

# Color in Chaucer

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*Suggest it*

"Colours we knowe I none, withouten drede,  
 But such colours as growen in the mede,  
 Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.  
 Colours of rethoryk ben me to queynte;  
 My spirit feleth noight of swich matiere".

The use of color in Chaucer forms a marked contrast with its use in the earlier Old English writings where, according to modern sense, entirely unsuitable terms were applied and where, also, reference is made most frequently to the duller colors. In the Battle of Maldon we find,

"ða þyrktnod bræd bill of sciade,  
 bræd and brūncæg, and on ða byrnan sloh".

The Anglo-Saxons commonly applied the term 'brūncæg' to a sword and that too, as in the present instance, to a sword in use. A rusty sword might possibly be conceived of as brownedged but, in modern color sense, <sup>one</sup> could not apply the term to a sword fit for use nor would Chaucer. In the same poem we find - "feoll ða to foldan fealohille sword". In the Battle of Brunanburh - "cuning it gewat on fealone flod, feorh generede". In the Wanderer reference is made to the "fealwe waegas". In Caedmon's Genesis when Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac,

"ðu scealt x x x Sonne  
 sweart lige lēfes lic for barnan" where we should expect Sonne readan lige. In the same poem we find, "ac him sē hālgas wer  
 gyrde graegan sweorde" where we should not expect to find color mentioned at all - sharp sword, shining

shining sword, or burnished sword would seem more timely. In the Assumption of St. John the Apostle, we have more than once reference made to "read gold"; Ælfric said, "Ealle ðas goldamidas secgað ðæt hi næfre ær swā clæne gold. ne swā read ne gesāw-ou". Chaucer speaks only of yellow gold and we show our appreciation of his use in the expression "yellow as gold". I find no seeming misapplication of 'hwit'. Purple connected itself with wealth, pomp and honor as it did later. The feeling among the followers of St. John, according to the Assumption of St. John, the Apostle, when they saw their former ser-  
vants "mid godwebbe gefraetwode", was such that they were finally commanded, "Bigað ðow pællum cyrtlas, ðæt ge to lytelre hwile seinou swā swā rose". Blue does not seem to have been a common color. The 'blue sky' nor 'blue eyes' do not seem to have been mentioned by the Anglo-Saxon writers. In the same selection we find that St. John, "on Goddes naman ða grēnan gyroða geblitode, and hi wurdou to readum golde aewende", but whether 'grēnan' refers to the state or color of the twigs may be questioned. Beowulf refers to the sea as the "fealuflōd", also speaks of measuring the "fealwe stræte". In line 866 he speaks of "fealwe mearas", in 163-5 of "feower mearas x æppel-fealwe". Brown, fallow, graeg being common colors, but the descriptive words of Beowulf are not color adjectives. But in comparison with other Anglo-Saxon writings, the color names seem to be more nearly applied as at present, although the sword was still "brun ecg" and nowhere in early English

writers is there such wealth and richness of color as illuminate the pages of Chaucer.

He, however, writes most vivid descriptions in which the color element suggests itself and in which the circumstances or the material described produces the color idea. For example, in the House of Fame, we have.

"His heer, that ouny was and crispe,

As burned gold hit shoun to see", which can not fail to present to view a curly, golden head shining in the sunshine: then,

"Upon an yren piler strong

That peynted was, al ende long.

With tygres blode in every place" which presents to our minds a red pillar.

Again, "Now of the hall x x x

x x x that every wal

Of hit, and floor, and roof and al

Was plated half a fote thikke

Of gold and that was no-thing wikke", which hall we might think of as in the sunlight resplendent with colors.

Chaucer makes most frequent use of the colors white, red, green and black. In the Nonne Priests Tale his description of the widow's chanceler is bright with color, he says

"His count was redder than the fyn coral

x x x

His bile was blak, and as the feet it shoun;

Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;

His mayles whytter than the lilee flour,

And like the burned gold was his colour."

This passage contains the only instance of his use of "azur" and one of the two times he uses "burned gold".

Later in the tale of this same fowl it is said

"Ye been so scarlet-seed about your yēn" which is one of the two times this combination of color is used.

Of scarlet he speaks in Sir Thopas thus:-

"His rode is lyk. scarlet in grayn", and in the Wife of Bath's Prologue, she says that in her "visitacions

To pleyes of miracles and mariages," she wore "gaye scarlet-gytes," and Chaucer, himself, says in his description of her, "His hosen were of fin scarlet-seed".

