Visualising Colour in The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath: A Digital Humanist Perspective

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Abstract

The works of Sylvia Plath are typically predisposed to meticulous dissection, laying bare their emotive and confessional components. Naturally, these are embedded in vivid images and metaphors. *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* fleshes out her innermost musings into a public space. Likewise, the torrent of colours is prevalent in these writings. This research attempts to undertake the study of the frequencies of colours in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* by deviating from the traditional textual analysis method and adopting a more distant reading method through Voyant Tools, pertinent to assess large data sets within the field of Digital Humanities. Colours constitute a giant portion of data in Plath's journals. The frequencies of colours are visualised through the journals with regard to Plath's pattern of behaviour and its manifestations. Colours are extensive networks of information which augment Plath's diary entries. This area would not only be examined expansively, but extracted data would be displayed in the shape of graphical representations to contribute to the macroanalysis of a text. Overall, this DH research adopts a visualising method not to solve a literary conundrum but to put forward new patterns of information.

Keywords: Data Visualization, Digital Humanities, Distant Reading, Macro Analysis, Sylvia Plath.

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INTRODUCTION

This research attempts to undertake a digital method to focus on the frequencies of colours in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* and present visualisations of data. Through Voyant Tools, the paper gives a macro analysis of the manner of primary colours (red, yellow, blue and green) and their variable manifestations in Plath's journals. Their progressions are plotted through the tool's own interface. Data visualisation and text-mining skins are utilised to rearrange and explicate frequencies and verbal patterns of colours into graphs of data representation to observe potential correlation between them. Furthermore, these four colours are grouped together into warm and cool colour palettes, drawn to see the most and least dominant and observe whether the data coincides with the content of the journals. A line graph along with a pie chart shows the total frequencies in the entire corpus to note its general pattern.

Through this field of Digital Humanities, a qualitative and a microanalytic approach is adopted to probe into Plath's frequent use of colours in her journals. The underlying questions for a literary scholar would be: Why is there an adamant need to employ a traditional text and integrate it with technology? Would it not be preferable to apply textual analysis instead to a collection like this? Like other existing DH projects, this research simply attempts to prove that novels, poems, and journals are not simply arrangements of words and sentences but they are also data. Such an assertion is expected to baffle literary researchers; however, due to its characteristics, the claim of *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, by nature, is a text as well as a giant portion of data.

It goes without saying that Sylvia Plath's journals were meant to be cradled within the privacy of ink and paper, hidden from the public eye. Unfortunately, that was no longer the case

when they made a posthumous appearance after publication. Jo Gill retraces this injustice through Ted Hughes's unsolicited decision in *The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath,* where he sifted and filtered what the corpus of her diary entries must consist of (Gill, 2008, p. 101). On the other hand, readers were finally able to see the person behind *The Bell Jar* and her poems, raw and untouched by professional authorship.

Later on, after Hughes's death, an unprecedented portion of her journals surfaced in another published edition as *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, edited by Karen V. Kukil. These journals also give readers a glimpse of Plath dabbling with doodles as another mode of articulating her thoughts. While navigating through these journals, there is a multitude of elements which are glaring and impossible to overlook. Indeed, like her poems, her language is overly saturated with rich descriptions.

In addition, what they see is an inundation of her constant grapples with life events encompassing academia, marriage, loss and self-perception from 1950 to 1959. The remaining three years, where her sanity and stability were battered and bruised, as a literal nail in her coffin, will eternally be left unknown to the reader. Although two immense volumes were destroyed by Hughes, involving the journals from the year of her death – 1963– (Gill, 2008, p.102), readers are still able to experience her emotional oscillations, social interactions and innermost wishes in a somewhat linear manner. Another article speculates that, according to Hughes, "the last journal came within days of Plath's suicide" (Wilkins, 2019). Had it been released to the public, Plath scholars would have been able to study the pattern of colour, proving imperative to this current research. Other claimed reasons regarding the disappearance and the act of destruction, especially "one of the volumes…to spare [her children] the pain of reading it" (Chiasson et al. 2018), whilst the

"second notebook had mysteriously vanished", according to Ted Hughes.

The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath is categorised into eight major sections which cover these time periods:

1. July 1950 – July 1953
2. 22 November 1955 – 18 April 1956
3. 15 July 1956
4. 22 July 1956 – 26 August 1956
5. 3 January 1957 – 11 March 1957
6. 15 July 1957 – 21 August 1957
7. 28 August 1957 – 14 October 1958
8. 12 December 1958 – 15 November 1959

As emotional as her journals overtly are, traits such as the usage of colour exist as threads in this elaborate patchwork of her mind and memories. Each individual colour operates in an extensive network of nodes that remain interconnected with the subject matter of her journals.

Colour is a naturally occurring phenomenon. For most of us, colours assist in differentiating between objects. On a much more personal level, many derive visual pleasure from a certain composition of colours. Like the use of colours in cinematography to steer the viewer's mood to its intended destination, in a text, it also adopts a much more active role. If one aims to illustrate an image through words, what breathes life and vividness into them are colours. It mimics what paintings anticipate doing: creating an atmosphere through a particular combination.

Although colours have been discussed from only an aesthetic point of view, colours occur as information. According to Bell, in his dissertation "A Pigment of the Imagination: In What Ways Is Colour Information?", he employs information theory to show how significant colours are in terms of "art-based

research" (p. 8) and utilises mathematical methods to count its frequency along with the traditional "visual analysis of colour in contemporary art" (p. 9). Likewise, our research treats colour as data cum information, departing from purely descriptive analysis.

Furthermore, referring again to the selected characteristic in this research, it is naturally investigated with the aim of delving deeper into its meaning for an answer, a complete decipherment of what was unreadable. With the digital age advancing at a rapid pace, it has permeated almost every corner and crevice. Instead of the lengthy and convoluted theoretical frameworks of Lacan Deleuze and Guattari, the field of Digital Humanities utilises instruments to approach a corpus instantaneously while extracting data, which cannot be done non-digitally.

Such data requires analysis on a larger scale. This is where a method such as macroanalysis is required. Jockers discusses in the chapter "Evidence" that macroanalysis mirrors what science and social sciences are required to do in their respective research: they take an immense amount of structured and unstructured sets of data for analysis computationally and later, it is interpreted through the researcher(s) (*Jockers, 2013,* p. 7). Literary studies, on the other hand, take upon a methodology of closely reading in which several texts are chosen to be read word for word. (p. 7). So, to pave more paths for the interweaving of science, arts and humanities, the limit to a handful of texts must not remain. In a world of databases of unimaginable size, curiosity seeps into looking into corpora and examining an author's entire oeuvre.

Using *Voyant Tools* to carry out this macroanalysis, Plath's journals would not be analysed from entry to entry, but

considering this text as a unity, it sieves out the frequencies of colours, noting its development in accordance with a timeline.

It aims to reveal new patterns for future researchers to explore. With respect to colours, the psychology behind the usage of colours is taken into account in general literature and media, and their typical connotation to mould the mood and tone of a text. The text, in particular, which is consulted to compare the connotations of colours, is Bellantoni's *If It's Purple, Someone's Gonna Die: The Power of Color in Visual Storytelling for Film.* It aims to extract:

1. The most and least predominant colours.
2. The statistics of the usage of warm and cool colours.
3. How each individual commonly used colour affects a single journal through its intended connotation.

The aim of this research is to open new gateways for not only Plath scholars but also researchers who are inclined towards familiarising themselves with Digital Humanities. Handling highly emotive texts is prone to be viewed from an invasive lens. Nevertheless, analysing her journals quantitatively reveals and allows scholars to focus on an imperative aspect which previously could not be discerned through close reading methods. It will benefit researchers through new emerging digital perspectives, also allowing computing and literary scholars to socialise and handle a particular corpus of a certain writer or even a genre in a more compact manner.

Contrary to the strenuous task of interpreting each and every work of an author manually, in this case, it will pave the road for Plath scholars with a uniquely indexed journal for further research. It will perhaps encourage experimentation with other digital tools involving mapping spaces constructed through

vivid descriptions of cityscapes and fields of meadows as a way of virtually walking users through different locations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the historicisation of Digital Humanities (DH), the chronology of its development does not stretch back to multiple centuries, unlike the majority of other literary approaches, such as the infamous *Poetics* by Aristotle. Roughly around the mid-20th century, the transition from paper to machines of information storage was underway, running parallel to the birth of the computer. Consequently, it was shortly after its initial stages that Digital Humanities unofficially emerged. Through what can undisputedly be considered the "first humanities computing centre" (Jones, 2018), according to the web article, "Reverse Engineering the First Humanities Computing Centre", Robert Busa founded the "Centre for the Automation of Literary Analysis" (Jones, 2018), paving the road towards the technological handling of literary texts.

Busa, therefore, crystallised the purpose of his centre through his first DH project, beginning in 1946. As a pioneer, he reported his momentous contribution to said field in "The Annals of Humanities Computing: The Index Thomisticus". He summarises the sole aim of the project by creating "a concordance of all the words of Thomas Aquinas, including conjunctions, prepositions and pronouns, to serve other scholars for analogous studies" (Busa, 1980, p. 83). With a corpus of such size, meticulous categorisation was executed by lemmatising the works of Thomas Aquinas. This particular attention towards grammar holds significance and promotes further study for linguistics scholars.

In connection with this first milestone, the hurdles of this budding analytical method were inherently interwoven in the computationally primordial decade. As stated in the article "The

Early History of Digital Humanities: An Analysis of Computers and the Humanities (1966–2004) and Literary and Linguistic Computing (1986–2004)", the lack of advancement is manifest in the "early projects" (Sula & Hill, 2019, p. 91) which were "hindered by storage capacity, hardware costs, and processing limits" (p. 191), producing results at a much slower pace. Even though the first project was a success, it spanned over a period of three decades (Busa, 1980, p. 84). Contrary to the 21st century, data storage has become more compact and comparatively cost-effective with astronomically faster processing speed. Accumulating texts and archives have been condensed to a matter of minutes; not to mention, applying digital tools to extract information, or for the mere sake of categorisation, is invested in only a fraction of time. This research temporally produces the findings without exhausting the typically average RAM of a computer.

Shortly after this initial project, DH was set in motion, and other projects followed suit, which were more diverse in nature. This is to say that Digital Humanities did not remain pigeonholed to Linguistics. It encompassed a myriad of disciplines after gradually permeating several subject fields, such as literature and music. Especially referring to the latter, Michelle Urberg's article (2017), "Pasts and Futures of Digital Humanities in Musicology: Moving Towards a 'Bigger Tent'" retraces an eminent project, said to be "one of the earliest of musical content" (p.137), namely, "Hymn Tune Index" (p. 137). Led and owned by Nicholas Temperly, Robin A. Leaver reports in "Notes" pertaining to said database that its formal impetus was initiated in 1982 after receiving funding (p. 385). The aforementioned project is currently materialised in the form of a website with its sole purpose of assembling English hymn tunes "printed anywhere in the world" (Temperley) up until the year 1820, involving the related published material up and until said

date (Temperley). Here, the digitalised storage of music stood astute for scholars and theorists, provided that music has evolved and integrated with the advancement of music.

Further consolidation of Digital Humanities manifested after the commercialisation of personal computers. This comes from the not-so-distant era of computers, where an entire room was occupied for its previously large yet crucial components to be connected into logic circuits in order to function properly. Condensing to a machine that occupied a desk's space proved not only convenient and inclusive for the general public but also assisted DH in working with digital material, making it more flexible. Working in an office space with the ability to have multiple computers or from the comfort of one's home increased the mobility of such projects.

