses red in the sense of "honorable" and "festive" more than in the sense of "dangerous", "disturbing".

Thus, depending on the acceptance or non-acceptance by the poets of the Silver Age of revolutionary events, which is followed by fundamental changes in the world order in Russia, the color red served as a symbol of revolution. But their attitudes toward these events differed radically, and consequently the use of red was also used with different meanings. Some were able to recognize the events of a cardinal reorganization of Russia, while others were categorically against it. Given that all the changes took place under the red flag, symbolizing the cardinal changes of the current way of life, red thus becomes the main color, reflecting both the pain and suffering for some, and the hope for change for others. It is worth noting that the importance of color in works of fiction should not be underestimated, as they possess cultural symbolism, create the atmosphere of the text, and express the writer's attitude toward certain phenomena of society.

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