Two mentions are made of purple. One in the Legend of Cleopatra when she fled "with al her purple sail", and the second time of Criseyde when she found she must go to her father in exchange for Antenor and so be separated from her lover. where Chaucer says she wept until

"A bout his eyen two a purple ring

Bi-trent".

Of Emelye, he says, "For with the rose colour stroof her hewe" using it, <sup>(rose colour)</sup> but the once. For very black he used two expressions: of a bear's skin he said it was "col-black" and of a raven its feathers "shoon for-blak".

In the description of Emetrice, King of India, he says, "His crispe heer lyk. ringes was y-roune,

And that was yellow, and glittered as the soune,

His nose was heigh, his eyen bright-citryne,

His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn

A few fraknes in his face y-spereynd,

Bitwixen yellow and souldel blak y-meynd",

which description is as abundant in color as that of the widow's chancicleer and contains the only use of the

color 'citryu' and one of the two of 'sangwys' as a color the other being of the Franklin's "complexion".

Of Sir Thopas, Chaucer says,

"His heer, his berd was like saffron" - the only time he uses saffron. "Bay" is used only with reference to the color of a horse - as now. Eneidius sat

"Upon a stede baye, trapped in steel".

In Troilus and Criseyde,

"This Troilus sat on his baye stede", which stede Criseyde "ones wam of Troilus" and after this having transferred her affection to Diomedes,

"the story telleth us,

That she him yaf the faire baye stede".

"Leden" with reference to color is used but once - the Canon's yeoman says, -

"And where my colour was both fresh and reed,

Now is it wam and of a leden hewe", where 'leden' makes a fine contrast to "fresh and reed".

Once, in the House of Fame, Chaucer speaks of "falwe twiggis" - the only use of falwe and this too in one of those passages where he associates colors.

This association is well illustrated by the following quotations. -

"And at this hour, x x x

Was made of twiggis, falwe, rede,

And grene ek, and some were whyte";

Once he uses "swartish red" in a similar association, -

And swiche a smoke gan out wende

x x x x

Blak, blo, greenish, swartish reed,

As soth were that-inere smelle leed."



or in the Parlement of Foules -  
 "A garden saw I, ful of blosmy bowes,  
 Upon a rivir, in a grene mede,  
 With floures whyte, blew, yelow, and rede"  
 Again in *Amelida and Arcite* where false Arcite  
 being enamored with a new enchantress, the poet says,  
 x x "He cladde him in his hewe  
 Not I not whether in whyte, rede, or grene:"

And in *Troilus and Criseyde* -  
 "In May, that modes is of monthes glade,  
 That freshe floures, blew, and white, and rede",  
 Two colors are associated very frequently but be-  
 cause these examples are given in another connection  
 in this paper I do not give them here.

In the *Secunde Mounes Tale of the lyf of Sainte Cecile*  
 we have, "two coronis han we,  
 Snow-whyte and rose-reed that shyner clere".  
 We learn, too, that the Summoner had a "fyr-reed cherubines  
 face". Rose-reed, scarlet-reed, and fyr-reed are each  
 used by Chaucer once.

Yellow, he uses eleven times. Of *Ligurges*,  
 the Knight said, "The cercles of his eyes in his heed,  
 They glowe ben betwixe yelow and reed".  
 Once he spoke of "yelwe gold" and in his *Compleynte*  
 to his *Empty Purse* he speaks of "yelownesse" referring to  
 gold. Five times he mentions "yelwe heer" and once speaks  
 of "mayles yelwe" in a 'cote armure'.

*Chanticleer* in his description of a fox to his wife *Pertelote*  
 said it was "betwixe yelwe and reed".

Chaucer's use of blue shows an advance in the develop-  
 ment of the color sense in the English people.

He mentions blue nine times in his works - but twice in the Canterbury tales.

The Miller wore "A whyt cote and a blew hood". The parson used it of hose. It appears once in the House of Fame.

In the Compliment of Mars "teres blew" are mentioned, and in the poem Against Women Unconstant, the poet says, "Insteede of blew, this may ye were al grene."

In Chaucerian days, "blue meant loyalty; red, ardent love; black, grief; white, joy; green, fickleness; yellow, falsehood", hence the point to the line just quoted.

Criseyde sent Troilus a "blewe ring" when he was despairing of her affection.

Canacee made for the wounded hawk "a newe, and covered it with veluettes blew,

Light blue is used but once, - the Reve wore a "surcote of Pers."

Ten times Chaucer mentions things gray.