Around the same time, in the 1980s, the Internet began to crystallise from its rudimentary form until the World Wide Web surfaced as a single system to host information on multiple websites and pages. The coupling of personal computers and the Internet propelled progress in terms of scholarly use. Furthermore, the latter became an area of departure from traditional print, again extending towards the common masses to publish their material of all shapes and forms. In the chapter "The History of Computing" from the book *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, Susan Hockey brings the reader to revisit the past of computers through the introduction of the Apple Macintosh, which included having a "HyperCard…[that] incorporated a simple programming tool…for humanities scholars to write computer programs easily" (Hockey et al., 2004, p.28). Hence, it is considered another milestone in Digital Humanities where the power of creating customised and personalised tools has never been easier, opening new portals to approach digitised information.

As discussed earlier, DH was first and foremost associated with the linguistic aspect of language. Later in the 1990s, long after the "The Index Thomisticus", linguistics underwent more advancement through the founding of Text Encoding Initiative, which currently is hosted on a website at https://tei-c.org/ "maintains a standard for the representation of texts in digital form" (Text Encoding Initiative). According to Hockey et al., this stepping stone was "the first systematic attempt to categorise and define all the features within humanities texts that might interest scholars" (p. 30). This later infiltrated into future digital tools, such as *Voyant Tools*, that aimed to solely work with pinpointing relevant material and classifying them according to their respective labels.

In one of the subsections of DH, distant reading is considered essential. Jänicke, in his thesis, "Close and Distant Reading Visualizations for the Comparative Analysis of Digital Humanities Data", discusses Franco Moretti as the main proponent in the practice of distant reading. Moretti's staunch support for this technique was rooted in his intention of approaches "that steer the traditional way of approaching literature towards a completely new direction. Instead of reading texts in the traditional way – so-called close reading –he invites us to count, to graph and to map them…to visualise them" (Jänicke, 2016, p.2). It may appear quite alien and rather outlandish to intertwine mathematics, history or geography through graphs and coordinates in a virtual mapping tool.

Sinclair and Rockwell come to its defence for implying that this far more advanced methodology resonates with the current day and age as well as cupping the fragments of the past and their treatment with literary texts:

> With such rich and sophisticated analytic environments, do we even need to read texts

anymore? Our reaction to this question reveals much about our purposes for interacting with texts. If we read the text for pleasure – a compelling story, a nuanced description, a detailed account of a historical event, etc. – text analysis and visualisation are unlikely to be satisfying in the same ways. If we are interested in examining linguistic or semantic features of text, analytic tools may be of help. In our (the authors') own practice as digital humanists, we have tended to combine these activities: we read texts we enjoy, and we then explore and study them with analytic tools and visualisation interfaces, which then brings us back to rereading the texts differently. (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016, pp.276-278)

As mentioned above, misconceptions do revolve around visualisation being portrayed as inflexible. Its salient features encompass how it "explicitly invites the reader to analyse the texts" (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016, p. 276), "provides open-ended search capabilities" (p. 276) and a visual representation of the entire corpus (p. 276) which otherwise proves to be a herculean task to do so manually. The authors here have also substantiated their side of the argument by discussing the harmony that digital tools and text can have when it comes to exploring a specific facet of a corpus. Using visualisation in this research can be considered as a thread of multiplicity being embedded in the patchwork of literary research and not an extraneous addition to literature.

In the chapter "The Meta-Issues of Digital Humanities 1" from the book The Digital Humanities: A Primer for Students and Scholars, the authors touch upon the theoretical mechanism of Digital Humanities itself. With one's existence, criticism of

all kinds is inevitable, and the development of DH does not preclude itself from such treatment. Stephen Ramsay, being a staunch opposer, reprimands distant reading as a lens which proves substantial to literary research. Despite its popularity and the extensive research produced by employing this method, "word and frequency lists" (Gardiner & Musto, 2015, p. 280) appear more vexing as it "radically" (p.280) aims to "decenter traditional reading" (p. 280). The linchpin of this research fundamentally relies upon visualising the frequencies of colours in Plath's journals in a quantitative manner, much against Ramsay's liking.

Franco Moretti's counterargument, in support of Digital Humanities, is that the decentralisation of "traditional reading" (Gardiner & Musto, 2015, p. 280) is not the direct causation of distant reading itself. In fact, the aim lies within decentralising "the individual work and author" (pp. 279-280), proceeding to discard "narrow insights and discourse based on a restricted canon" (pp. 279-280). Moretti, here, treats the centuries-long method of traditional reading as monolithic and hostile to newer approaches. Where "statistical analyses" (279) are extracted through an abundant melange of texts, it contributes to producing patterns and observations through non-theoretical and hands-on methods.

Moreover, the technological advantage digital tools can bring is that along with the target word of interest, they display the sentence or paragraph in which it is contained (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016, p. 276). Additionally, such findings occur in a minute fraction of time. Since Plath's journals stretch to hundreds of diary entries, this corpus is an apt selection for a DH study to evaluate as a whole.

One of the major threads of Digital Humanities research, which is implemented in this research, is text-mining. As

daunting or esoteric as the term may appear, Yu-wei quotes Professor M. Hearst's definition of text-mining in the chapter "Transdisciplinarity and Digital Humanities: Lessons Learned from Developing Text-Mining Tools for Textual Analysis". According to him, it is where it can be simplified as a technique of obtaining "previously unknown information…from different written resources [and] linking [them] together…to form new facts" (cited. in *Barry,* 2012, p.300) for further exploration and creating room to experiment. Text-mining is only the first step carried out in DH methods, and it eventually furcates in studies regarding "text analysis, computational linguistics, content analysis, and sentiment analysis" (Yu-wei, 2012, p.301). Plath's journals undergo the same procedure of probing or "mining" and bringing forth new findings such as colour.

Little research has been published regarding the intersection of Digital Humanities and Plath's works; nevertheless, in the article "Evolution of Vocabulary in the Poetry of Sylvia Plath", "a quantitative analysis of the temporal evolution of word choice" in her poetry collection, "across the career of Sylvia Plath" is carried out (Wadsworth et al., 2017, p.1). Here, a Python tool was utilised to isolate and aggregate the relevant vocabulary to note the shifts in pronouns and colours.

Tools, especially used for data visualisation, are often criticised for inherently having reductive characteristics, and rightly in many instances, as stated in *The New Companion to Digital Humanities,* "Visualizations are transformations of text that tend to reduce the amount of information presented, but in service of drawing attention to some significant aspect" (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016, p. 276). By bringing this into the context of this research, it may overlook the metaphors and imageries, but it pinpoints what a researcher aims to see without manually accessing each and every journal through computer language.

An example of a visualisation literary project that further substantiates the legitimacy of Digital Humanities' presence in English literature involves compiling a corpus of more than 100 texts sharing the genre of European Gothic literature. It was an endeavour to debunk the stereotypical outlook of Gothic literature being dark and gloomy in terms of its colour palette. Eleanor Stribling gives a background story in her article about her collaboration with the owner of this brainchild, Caroline Winter, where Stribling provided a Python script to tally the frequencies and analyse the colours in the corpus (Stribling 2018).

Since July 2017, Winter's website for *Gothic Colors has* come with a pie chart-like illustration of the number of colours mentioned in each text, categorised through authors such as Edgar Allen Poe or Charlotte Perkins Gilman (Winters). With simple interactive interference, a curious mind can use the drop-down menu to select whichever author they please and view all the colours and frequencies in each individual work in their oeuvre. As it is a valuable contribution to Digital Humanities, it also stands as existing research done on extracting the statistics of colours by selecting works from the world of English literature. Slightly diverging from purely fictional works, Plath's journals are still imperative for literary study.

Voyant Tools is popularly used by undergraduate students and those who have only begun to become accustomed to navigating around in DH. Because of how user-friendly it is for anyone who has access to a personal computer, many projects have been created by utilising this tool. One of them is "Allan Allsop's War", hosted by the Mosman Library Service. It explores the life of the titular figure, Wilfred Joseph Allan Allsop, through his discovered journals by highlighting "distinctive words" (Mosman Library Service 2012) appertaining to his voyages to Egypt and Frances (Mosman

Library Service 2012). This is an existing project that is used not only for the purpose of Digital Humanities but also for journals, meaning that my selected corpus holds relevance in this research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach utilised in this research is primarily quantitative. However, it can be considered as a rather mixed method as it also consults the qualitative angle of this research. The latter borrows several extracts from the journals to analyse closely and aims to quantify *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* (excluding the appendices) with respect to colour frequencies.

Voyant Tools

Voyant Tools is the brainchild of Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell. It is one of the most basic and common tools used in Digital Humanities. Without any prior knowledge of computer science, a user can easily navigate and upload a file to view purely textual plots involving word maps and line graphs. It comes with a search bar if one wishes to jot down the frequency of a certain word or phrase. Other than a file, URLs and plain texts can be inserted for analysis.

This tool is free and open access and open-source for people all over the globe without the need of registration or downloading as it is an in-browser analysis tool. Voyant Tools can be accessed at https://voyant-tools.org/. The following figure (see Fig. 1.) is a sample of what the interface appears to be when *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* is uploaded as a PDF file.

DISCUSSION

The hyper-awareness of dwelling in a universe of an endless combination of pigments is overwhelming. Often these shades and hues meet patches of darkness: the absence of colour. If we break down the very existence of colours and look past the

aesthetic modification and the pleasure it brings to the human eye, colours are merely a reflection of specific wavelengths assigned to display a specific shade of colour. The mechanism of colours has come a long way from aiding creatures of all species in their need for survival to evoking certain emotions and appearing as symbolic entities to exhibit different images and tones. In this research, colour is one of the primary characteristics present in her journals and whether their role in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* is as meaningful and substantial as assumed.

All primary colours and a secondary shade (namely, red, yellow, blue and green) are assembled into subsections where each connotation within the context of their respective diary entry is scrutinized. By omitting the letters, short story drafts, the following sections discuss the occurring patterns, colour-wise. With slightly nuanced interpretations of each individual colour, it is imperative to examine how the colours have been positioned.

Red

Patti Bellantoni lists the multiple implications that colour red may have. In the book, *If It's Purple, Someone's Gonna Die: The Power of Color in Visual Storytelling for Film*, she states that this colour typically has a "visually aggressive quality" (Bellantoni, 2005, p. 2) and tends to evoke "anger" (p.2). In contrast, it is known to be more "cheerful" (p.2) and with slight variations to red by adding an orange tinge makes the shade more "sensual or lusty" (p.3). Keeping these interpretations in mind, this chapter investigates the vital passages containing the colour, red.

An overall timeline displaying the progression of red in the first journal (see Fig. 3.) illustrates how the frequency of the colour is disturbed throughout this time frame. The default

settings of *Voyant Tools* have divided this journal into ten equal parts to observe its spread out. Here, it is shown that in the beginning, the occurrence of red is moderate and rises to a peak before dropping down towards the middle of the journal. Yet, it reaches its peak in the latter half of the journal and afterwards plummets to a valley and attempts to approach another crest, but it does not reach its maximum height.
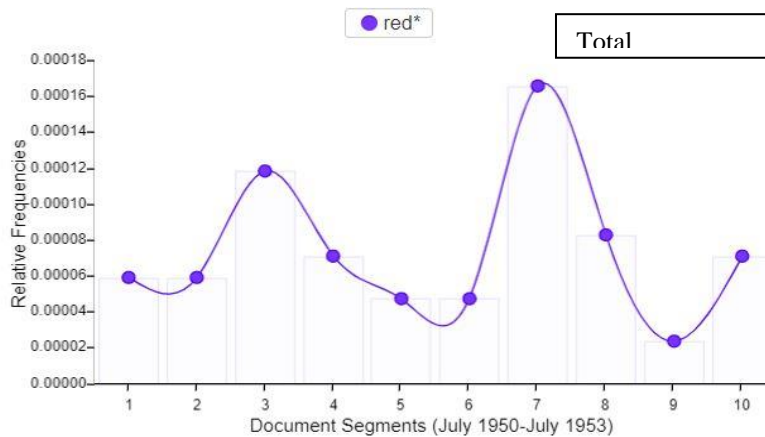

Fig. 1. Occurrence of the colour "red" in the "Journal: July 1950–July 1953".

In the "Journal: July 1950 – July 1953", the ninth diary entry begins on a rather introspective note on how translating events to words on paper comes with a challenge. She attempts to record her slight tiff with her overly nagging mother, failing to see eye to eye. Afterwards, she moves onto the weather of that particular day where it poured and unfortunately becomes soaked in the rain, much to her displeasure.

In this diary entry, the colour red is utilised in a neutral sense as a mere adjective: "It rained all afternoon at the farm, and I was cold and wet…my red ski jacket over my sweatshirt" (Plath, 2000, p.14). Red is utilised to describe the colour of an item of clothing worn at the time it rained. However, reading into the situation where this red colour is present, it contrasts with the grey, gloom and doom of the rain in the backdrop of this diary entry. Hence, although the colour itself is used, impartial to the

undesirable experiences Plath had to undergo, the position of red here is placed in rather unfavourable circumstances.

On the other hand, in the 21st entry, the connotation of red in which it is used coincides with the subject matter of this portion. Plath here starts by describing her settings, with slight criticisms attached to the aesthetics of it. However, she explicitly mentions that she "sit[s] here, smiling" (Plath, 2000, p. 26) and proceeds to ponder over in a maxim-like manner where she writes, "Woman is but an engine of ecstasy, a mimic of the earth from the ends of her curled hair to her red-lacquered nails" (p.26). She brings forth a pseudo dictum about the female sex and sexuality. Referring again to Bellantoni, the "red-lacquered nails" (2005, p.26) are overtly indicative of the colour's sensuality from this perspective.

In the same diary entry, she describes a "Liz" (Plath, 2000, p. 26) whose "red lips [stain] the cigarette; her full breasts under the taut black jersey" (p.26). The implication set forth by the colour red remains consistent here. The descriptive portrait of Liz smoking and wearing figure-hugging clothing suggests promiscuity and, in other words, sensuality. It is somewhat of a lustful description catering to the male gaze as this sentence focuses on minute details which lays emphasis on the female body.

The pattern of red in "Journal: 22 July 1956 – 26 August 1956" is interesting to take note of as compared to the previously discussed journal (see Fig. 4.). While red is almost non-existent in the first segment of the journal, it immediately skyrockets right in the middle. After reaching its maximum peak, it drops down to a valley and rises again, progressing in almost a straight line.
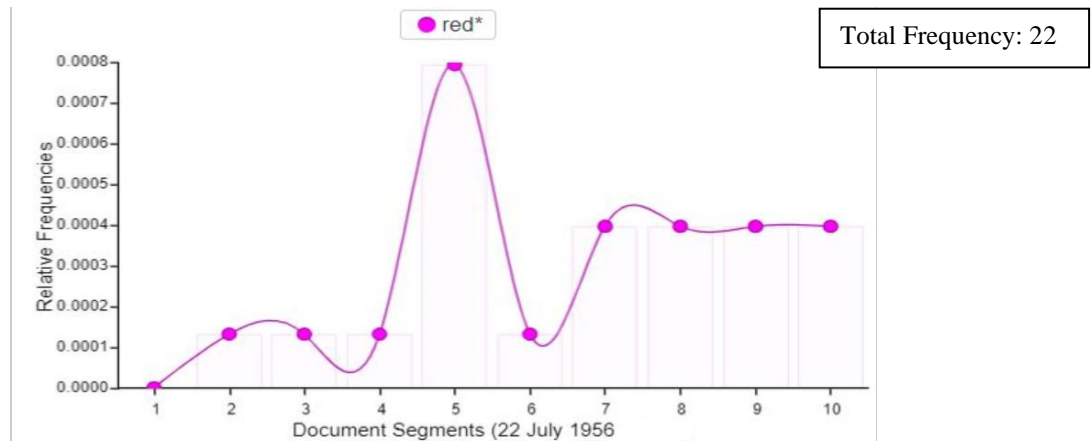
Fig. 2. Occurrence of the colour "red" in the "Journal: 22 July 1956–26 July 1956".

In this section, the usage of red is coupled with the nauseating layout of Plath's day as the language she spews out in this portion is abundant with fragmented phrases, conveying her inability to compose organised sentences as shown here: "long deep nap… hypnotised sleep, plummeting deep into dark…groggy dazed…spinning warm sick giddiness…sweaty…Ted lit carbon fire, glowing to red coals in the black oven" (Plath, 2000, p. 293). The colour red portrays the intensity of the flame, juxtaposing the drowsiness to which Plath had surrendered. Hence, the atmosphere created through this description places the colour red as a single pixel in an image of malaise.

With a total frequency of 20 in "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957" (see fig. 5.), the outset begins with a peak and oscillates in a manner of almost a consistent peak and valley. It is shown that there are instances where the colour red was not used at all. The maximum peak, on the other hand, prompts one to investigate how the colour red is utilised.
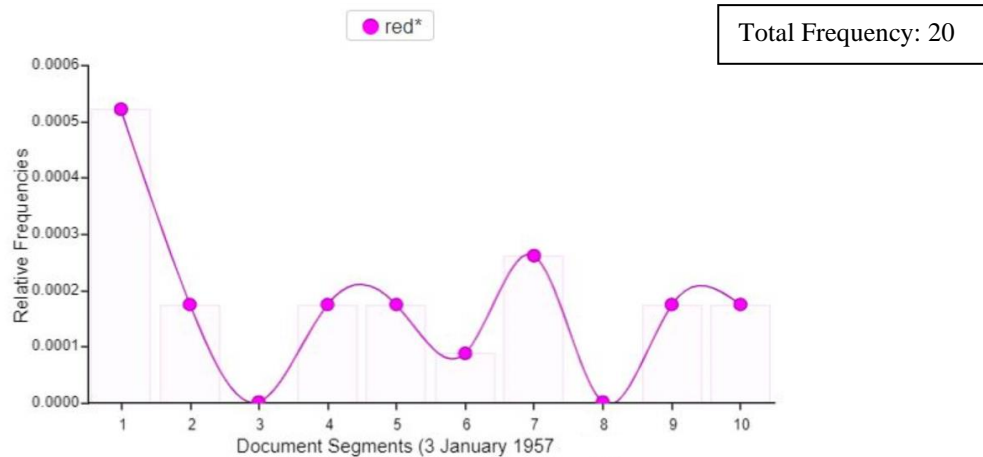
Fig. 3. Occurrence of the colour "red" in the "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957".

In the first diary entry of this journal, the colour occurs three times, all used in the same manner: as adjectives. This passage focuses on Plath's visit to Grantchester near Cambridge. Since she walks to this village, her recounting of the day is brimming with vivid descriptions. She begins with the green landscapes, buildings and moves onto the daily routine activities which take place as she down to the village (Plath, 2000, pp. 301-302).

The colour is first mentioned when Plath describes the "Red hawthorn berries vivid on the bare tall bushes…" (Plath, 2000, p. 302). Such images bear a resemblance to what one may see in the pastoral. As a contrast, Plath comes across an "…old red brick buildings of Queens" (p. 302). So far, these reds are adherent to physical settings and little to no thoughts regarding her inner state have permeated her recall of this particular walk. However, in the third occurrence of red, the colour is enveloped in a rather morbid description of a chicken soon to face slaughtering. This is where Plath showcases her intelligent use of similes. She describes: "Man carring plucked chicken by neck, red comb dangling like ruffled scallops of blood" (p. 302). She has equated the bloodstained imagery of a chicken's naturally existing body part to lay more emphasis on the chicken's impending doom.

The following figure (see Fig. 6.) displays the highest frequency out of all the journals as the former half is abundant in the use of red. However, the latter half of the segments displays less than half of the frequency in comparison. Furthermore, from the progression of this line graph, it still can be observed here that in none of the segments, the usage of red is absent.
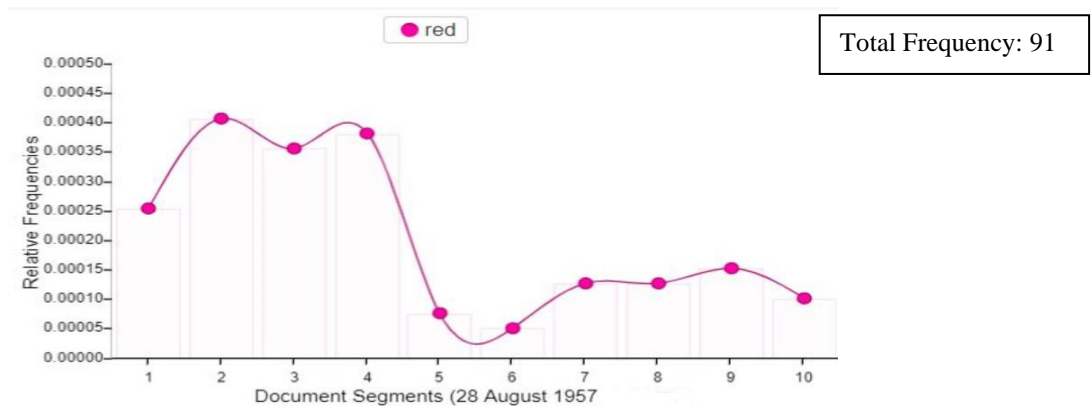

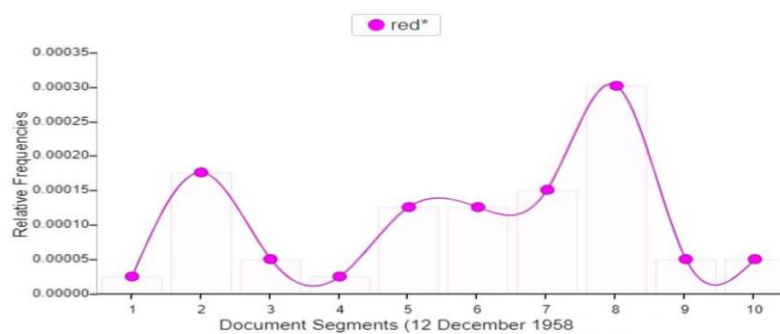**Fig. 4. Occurrence of the colour "red" in the "Journal: 28 August 1957–14 October 1958".**

In the second last journal of the corpus, "Journal: 28 August 1957–14 October 1958", the colour red is used in a much more graphic manner than in the previous journals, while she peppers in colour as adjectives as well. In the following examples, she again revisits the promiscuous quality of putting on "red lipstick" (Plath, 2000, p.350) and describes a woman's lustrous "red-brown rich eyes" (p. 353). Plath delves into a slightly more menacing portrayal of the colour red, where there are "Bowls of buttered popcorn…red-toothed grin of a wood fire" (p. 353). Personifying the burning wood paints as an unpleasant portrait of a mundane and typical process, placing it in a more negative context.

Nevertheless, Plath also embeds the colour red with much more grotesque and uneasy images. Although her journals were never intended to be read by the public, she brings the reader up close to the uncomfortable descriptions of the human

body. One instance revolves around how she mournfully describes a woman's mismatched spouse in several ways.