Grey eyes seem to have been pleasing to the English people of Chaucer's time, for three times he speaks of grey eyes in what seems to be terms of admiration.

He in his description of the prioress speaks of "her eyen greye as glass". In the Miller's description of Absolon we find reference made to "his eyen greye as goos". Also the Miller's daughter is described as having "yis greye as glass". The Reve rode upon a horse

"That was al pomey grey, and highte Scot".

Of Sir Thopas, Chaucer said, "His stede was al dappel-gray, and again, "He worth upon his stede gray."

The man who joined the company at Boughlon under Bler rode "His bakeney, that was al pomey grys."

In the Tale of Gamelyn we have mentioned "a greye

freere and in Troilus and Criseyde a man referred to as  
 "this old greye". In Sir Thopas "a grey gos-hawk" is men-  
 tioned. The Wife of Bath is made to say,

"Ne noon so grey goos goth ther in the lake,  
 As, seistow, that wol been with-oute make"

Brown, Chaucer uses but nine times.

Of Criseyde, he says,

"In widowes habit large of samit brown,  
 On knees she fill bifore Ector a-down".

This is the only case I have met in literature of  
 a mourning habit made of brown silk.

From the readiness with which Criseyde accepts the  
 admiration of Troilus, I conclude that this brown  
 habit must have been only second mourning at  
 the most. The widow in the Nunne Priestes Tale

had, "Milk and broun breed, in which she found no lak".

Of the Geoman we find "a not heed hadde he, with a  
 brown visage" and of the Shipman, "The holi somer had maad  
 his hewe al brown". In the House of Fame, we read of  
 Vulcanus that "his face was ful brown". Sir Thopas  
 wore "housen brown". The Monk's "palfrey was brown as is a  
 berye". In the Book of the Duchesse, he describes a lady's

hair as follows:-

"For every heer upon his heed,

Soth to seyn, hit was not rede,

Ne nouthur yelow, ne brown hit was;

Me thought, most lyk gold hit was".

Black, Chaucer uses fifty-nine times - thirty  
 seven times in Canterbury Tales. I give the references  
 as they are found through out his works.

Canterbury Tales. Prologue

- 274 "Twenty bokes, clad in blak or red"  
 537 "His nose-thrilles blake were and wide"  
 627 "With scalled browes blake, and piled beard"

The Knight's Tale

- 41 "Ech after other, clad in clothes blake"  
 53 "And why that ye been clothed thus in blak?"  
 1142 "The shepene burning with blake smoke"  
 1272 "Blak was his berd, and manly was his face"  
 1312 "Betwixen yelow and some tel blak y-meynid"  
 1659 "Somme held with him with the blake berd"  
 1831 "As black he lay as any cole or crowe"  
 2021 "In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teies"  
 2045 "That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hys"  
 3126 "But in his blake clothes some fully"

The Nonne Prestis Tale

- 23 "His berd was served most with whyt and blak"  
 41 "His bile was blak, and as the feet it shoon"  
 84 "With blak, unlyk the remnant of his heres"  
 115 "For fere of blake beres, or boles blak"  
 116 "Or elles, blake devels wole him take"

The Miller's Prologue

- 60 "and blake as any sloo"  
 306 "At thilke tyme, than alle hise wethers blake"

The Cook's Tale

5 With lokkes blake x x v

The Monk's Prologue & Tale

141 "Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked"

392 "The field of snow with stegle of blak there inne"

The Wife of Bath's Prologue

624 "Al were he short or long, or blak or whyt"

The Friars Tale

66 "Do stryken his out of our letters blake"

325 "Unto the devel blak and rough of hewe"

The Marchantes Tale

835 "But ever live as widwe in clothes blake"

The Frankeleyns Tale

131 "But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake"

140 "But, Lord, this grisly feendly rokkes blake"

163 "But wolde god that alle thise rokkes blake"

430 "To mannes righte, that alle she rokkes blake"

The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue

4 "A man, that clothed was in clothes blake"

The Manciple's Prologue and Tale

195 "Thou and thyne of-spring ever shul be blake"

201 "And made him blak" x x x

206 "And for this caas be alle crows blake"

The Parson's Tale.