She begins with the large age difference and ends with a zoomed-in image of his hands, damaged due to disease, by recalling: "Married to the wrong man, twenty-one years older than she…with that skin disease puffing his hands dry, red, flaking the skin off" (Plath, 2000, pp. 355-356). It moves on to another diary entry where she talks about her daily activities but also adds explicit details which are more personally associated with the natural excretion of her body. She primarily focuses on the colours of her nasal mucus by describing the "greeny clot of snot…veinburst of blood" (p. 258) and proceeds to "wipe it behind the bedpost head" (258). Along with the "chicken" (p. 302) example, this is another association of the colour red with blood – both being morbid in nature.

The last journal, "Journal: 12 December 1958 –15 November 1959" have two noticeable crests (see fig.7.) in the second and eighth segment coupled with two much lower troughs. The colour in this section is significantly populated and distributed throughout all the segments. It is worth taking note of how Plath nears the end of the chapter, the impassioned colour red decreases in its usage.

Total Frequency: 43

Fig. 5. Occurrence of the colour "red" in the "Journal: 12 December 1958 –15 November 1959".

Plath creates images that appeal to the visual and olfactory senses. In the following description, she lucidly evokes the

reader's sense of smell through the "…stink of women:…cologne, rose water…cocoa butter on the nipples so they won't crack, lipstick red" (Plath, 2000, p. 478) and immediately pairing with tactile and visual images again through the colour of lipstick. Once again, the repetitive references to a red makeup item lay emphasis on the height of femininity and sensuality. In the next example and the same diary entry, Plath does not directly use the word "red"; instead, she alludes to the inherent characteristic of blood. She goes on to express grief over her father's death where she "never knew the love of a father, the love of a steady blood-related man after the age of eight" (p. 479), meaning that the absence of a paternal figure due to death brings coherence along with the decision to use the word "red".

In another entry, she uses red as an adjective and again, merges the grotesque with the interior of the house as the "Carpet glows blood red" (Plath, 2000, p. 557) and repeats this technique by describing a "horrid priest" (p. 564) who looked "raw, bright red face looked to have gone under carrot scraper" (p. 564), interweaving a culinary yet graphic image through the act of scraping. The coupling of the colour and "horrid" (p. 564) suggests a rather aggressive quality to the priest.

In conclusion to this section on the colour "red", it is evident that the progression of red begins steadily with a comparatively low frequency (see fig. 8) and then reaches its height right after the latter half of the journals. The analysed excerpts indicate that her time in England, while surrounded by the beauty of nature, contributed tremendously to her red-related descriptions. Her company around women, along with qualities regarding their sexuality, are also associated with the colour red. However, the occurrence of red is mostly linked to its natural presence in the objects around her.
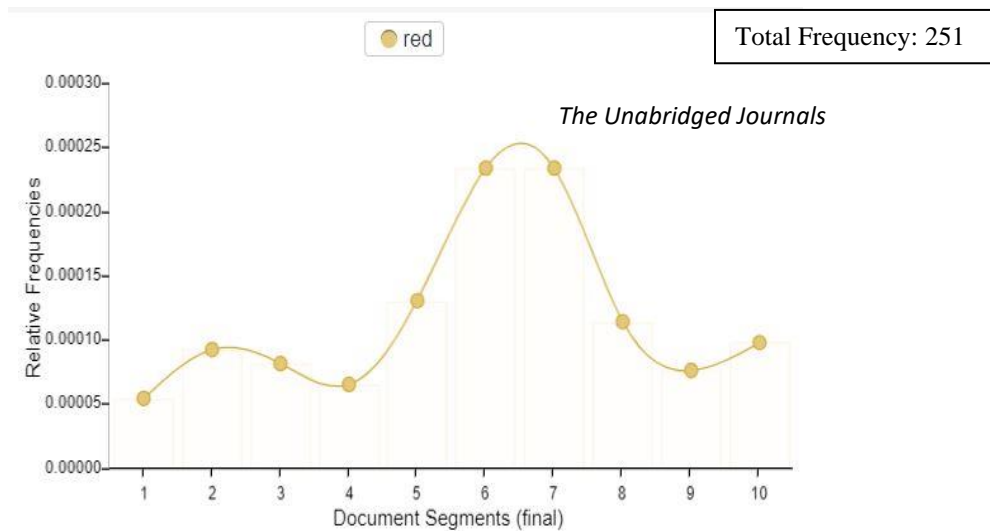
Fig. 6. Occurrence of the colour "red" in the entire corpus.

Yellow

When it comes to primary colours, yellow is certainly the brightest of them all. Their presence is tantamount to a revitalising entity, or it is a "powerful life energy" and portrays "exuberance" (Bellantoni, 2005, p. 42). Needless to say, one of the most dominant objects which somewhat represent the colour "yellow" is the "sun" (p. 42). Out of all primary colours, yellow is more integrated with giving life and joy. It can also be associated with the elements of spring, such as daffodils.

On the other hand, like the colour red, it is just as "visually aggressive" (p. 42) and infers to hazardous situations (p. 42) or in signs to alert a passer-by about a wet floor. Dr Harry Hepner discusses the paradoxical features of the colour yellow, which is the "longest remembered and most despised" (cited in Bellantoni, 2005). A highly saturated colour like this is difficult to overlook in any situation or setting. In Plath's journals, yellow is also imperative and worthy of taking notice of for further probing.

The progression of the colour yellow begins with a rather high frequency and exceeds the frequency limit (see Fig. 9). It is

highly unlikely for any colour to peak high enough in this manner, and it plummets dramatically in the latter half of the ten segments. It reaches a less heightened spike around the seventh and eighth segments before dipping to the portion with the least frequency of yellow.
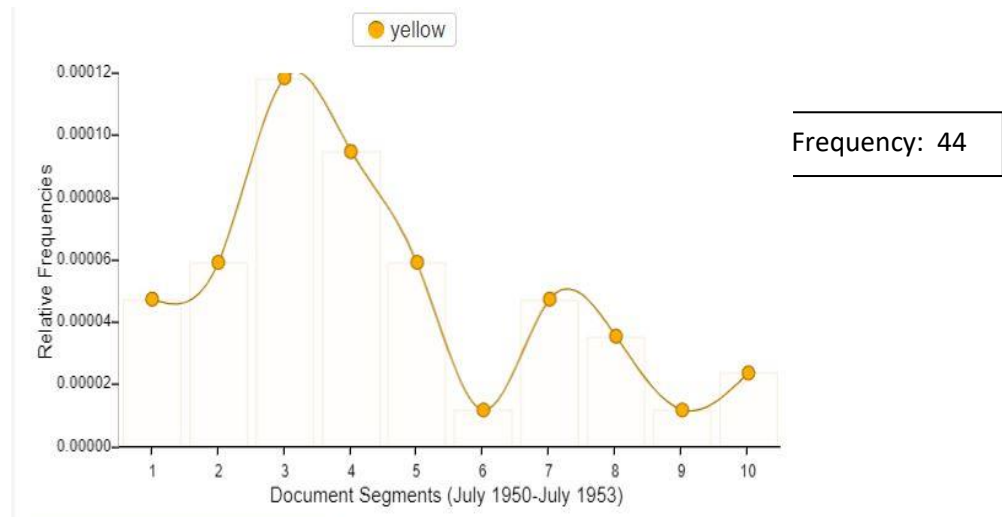

Frequency: 44

Fig. 7. Occurrence of the colour "yellow" in the "Journal: July 1950–July 1953".

In the first journal, there are several occurrences where the colour yellow is used as an adjective to illustrate the typical glow of the moon. She recalls, "…there was the moon, almost full, luminous and yellow, behind the trees" (Plath, 2000, p. 21). Soon after, she records the claustrophobic environment she is placed in at the time, prompting her to go outside in the first place (p. 21): "I felt suddenly breathless, stifled" (p. 21). The coupling of these two sentences highlights the eerie and suffocating positioning of the colour yellow. However, the manner in which this yellow is used is not atypical.

Contrary to how yellow is typically utilised – in discussing the shades of the sun and the moon– Plath again goes back to associating even the brightest colours with what is considered uncomfortable to come face to face with. She does not shy away from revisiting bodily excretions such as "releasing

the bright yellow stream of urine" (Plath, 2000, p. 61) as she delves into the rather dismissed details of her contemplations in this particular. diary entry.

For Plath, the colour yellow is connection something that contains a pungent quality. The following synesthetic description of "the yellow, stinking mist" (Plath, 2000, p. 41) is "just what lies below in the slime, in the oozing, vomitstreaked slime" (p. 41). Here, Plath has approached the yellow in a much more unique way. In contrast with red, yellow is used directly to vividly describe what appeals to the olfactory senses.

Another example refers to the troubling description, which involves physically suppressing a worm in a nonchalant manner. She dives into creating connections with the colour yellow with bodily organs where, in this case, it is of a worm. She states, "Only the guts of the worm know. And it is nothing to crush the yellow liquid intestines under a casual heel" (Plath, 2000, p. 75). The morbidity is evident in an instance like this, where Plath shows a preference for associating the colour yellow with much less cheerful circumstances. In fact, it is used to bring in a much more hyper-realistic element to her descriptions.

In the "Journal: 22 July 1956 – 26 August 1956", there are two noticeable features in the progression of the colour yellow (see fig. 10). The first two segments have an equally distributed use of yellow, whereas in the third segment, it drops down to zero frequency. It rises again, and the next two segments are just as equal in frequency. Only after the former half of the journal does the frequency gradually reach its maximum crest, encompassing three segments, until it drastically drops down in the tenth segment, at the same frequency as the first two segments.
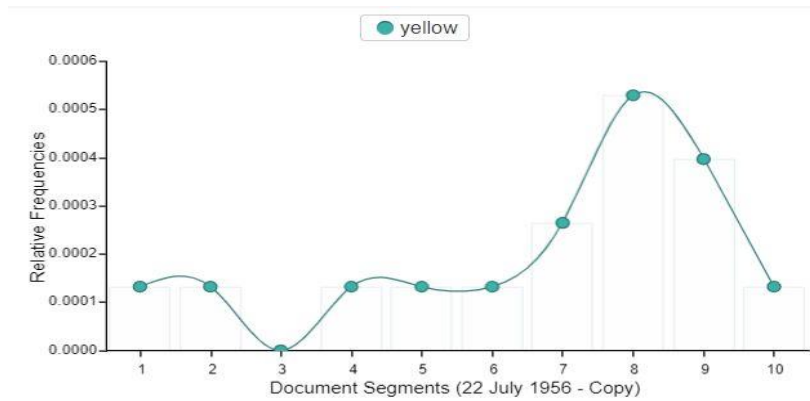
Total Frequency: 15

Fig. 8. Occurrence of the colour "yellow" in the "Journal: 22 July 1956–26 July 1956".

The section solely revolves around the usage of yellow as an adjective for naturally pigmented objects. This means that Plath's side as a writer shines through as she brings the colours of the objects into focus. She talks of "yellow summer squash" (Plath, 2000, p. 281) "yellow pears", (p. 295) and "yellow plums" (p. 296). Here, yellow is predominant in gustatory images where she refers to fruit. This is due to the fact that around this time, she was in Spain on her honeymoon while surrounded by orchids and gardens (pp. 279-299).

Plath also brings in connections with inedible things such as clothing. She mentions "yellow flowered bathing suit" (Plath, 2000, p. 293) where the context of this entry is overall pleasant and geographical characteristics as shown in the "yellow grass" (p. 283). This coincides with the summery and sun-burnt features by placing yellow, hence showcasing the typical usage of the colour in its traditional connotation.