344 "for which his flesh was blak as an Ethiopian for <sup>hete</sup>"

426 "as is whyt & blak, or whyt & blew"

605 "for thou mayst nat make an heer whyt ne blak"

134 "is the wal blak of the leyt"

House of Fame

- R11.1079 "Be it clothed need or blak"  
 111-1637, "Took out his blakke trumpe of bras"  
 1647 "Blak, blo. greenish swar tish need"  
 1671 "Thou Eolus, that is so blak"  
 1801 "And with his blakke clarion"  
 1865 "And toke his blakke trumpe faste"

The Book of the Duchesse

- 253 "In fyn blak satin don tre mere"  
 455 "I was war of a man in blak"  
 457 "And he was clothed in blakke"

The Parlement of Foules

- 141 "Thise vers of gold and blak y-writen were"  
 683 "And driven away the long nightis blake"

Amelida and Arcite

- 213 "Wyn herte, bare of blis and blak of lewe"

Troilus & Criseyde

- 170 "In widewes habite blak"  
 175- "Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre"  
 177 "That his bi-helden in his blake wede"  
 642 "Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse"  
 11-1 "Out of these blake wawes for to sayle"  
 534 "That stod in blak, with loking on her yeaer"  
 1320 "Have here a light, and loke on at this blake"  
 1429 "O blake night, as folk in bokes rede"  
 v-229 "Y-bounden in the blake bark of care"  
 779 "Shul blake been" x x

Green; Chaucer uses more frequently... seventy four times in all.  
Canterbury Tales Green

### Prologue

- 103 "And he was clad in coti and hood of grene"  
114 "An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene"  
159 "A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene"  
607 "With grene treis shadowed was his place"

### The Knight's Tale

- 177 "Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene"  
209 "And eek the gardin, ful of branches grene"  
652 "May, with alle thy flouris and thy grene"  
654 "I hope that I some grene gete may"  
828 "And Emelye, clothed al in grene"  
1100 "With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas"  
1221 "In gande grene his statue clothed was"  
1317 "Upon his heed he wored of laurer grene"  
1432 "A coroune of a grene ook cerial"  
1438 "O chaste goddess of the wodes grene"  
2002 "That in that selve grove; swote and grene"  
2017 "Eek on his heed a coroune of laurer grene"  
2057 "That with his grene top the heven raughte"  
2077 "And then with grene wode and spy cerye"

### Tale of the Wyf of Bath

- 5 "Danced full of ti in many a grene mede"  
142 "Save on the grene he saugh settinge a wyf"

### The Freres Tale

- 84 "He hadde upon a courtopy of grene"  
88 "Wher rydestow under this grene shawe?"

### The Clerk's Tale

- 1117 "I wille with lusty herte freshe & grene"

### The Marchantes Tale

- 221 "My n herte and alle my lines been as grene"  
793 "That stood under a laurer alwey grene"

- 991 "Upon a bench of turves, freshe and grene"
- 1084 "On heigh, among the freshe leves grene"
- 1089 "To stein of the smale peres grene"
- The Squires Tale
- 54 "What for the reasons and the yonge grene"
- 646 " \* \* "the newe is peynted grene"
- The Frankelays Tale
- 134 "Than wolde she sitte adown upon the grene"
- 5-23 "Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd"
- The Seconde Nounes Tale
- 90 "And grene of conscience, and of good fame"
- The House of Fame
- 11-1226 "And pyper made of grene corne"
- 1647 "Blak, bli, greenish"
- 1937 "And grene ek, and some weren whyte"
- 1946-7 "As fele as leves been on trees  
In somer, whan they grene been"
- Legend of Good Women
- 214 "And she was clad in real habit grene"
- 227 "In silk, embrouded ful of grene greves"
- 242 "Corouned with whyte, and clothed al in grene"
- 282 "Behind this god of love, upon the grene"
- 303 "With the whyte coroun, clad in grene"
- 341 "Thu spak this lady, clothed al in grene"
- Legend of Thise of Bakyton
- 712 "And woude as nigh, upon a grene"
- Legend of Hyperborea
- 2648 "And quok as dooth the leef of aspe grene"
- The Book of the Duchesse
- 414 "For al the wode was woxen grene"
- 417 "Wher there were many grene greves"



497 "His hewe change, and wexe grene"  
 The Parlement of Foules

122 "Right of a parker, walled with grene stoon"

130 "ther grene and lushy, May shal ever endure"

174 "Eche in his kind, of colour fresh & grene"

184 "Upon a rivis, in a grene mede"

202 "Made in the leves grene a noise soft"

296 "That I of spake, that was so swote and grene"  
 Aucuba & Arcite

146 "Not I not whether in whyte, rede, or grene"

180 "His herte was ellis-where, newe and grene"

353 "With face ded, betwix pale and grene"

The Formes Age.

21 "ho ship yit karp the waves grene and blew"  
Fortune 1m.B.