In "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957", the observations made in this line graph (see fig. 11). There are three very distant spikes prevalent, which are almost equal in height apart from the last two segments where there is a complete absence of the usage of yellow. The middle peak, encompassing the fourth and fifth divisions, exceeds the graph and goes past the default y-axis. This indicates that during her time in

Cambridge, she was also surrounded by elements of spring and nature all around.
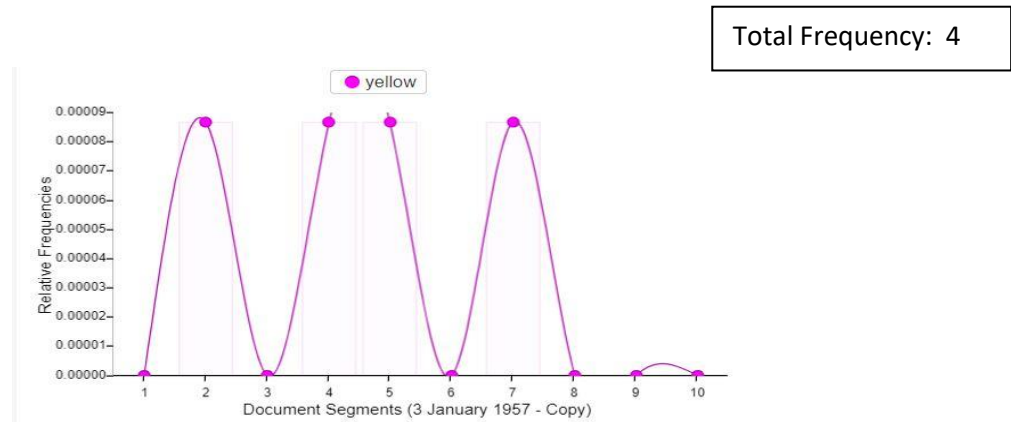
Total Frequency: 4

Fig. 9. Occurrence of the colour "yellow" in the "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957".

Living in a pastoral setting has certainly permeated into Plath's journaling. She begins with the description of flowers, such as the "yellow trumpet flowers" (Plath, 2000, p. 324), by identifying their colour and shape. In the following diary entry, the impression Plath's writing brings forward is the constant need to attach adjectives to daily objects. She discusses her time as a homemaker, where she adds "yellow butter into yellow custard" (p. 328) and folds in "whipped cream…to make yellow and white custard" (p. 328). Such repetitions have contributed tremendously to the frequency count of this specific journal.

The visual pattern observed in "Journal: 22 July 1956 – 26 August 1956" (see Fig. 12) contrasts the previous journal, where there is a dip in the middle of the ten segments. There are three spikes with a consistent curved peak over the latter half's segments. With a somewhat gradual decrease as the section comes to a close after beginning with a peak.
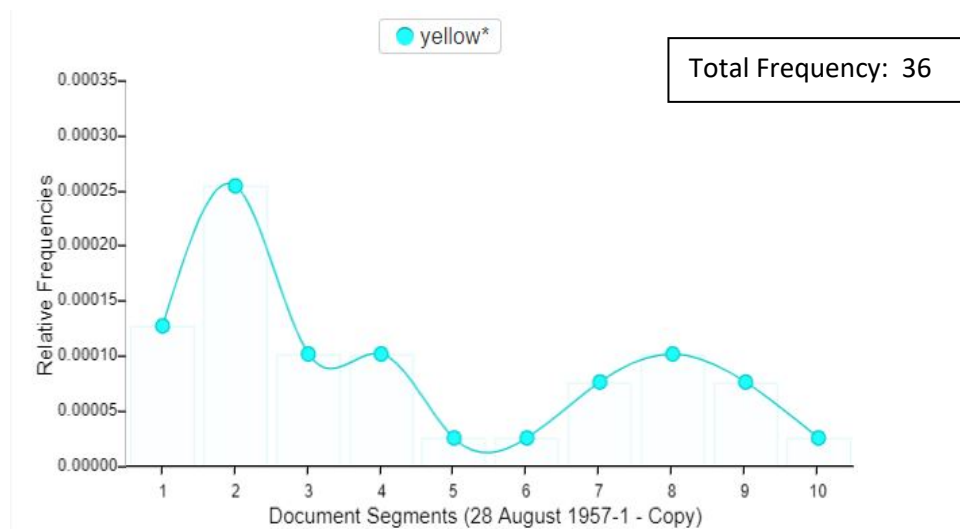
Fig. 10. Occurrence of the colour "yellow" in the "Journal: 28 August 1957–14 October 1958".

The context in which the colour yellow is used in this journal leans towards the transitioning season of the year: Autumn. She jots down the date "6 Sep" (Plath, 2000, p. 336) and proceeds to journal about waking in the "First morning up early" (p. 336) and describes what are clear indicators of the season by putting forth the "light yellowing, cold, among elm leaves" (p. 339) and "The black yellow-streaked smother of October" (p. 339). This is indicative of the departure from the summer and spring seasons, dulling down to Autumn. In the phrase "black yellow-streaked" (p. 339), yellow loses its brightness and is mixed with the absence of colour: black. This shows that although yellow may hold its intrinsic properties, the context and the other adjectives it becomes associated with come under their influence.

The usage of yellow takes a polarising shift when Plath recalls "Walk[ing] with Ted home" (Plath, 2000, p. 348) and comes across "dog urine-stains bright yellow" (p. 348). Again, the direction Plath takes her descriptions whenever colours are involved becomes "gross" and uncomfortable to mentally visualise. Like nasal mucus and other bodily excretion, she repeatedly combines the word "pissed" (p. 350) with "yellow,

stained at the lip of the dark water" (p. 350) to describe the accurate shade of it.

The last journal of this corpus displays that there are little frequencies of the colour yellow in the former half (see Fig. 13). With only three defining peaks and two valleys, the spike is at its height in the eighth segment of this journal. The peaks on both sides of the highest peak are equal in height or, in other words, frequency.
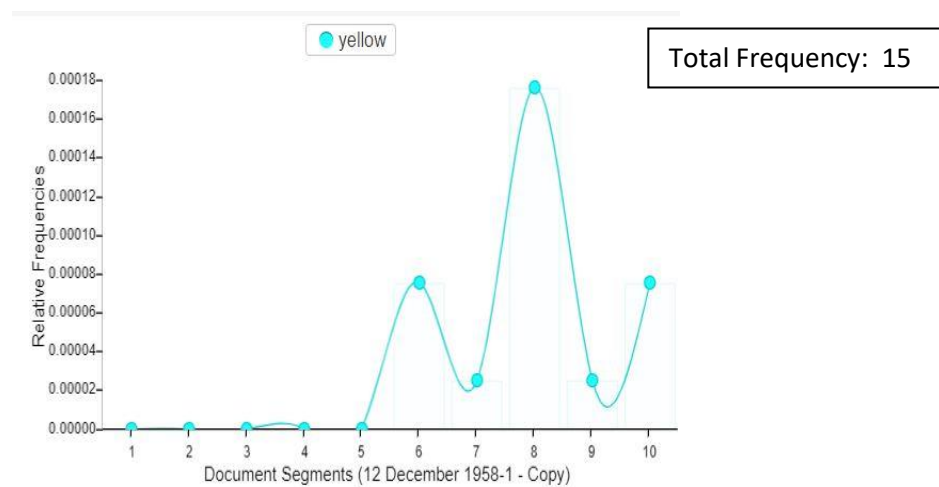

Fig. 11. Occurrence of the colour "yellow" in the "Journal: 12 December 1958 –15 November 1959".

While Plath made associations with the human body through the colour yellow, in this journal, she brings in illness and disease to enrich her descriptions. She blames that "Aspirin make [her] feel sick" (Plath, 2000, p. 537), and because of it, her "face looks yellow and podgy as cheese" (p. 537). This is a display of an interesting yet unappetising combination of gustatory and illness-related images of her skin. In other diary entries, yellow represents life and spring; however, here, it pollutes the joyous quality of yellow through sickness.

In addition, Plath describes an insect "A black hornet sits on the screen, scratching and polishing its yellowed head" (Plath,

2000, p. 565). Referring to Bellantoni again, yellow is also indicative of something hazardous (p. 42). An insect which stings, combined with its "yellowed head" (p. 565), alerts the reader and viewer through its caution-inducing appearance.

Plath does not shy away from blurring the line between the human body and elements of nature. While she was outside in the park (Plath, 2000, p. 570), she later discusses in this diary entry that the "toadstools" (p. 570) were similar to "orange plates with hairy yellow warts" (p. 570). She shifts back to linking kitchen crockery with skin infection, as shown in "yellow warts". This unusual and almost repulsive connection between nature and disease reveals that Plath shows a preference towards using colours in a more unconventional manner. Yellow, in particular, is as cheerful and energising as it is at first impression; here in the journals, it is disconcerting.

In conclusion to this section on the colour "red", the results reveal that in comparison to the colour red (see fig. 8), it is much lower (see fig. 14). Looking at the relative frequency, red is recorded as 0.00030 as maximum while here it barely crosses 0.00014. As shown in the figure, the frequency of yellow begins with a steady increase it, reaches a peak and dips until it rises again, reaching its maximum crest right after the latter half of the segments begin. Taking the line graph from the last journal (see Fig. 13), it creates an absence in the frequency near the final divisions (see Fig. 14). However, immediately, the word count of yellow increases towards the end of the final journal.
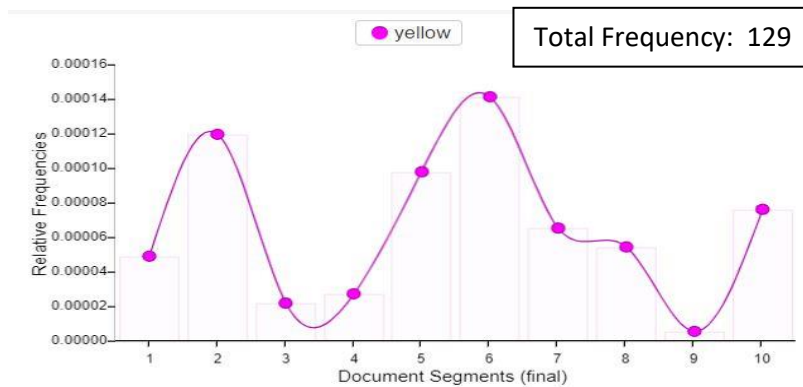
Fig. 12. Occurrence of the colour "yellow" in the entire corpus.

Blue

If one decides to look above and marvel at the sky, one would typically see strokes of white scattered on top of a monochromatic sheet of blue. The visual pleasure one may derive from simply looking may suggest a similar experience to viewing a "tranquil pond" (Bellantoni, 2005, p. 82). Due to its soothing and serene quality, it is also interpreted as "loyal and dependable" (p. 82) when it comes to colour psychology.

In other cases, one may casually state that they are feeling "blue". Bellantoni also equates blue with a "blanket of sadness" (Bellantoni, 2005, p. 82) and temperature-wise, it is the "coldest colour of the spectrum" (p. 82). Both hand in hand, the colour blue stands as an embodiment of misery and sorrow. With relevance to *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, keeping these connotations in mind, the usage of blue is explored in the diary entries. This is to observe whether Plath brings in her own unique associations to the colour blue, similar to the rest of the previously discussed colours.

In the first journal, the colour blue is illustrated in this line graph (see Fig. 15), which has two defined peaks: one in the former half and one in the latter. The nature of the crowded frequency in these peaks is sifted out, and observe the reasoning and the context in which they are used. This is to observe

whether they are utilised in the conventional sense or perhaps she brings herself as a writer in the narration of her personal life and thoughts.
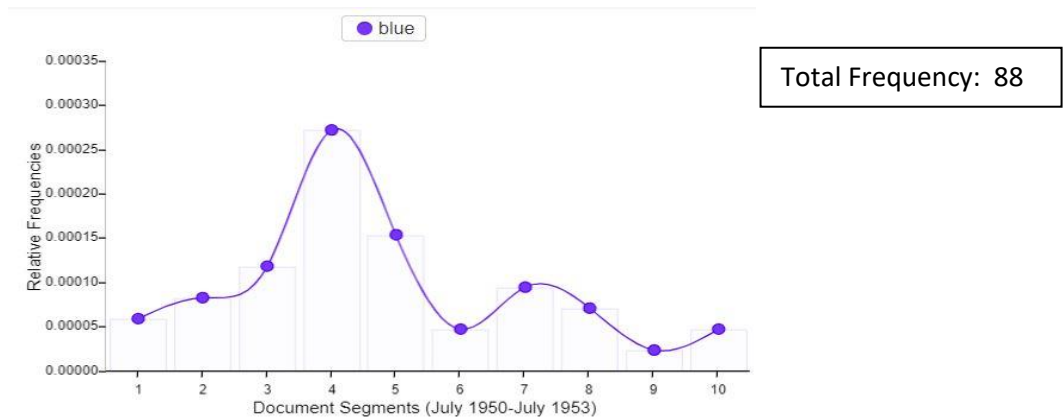

Fig. 13. Occurrence of the colour "blue" in the "Journal: July 1950–July 1953".

Plath's focus on physical features is prevalent throughout journals. She often brings up lips, skin, and bodily excretions, both close and personal, and this blue is no stranger to these associations. If we take the inherent features of Caucasians into account, there are several occurrences where Plath refers to the "grave blue eyes and slow fragile smile" (Plath, 2000, p. 23). The choice of "grave" (p. 23) as an adjective coupled with "blue" (p. 23) exhibits a kind of seriousness to the colour. However, in this diary entry, Plath provides these details of children who have a rather soothing presence for herself. She again repeats this ocular description by referring to their "guileless blue eyes" (p. 23). As observed in these examples, the colour blue is, so far, restricted to the colour of the eyes.

Later, Plath departs from the eyes and inculcates the colour blue in circulatory "knots of blue arthritic veins" (Plath, 2000, p. 54). Here, as an adjective, it highlights the explicit evidence of ageing and the gradual decay of the human body. It neither alludes to the serenity nor the sorrow of the colour blue, but this hue is framed with the severity of the person's deteriorating state.

There is a return to the colour blue used in daily objects and in exterior and interior housing design. Plath discusses the "blue rooftops are muted and secretive" (Plath, 2000, p. 39), where she interweaves a meek quality to the colour and the discretion it indicates. Her inner critic seeps through as she bluntly expresses her criticism as she says "I can almost ignore the room…with its unbelievable color combination" (p. 65). The calming effect of the colour blue is overshadowed by its undesirable combination with another, where the "pale blue wall paper with sprays of pink and white pussy-willows" (p. 65). Here is a manifestation of a combination of colours which are somewhat contradicting each other in Plath's eyes. She utilises crude language to vent her staunch disapproval of it fully.

The journal (see fig. 16) contains three defined peaks spanning over the segments of the journals. Nevertheless, if looked closely, there is an absence of the colour blue in both the first and third segment of graph. Only in between, there is a crest created. In addition, the valleys are much more narrow in comparison which is interpreted as the juxtaposition of crowded and sparse usage of the colour blue.
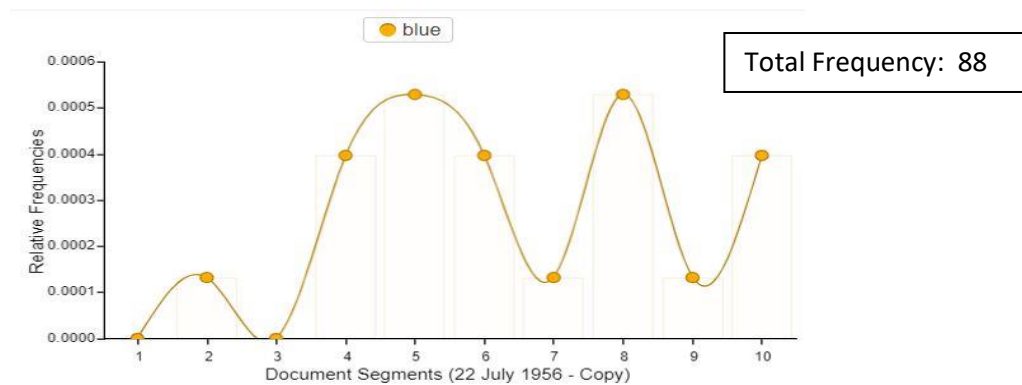

Fig. 14. Occurrence of the colour "blue" in the "Journal: 22 July 1956–26 July 1956".

There is an interesting turn in the treatment of the colour blue as it adheres to orthodox descriptions: water and fluid imagery. Beginning with the sea, Plath writes about a particular day when she is "observing glimpses of blue sea" (Plath, 2000, p. 288)

and "water blazing blue in the sun" (p. 291). Such examples with the sea abound in the text, especially looking at the frequency count. Fluid images like "bottle of blue ink, perpetually open, rested on a stack of paper" (p. 294) bear resemblance to an open body of water, just like the sea.

The typical description of the sky occurs in a diary entry of this journal. She proceeds to describing "clear blue sunny days" (Plath, 2000, p. 298) which is considered to be one of the most conventional associations with the colour blue. Along with illness and water bodies, blue has appeared as an element of the weather. Furthermore, it is used as an adjective for architectural features where the "blue mosaic windows" (p. 292) are part of the house.

The line graph extracted from the blue colour data from "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957" (see fig. 17) stands apart from the rest of the journals as the usage of blue is at its maximum height and at a very high relative frequency of 0.0007. Not to mention, this occurs from the outset of this journal. With a sudden decrease, there are small peaks and lower valleys to further exhibit the drop in frequency. There is a steady pattern until the tenth segment, where the usage of blue is non-existent.
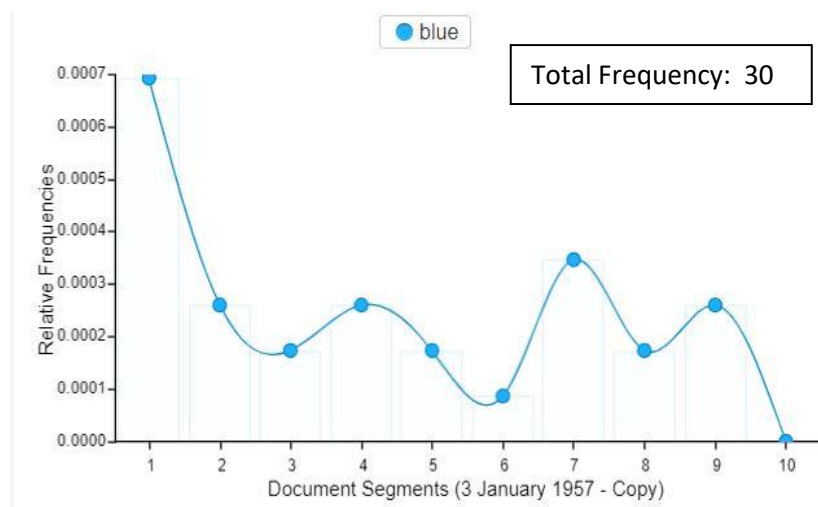

Fig. 15. Occurrence of the colour "blue" in the "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957".

Water-based images once again come centre stage in this journal. Here the sky and sea are merged through its reflection in water. She describes the "sky reflecting pale watery blues" (Plath, 2000, p. 301). She adds another variation to same description in the next entry where the water is "reflecting blue glaze from pale sky" (p. 302). Plath, in these examples, exhibits her attention to detail while poetically embedding water images.

In the following example, blue is finally used in association with temperature. Instead of instilling a sense of sadness with its freezing temperature, "a blue clear cold day that makes [her] want to be wandering" (Plath, 2000, p. 304). A clear blue sky, devoid of any other weather-related hindrance, evokes her need for aimless walking outside.

Still adhering to the sky-related images, she oddly combines a water-related verb with a phrase describing the sky. She discusses the buildings which are "…swimming, weltering, in a thinning blue air" (Plath, 2000, p. 311). This peculiar description is almost paradoxical in its phrasing however, in essence, it still traditionally remains with a sky-related image.

In "Journal: 28 August 1957–14 October 1958", the frequency is comparatively less than the previous one (see fig. 18.); nevertheless, the highest peak occurs at the beginning of this journal while it steadily takes the shape of a trough. The colour blue becomes non-existent in the sixth segment of this section. After this absence, there are two more peaks and ends with relative frequency near 0.00025. This means that there is a certain crowding of the colour yellow even till the end of it.
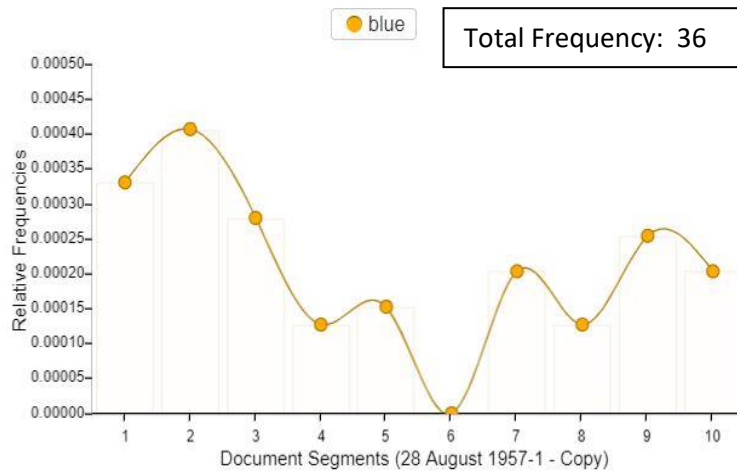
Fig. 16. Occurrence of the colour "blue" in the "Journal: 28 August 1957–14 October 1958".

Plath writes a rather surrealistic sentence which envelopes the colour blue. She questions, "What breaks windows to thin air, blue views, in a smother-box?" (Plath, 2000, p. 339). By loosely interpreting this, she contemplates the destruction of windows, bringing the colour blue into a much more negative life.

She immediately proceeds to pair blue with more coherent phrases where the interiors of the house have "light blue walls" (Plath, 2000, p. 339) and the time she stays in France in a "Paris blue room" (p. 343). In Plath's frenzy of writing, occasionally, she utilises colours in a bizarre arrangement of words.

However, she continues to use colours in a dichotomous manner. In one instance she embeds a visually-appealing quality to woman's clothing where she takes notice of her "attractive teal-blue dress" (Plath, 2000, p. 353) in contrast with the woman's husband who is dressed up in a "nasty-tasting metallic blue suit" (p. 353). Plath's opinionated self surfaces in descriptions like these where the natural qualities of the colour blue, are moulded through her thoughts.

The temperature aspect of the colour blue is explored once again in "snowqueen, blue white as ice" (Plath, 2000, p. 341), pairing it with white to

lay emphasis on the extremity of the coldness of blue. Although there is no blue hue to the colour of ice, the placement of blue here emphasises how cold and white she is. This is because white is the opposite of black. If black is the absence of colour, white is simply the polar opposite, indicating brightness.