5 "My hertes wounde, whyl that hit is grene"

Against Women Unconstant

7 "In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene"

Troilus and Cressyde

1-157 "With new grene, of lusty Ver the pryne"

816 "May, may, but ever in oon be fresh and grene"

11-61 "It made his hewe a-day ful of te grene"

821 "And shadowed well with bloomy bowes grene"

918 "A nightingale, upon a cedre grene"

1705 "Downward a steyre into a herbe grene"

11-10 "As man, bird, best, fish, herbe and grene tree"

35-3 "Revesten here in lrene, whan that is May"

1062 "And after winter folweth grene May"

14-470 "That witeles, mot grene some seye"

1134 "And thus she lyth with lewes pale and grene"

1433 "De lyten in his song in leves grene"

v-10 "y-brought ayein the tēdre leves grene"  
 243 x x x "O pitious pale and grene".

Chaucer loved nature and never wearied of green leaves and bright flowers. He tells it in *Legende of Good Women* when he says

"And as for me, though that I koune but lyte,  
 Om bokes for to rede I me delyte,

And to hem give I feyth and ful credence,

And in myn herte have hem in reverence

So hertely, that there is game noon

That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,

But yt be seldom on the holy day,

Save, certynly, when that the monethe of May

Do comen, and that there the foules syng,

And that the flouris gumen for to sprynge, -

Farewel my boke, and my devocioun."

White Chaucer uses yet more frequently than he does green and often in association with other colors - frequently of things pure.

- 1370 "Al ful of fresh flouris, whyte and red"  
 137 "His necke whyt was as the flour-de-lys"  
 132 "Whyt was his berd, as is the dayes eye"  
 138 "Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk"  
 164 "A whyt cote and a blew hood wored he"  
 132 "That him might helpen of his whelkes whyte"

## The Knight's Tale

- 118 "So shyneth in his whyte baner large"  
 175 "She gadereth flouris, partly whyte and rede"  
 501 "That frothen whyte as foam for in wood"  
 1635 "Estward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt"  
 1052 "Of alabaster whyt and red coral"  
 1281 "With four whyte boles in the trace"  
 1290 "Aboute his char ther wenten whyte a launts"  
 1303 "Couched with perles whyte and round and grete"  
 1320 "On egle came, as any lilye whyt"  
 1728 "With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face"  
 016 "Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte"  
 1034 "Upon these stedes, that were grete and whyte"

## The Nonne Priesis Tale

- 22-3 "No wine ne drank she, neither whyt ne red,  
 His bord was served most with whyt and black"  
 43 "His nayles whytter than the lilye flour"

## The Miller's Prologue and Tale

- 50 "A barn-cloth eek as whyt as morne milk"  
 52 "Whyt was her smok"  
 55 "The tapes of her volu per"  
 138 "As whyt as is the blosme upon the ryse"  
 299 "The whyt pater noster"  
 390 "As soth the whyte doke after his drake"

Anelida and Arcite

- 146 "Not I not whether in whyte, rede, or grene"  
Troilus and Criseyde
- 1.158 "And avote smellere flouris whyte and rede"
- 642 "Eke whyt by blak, by shame eke worthinesse"
- II. 57 "That fresche flouris, blew, and whyte and rede"
- 55 "Right in the whyte Bole"
- 887 "Ye wis, quod fresh Antigone the whyte"
- 908 "And whyte thingis wexen dourne and sourne"
- 926 "How that an egle, feathered whyte as boon"
- 1063 "So speke it; and thou, Minerva, the whyte"
- III-901 "But giffe him with a few wordes whyte"
- 6247  
384 "They schul forgo the whyte and eke the rede"
- 1567 "'Trow I', quod she, for alle your wordes whyte"
- 752 "Her whyte brest she bet"
- 219 "Where is his whyte brest, wher is it, wher?" 94

## House of France

- 135 And also on her heed, pardee, his rose gablond whyt & red."
- 1935 "And grene eek, and some weren whyte"

## The Legend of Good Women

- 112 "Thare love I most these flouris whyte and rede"
- 216 "And ipou that a whyt coroun she best"
- 219 "Y-crowned is with whyte leves lyte"
- 229 "So were the flouris of his coroun whyte"
- 294 "Her whyte coroun was y-maked al"
- 242 "Corouned with whyte,"
- 299 "His whyte coroun berth the witnessinge"
- 303 "With the whyte coroun, clad in grene"
- 527 "His whyte coroun berth of hit witnessse"
- 532 "Y-crowned al with whyt, as men may see"
- 534 "In stede of rubies, set among the whyte"