The final journal in this corpus reveals that there is a major absence in the first segment of this section (see Fig. 19). Afterwards, there are consistent crests and troughs throughout the progression. It must be noted that the maximum spike it reaches in this graph, is slightly above the relative frequency of 0.00030. These figures portray the significantly lower count as compared to the rest of the frequency of the colour blues.
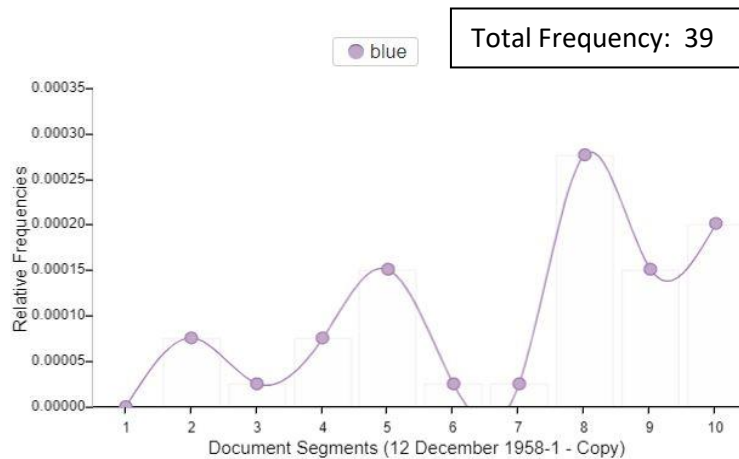

Fig. 17. Occurrence of the colour "blue" in the "Journal: 12 December 1958 –15 November 1959".

Examples where the "blue shadows of trees" (Plath, 2000, p. 489) are showcased in one diary entry. Although it is atypical to describe the shadows with blue instead of black, Plath utilised the former to highlight the cold temperature accompanying the trees at night. She later switches to daytimes where the "sky a high clear blue bell jar" (p. 522). Not only is she alluding to her own debut novel, *The Bell Jar,* with this early trace, prior to its publication, it treats the sky as a jar of suffocation.

Temperature and setting-related descriptions of the "blue clear cold morning" (Plath, 2000, p. 527) coupled with the "deep

blue cloud-crossed sky" (p. 556) in another diary, Plath brings variation to the shades of blue hence, adding more vividness. She instils a luminescent quality to the colour by describing the "blue light of a fuzzy moon, a warmish, windy night" (p. 582). Here is a contrast between the colour and the temperature when used. While blue connotates the cold, it is juxtaposed with the warmth of the night.

By looking at the overall progression of the colour blue from a distance (see fig. 20), this brings forth two defined peaks. When the line graph reaches a dip in the second half of the journals, there is slight stagnancy before it falls into a valley.
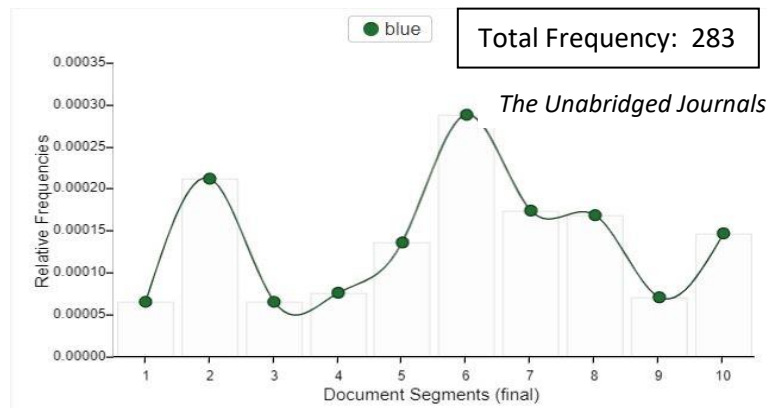

**Fig. 18. Occurrence of the colour "blue" in the entire corpus.**

The conclusion of this section reveals that Plath shows more preference towards associating colours with objects and situations in a much more unorthodox manner. Her inclination encompasses primarily sickness, physical features, natural occurrences such as the sky and water. Although there is a fair share of conventional descriptions utilizing the colour blue, Plath typically harsh criticism often involves using colour in a negative light.

Green

Natural landscapes and fields do not signify a particular plant or any other feature. Instead, the colour green comes to mind immediately. Green is intrinsic to nature and is heavily

associated with the environment. Bellantoni contributes to the discussion by linking this colour with "fresh vegetables" (Bellantoni, 2005, p. 160). Contrastingly, green has its own set of diametric qualities. While it may refer to freshness or untainted nature, it can also be considered as the fungus and rot of "spoiled meat" (p. 160) or "slime-covered swamps" (p. 160). Other negative qualities include "danger" (p. 160), "poison" (p. 160) as well as "illness and evil" (p. 160). Plath also uses the colour green in her journals. The question lies within the manner in which she uses it and to what extent Plath adheres to the accepted interpretations of the colour green.

In the first journal, there is a clear display of two full crests along with three rather shallow troughs (see fig. 21). The frequency plotted on this graph exhibits that in none of the sections of this journal, were there any absence of the colour green. Coupled with two valleys, the frequency count near the end of this journal stagnates.
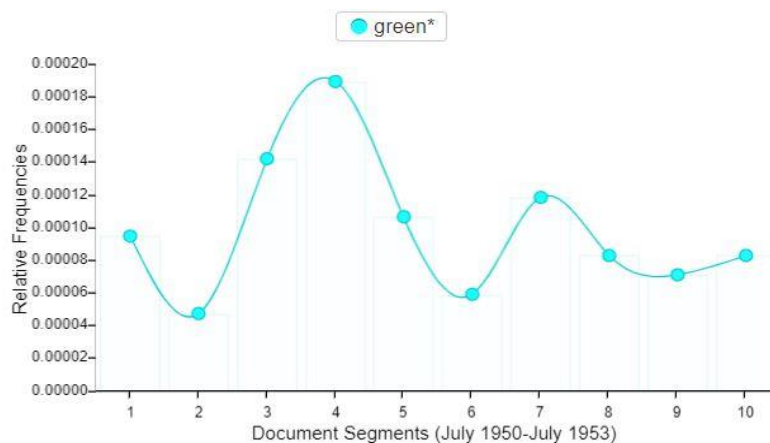
Fig. 19. Occurrence of the colour "green" in the "Journal: July 1950–July 1953".

One of the first references in this journal refers to "green leaves" (Plath, 2000, p. 17), which is an element of nature. Later on, in this journal, Plath writes quite the opposite of what green is usually perceived as. Here, green is embedded with the descriptions of littering and an unkempt environment as there are "beer cans lying about green and shiny gold, and ash trays" (p.

26). Here are two examples of Plath's use of the colour green in different aspects.

She departs from the images of nature and interconnects the colour green with her own body. The following diary entry dives into a rather revolting recount of her treatment of nasal mucus. She talks about how her "forefinger can reach up and smear down-and-out the soft, resilient, elastic greenish-yellow smallish blobs of mucus, roll them round and jelly-like between thumb and fore finger" (Plath, 2000, p. 192). The uncomfortable overtone of these lines is heightened through the vivid colours of green and yellow.

Another aspect of the colour green Plath puts forward is by associating green with a feeling. In one entry, she talks about how she "didn't turn green and serious and grave eyed at first" (Plath, 2000, p. 31). In the larger context of this diary, she discusses her personal encounter with jealousy.

In "Journal: 22 July 1956 – 26 August 1956", the line graph showcases three crests which are steadily progressing along with the progression of the green frequency within the journal. Compared to all the colour frequency graphs in this chapter, the relative frequency is at its highest, given that it exceeds 0.0010.
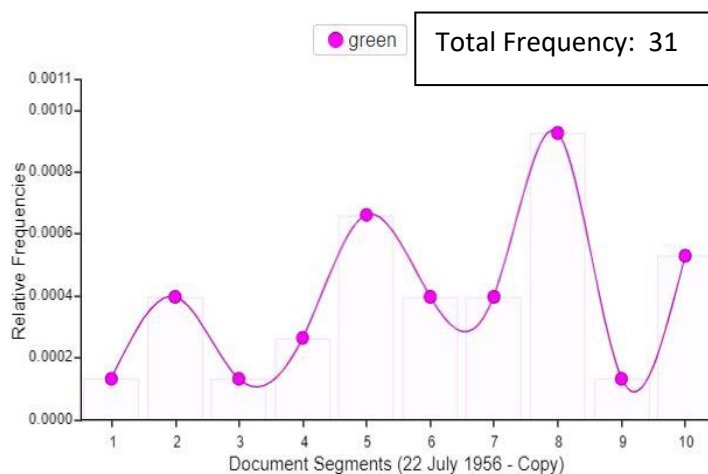
Fig. 20. Occurrence of the colour "green" in the "Journal: 22 July 1956–26 July 1956".

Drawing from the characteristics of nature, Plath describes the "small green fields fanned out into hot yellow plains of rye" (Plath, 2000, p. 286) along with "wide green scalloped" leaves (p. 290) where she moves onto edible "green honeydew melon" (p. 293) and "green peaches" (p. 295). So far in these entries, she continues to keep her descriptions in synchronisation with nature such as "green empty park" (p. 295). From these examples, it is deduced that during these times, her daily life was surrounded with nature and a pastoral setting.

In "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957", Plath's use of green in this line graph (see fig. 23) is plotted in an unusual manner. With little to no heightened peaks, the outset of the journals begins at a crowded frequency of 0.0016. However, as the journals progress along with time, it plummets to smaller peaks where in the sixth segment, there is no allusion to the colour green.
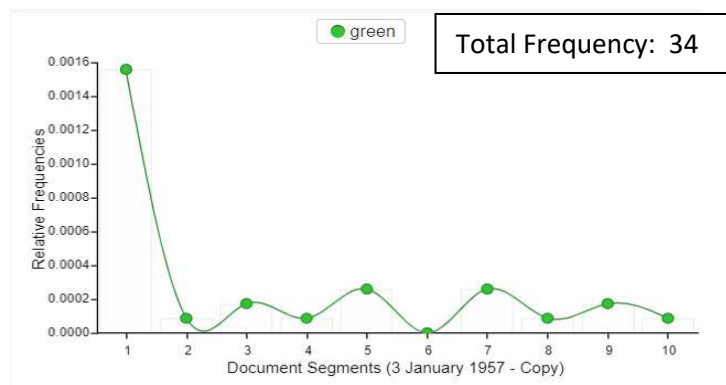

Fig. 21. Occurrence of the colour "green" in the "Journal: 3 January 1957–11 March 1957".

As it is shown that Plath is still residing near the countryside, she experiences the "Rural quiet scene." No people…green meadows blazing" (Plath, 2000, p. 301). Her emphasis on the tranquillity and serenity of the auditory and visual atmosphere is

contrasted with the "blazing" (p. 301) quality of the colour. The choice of this word is typically associated with colours belonging to a warmer palette.

Furthermore, the "green potted plants" (Plath, 2000, p. 306) and "green swatches of grass" (p. 309) all focus on how the inherent quality of normal plants and grass. Plath's fixation on coalescing all primary colours together is manifest in "Blue and green faint hazes blowing in the sun" (p. 309). The plants along with the yellow sun are a trio in this image to convey the vividness of nature.

The frequency of the colours used in this journal are much higher in their quantity (see fig. 24). There are two noticeable crests, which are paired with the dips, decrease in terms of their quantity. In this figure, all segments contain the colour green.
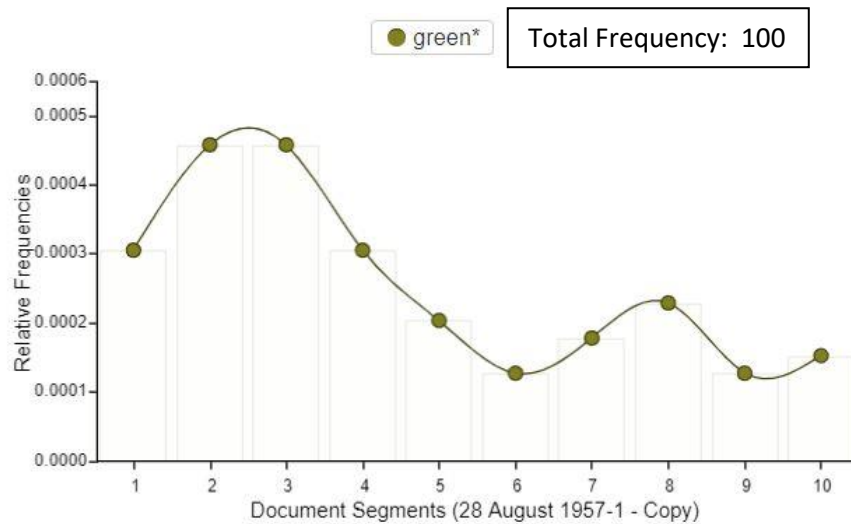

Fig. 22. Occurrence of the colour "green" in the "Journal: 28 August 1957–14 October 1958".

Instead of referring to nature in this journal, Plath finds herself grappling with the process of writing where she feels the dire need to "get back to perfect rhythms & words binging & bonging in themselves: green, thin, whine" (Plath, 2000, p. 340). Here she

shows signs of struggle with the rhymes and rhythmic side of language as a poet. This is a unique example of how green is simply utilized for linguistic purposes.

Plath revisits the colour green as the feeling of jealousy especially with the new emerging poets pose a threat to her role as a poet. (Plath, 2000, p. 351). She confesses, "Jealous one I am, green-eyed, spite-seething" (p. 351). In addition, she admits to feeling "Anger, envy and humiliation. A green seethe of malice through the veins" (p. 354). The description of green in these lines become part of a visceral reaction to the intimidation she is forced into feeling.

Another feeling that Sylvia described with the colour green is lethargy and sickness. She talks about her day where she "fall[s] on the bed, drugged, with this queer sickish greeny-vinous fatigue" (Plath, 2000, p. 388). Jealousy and illness go hand in hand when it comes to the colour green, transforming the colour into a negative connotation.

In "Journal: 12 December 1958 –15 November 1959", there is a noticeable decrease in the frequency of the graphs where are in fourth and fifth segment are void of the colour green. Only in the latter half does the frequency begin to increase and reaches its highest peak near the end of this journal.
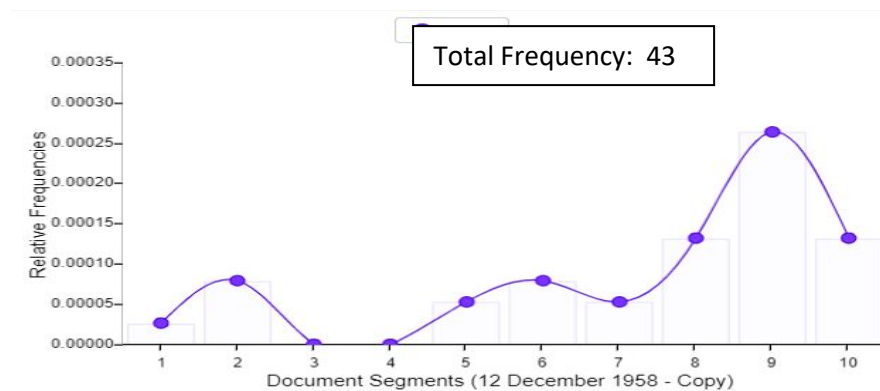

Fig. 23. Occurrence of the colour "green" in the "Journal: 12 December 1958 – 15 November 1959".

Apart from the malaise imagery described in the "lousy green depressing cold" (Plath, 2000, p. 518), where the nasal mucus is introduced again, she returns to the "green velvet ribbons and green shoes" (p. 550). Along with daily objects, as Plath recalls taking a stroll with her husband, Ted Hughes in one of her diary entries, she notes "The green, brilliant underbed of the lakes" (p. 584).

In addition, she moves the presence of the colour green in living things like animals. She talks of "A live brown and green beveled garter snake" (p. 570), having an unusual shape, coated in a rather muddy colour palette. With this combination of the snake, –bearing in mind that it is considered a sinister creature–, the use of green in a neutral manner is steered towards the negative.

The progression of the colour green in the entire corpus exhibits the two spikes (see fig. 26). As previously discussed in each individual journal, the usage of green is abundant but not enough in the latter few journals, as shown in the overall progression.
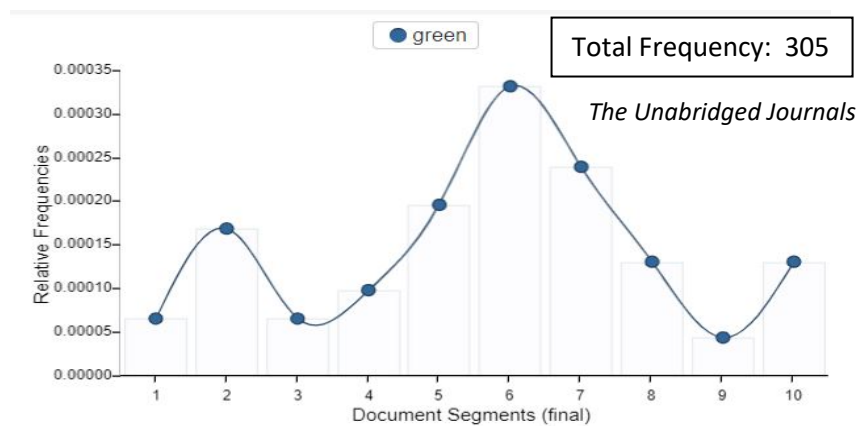

Fig. 24. Occurrence of the colour "green" in the entire corpus.

To summarize, the usage of the colour green is placed in several contexts. The descriptions are typically used in a conventional manner, adhering to the elements of nature and animals such as snakes. Like other colours, she directs the traditional interpretations of the colour green to describe bodily excretions

in an explicit manner. However, she also heavily lays emphasis on how she feels green or in other words, jealousy. One unique feature regarding the colour green is that it is involved in her creative and linguistics exploration as a poet. It is again concluded that the shades of green are open to her own interpretation and use.

Compiled Colour Patterns of *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*

The conclusion drawn from the analysis of these four colours bring forth a few observations. Although Plath uses colours in a conventional sense, she steers its usage into uncomfortable and diseased images. Regardless of how positive or bright a colour perhaps might be, Plath's opinionated self uses language as a tool to disfigure and taint the hues of those colours.

In terms of the colour red, one distinguished feature of its occurrence is Plath's discussion of the female sexuality which has not been executed in any other colour. With respect to yellow, it is heavily associated with the colour of urine, uncovering how Plath does not remain distant in describing what is uncomfortable to others. One noticeable trait of blue is how it is used to indicate temperature more than any other colour in this chapter. On the other hand, out of all colours, the colour green is designated to the feeling of jealousy and envy.

The overall progression of all the colours –along with other colours which are not discussed– are illustrated in the following figure (see fig. 27). To answer the glaring question of the most dominant and least dominant colours in the line graph, it displays that the uses of blue and green –meaning cool colours– are the most dominant ones consistently whereas yellow is the least utilized colour in comparison to the rest.
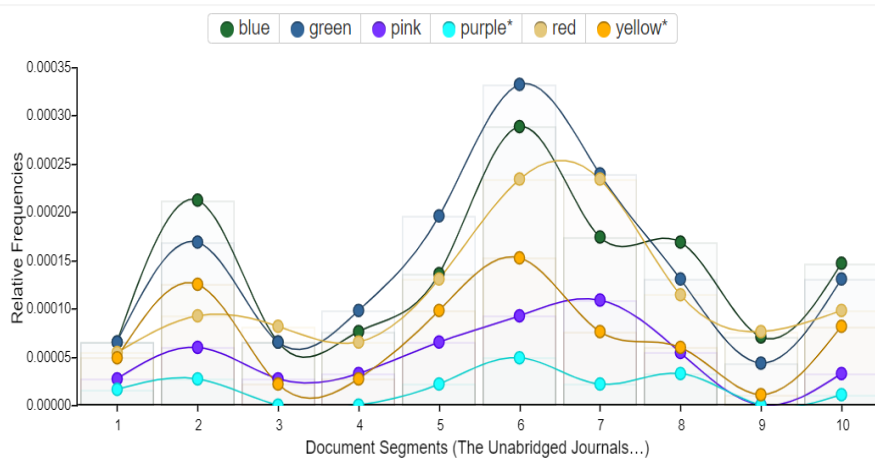
Fig. 25. Compilation of colours and their progression in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath.*

To further clarify to what extent the blue and green are dominant, in the pie chart illustrated (see fig. 28), the use of green and blue outweigh red and yellow with the figure of 61%. The results indicate that, regardless of the assumed impassioned entries, her negative descriptions lean towards using the colour palettes to emphasize her inner state.
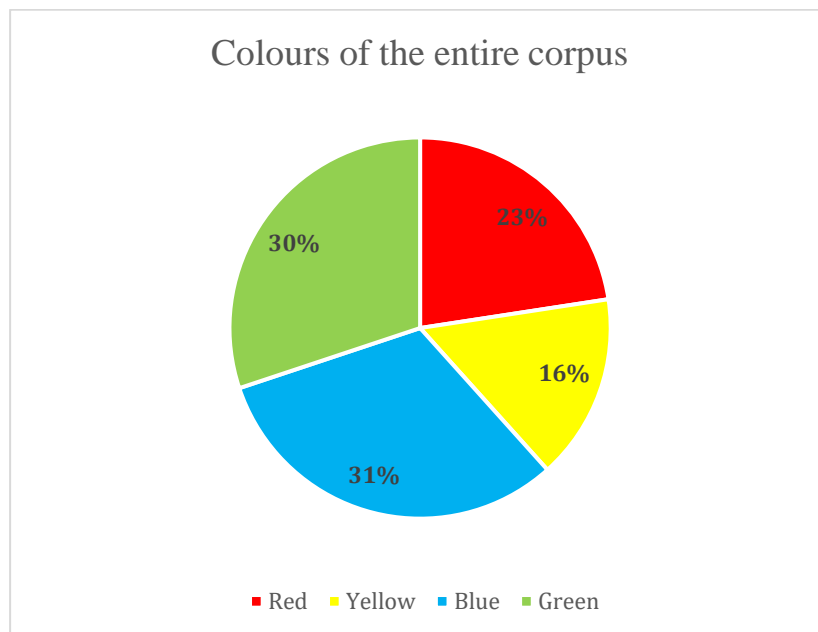
Fig. 26. Pie chart of the selected colours in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research being a Digital Humanities project in the form of a text, compilation, attempts to derive meaningful patterns from *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath.* It provides a bird's eye view of overall patterns in a text, which requires stepping outside the traditional literary textual analysis. By primarily adopting a distant reading approach, data visualization is the main mode of analyzing and interpreting the progressions of these selected traits. As a result, it produces textual trends.

The results first and foremost reveal that Plath's usage of colours in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, is clearly in abundance. Keeping red, yellow, blue and green (equally split into warm and cool colours) as the selected colours (since they are the most occurring) to probe into Plath's style in her diary entries. These colours are also categorized into warm and cool colour palettes to extract more results regarding the colour occupation in the corpus. This is why it is a deliberate choice of colours to maintain balance between the palettes.

 The results extracted from applying *Voyant Tools* reveal that the most predominant cool colours are the most predominant colour palette, amounting to just over two-thirds of the corpus. In this palette, blue occupies the most space in Plath's journals by occupying a third of the text. This result does coincide with the assumption of blue stereotypically connoting sadness, based on how grim Plath's subject matters happen to be. On the other hand, the least dominant colour is yellow which happens to meet the expectations of a Plath scholar or a reader. This is because yellow typically portrays happiness, which is not characteristic of Sylvia Plath as a person or a writer.

The discussion of colour in these journals draws the attention of Plath scholars and even general readers. It puts forward the suggestion and prompts researchers to take this quality in mind and investigate further in Plath's more popular works, using the same methodology and digital tools. From a perspective, it facilitates scholars to look for more correlations with these extracted results.

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