## Legend of Dido

- 198 "Upon a thikke palfrey, paper whyt"
- 135-5 "Right as" quod she "as that the whyte swan"

## A Treatise on the Astrolabe

- 190 Part II § 3 & 29 "Faire white sterre that is cleped Alhabor"

## The Book of the Duchesse

- 250 "Of downe of pure doves whyte"
- 780 "As a whyt wal or a table"
- 942 "Hit was whyt"
- 955 "Right whyte hands and mayles red"
- 1238 "A long castel with walles whyte"

## The Complaynt of Mass

- 82 "Depeynted was with whyte boles grete"

## The Parlement of Foules

- 186 "With flouris whyte, blew, yelow and rede"
- 237 "And on the temple of doves whyte and faire"

The Secunde Nonnes Tale.

- 89 "Or, for she whytnesse had of honestee"  
 115 "Right so was fayre Cecilie the whyte"  
 201 "An old man, clad in whyte clothes clere"  
 233 "Snow-whyte and rose-red, that shynen clere"

The Canonis Geomanis Prologue

- 5 "And under nethe he had a whyt surpys"

The Manciplis Prologue & Tale

- 99 "Whyt was the crowe, as is a snow-whyte swan"  
 136 "The whyte crowe, that heng ay in the cage"  
 192 "And eek thy whyte fetheres everichon"  
 200 "And pulled his whyte fetheres everichon"

The Parsons Tale

- 424 "in departinge of his hoses in whyt and red"  
 426 "as is whyt and blak, or whyt and blew, or blak and red"  
 605 "for thou mayest nat make an heer whyt ne blak"  
 634 "Soothly a whyt wal"

The Reves Prologue and Tale

10 "This white top wryteth myne olde yeres"

Man of Law - Prologue & Tale

257 "For though his wife be cristened never so whyte"

361 "The whyte lamb that hurt was with the spere"

The Prioresses Tale

9 "and of the whyte lily flour"

128 "The whyte lamb celestial, quod she"

Chaucer's Tale of Thopas

15 "Whyt was his face as paynde mayer"

147 "He dide next his whyte leir"

156 "As whyt as is a lily-flour"

The Monkes Prologue & Tale.

~~478~~ "Of rubies, saphires, and of perles whyte"

The Physiciens Tale

32 "For right as she can peynte a lilee whyt."

Pardoner's Tale and Prologue

198 "Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and red"

234-5 "Now hepe you fro the whyte and fro the rede  
And name by fro the whyte wyne of Sepe."

Prologue & Tale of the Wife of Bath

624 "Al were he short or long, or blak or whyt"

The Clerks Tale

388 "Upon an hors, anow whyt and well amblyng"

The Merchants Tale

900 "Com forth, my whyte spouse"

The Squieres Tale

409 "A midde a tree fer dry, as whyt as chalk"

The Frankeleyns Tale

420 "Sometimes a vyne, and grapes whyte and rede"

Red, too, was a favorite color; no less than eighty-eight times he makes mention of it and associates it with impurity, sensuality and grossness quite frequently.



Prologue

- 90 "All ful of fresche floures white and red"  
 153 "His mouth ful swete and there to soft and red"  
 294 "Twenty bokes, ad in blak or red"  
 58 "Bold was her face, and fair, and red of hewe"  
 555 "His berd as any rowe or fox was red"  
 567 "Red as the bristles of a sowes eres"  
 135 "And for to drincken strong wyne, red as blood"

The Knight's Tale

- 117 "The rede statue of Mars with spere and target"  
 195 "She gadreth floures, partly whyte and rede"  
 289 "Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede"  
 1052 "Of alabaster whyte and red coral"  
 1111 "Withinne the temple of mighty Mars the rede"  
 1039 "The cruel ire, as red as any glede"  
 2190 "With eyen rede, and of a man he set"  
 1274 "They gloweden betwixe yelow and red"  
 1306 "Bretful of rubis rede, as fyr sparklinge"  
 1725 "With baner red is entered right anon"  
 1752 "Out brest the blood, with sterne sterres red"  
 1777 "Out runneth blood on bothe his eyes red"  
 1043 "With alake pas and eyen rede and wete"

The Nonne Priestes Tale

- 22 "No wyne ne drank she, neither whyt ne red"  
 39 "His count was redder than the fyr coral"  
 82 "His colour was betwixe yelow and red"  
 108 "Of youre rede colera, pardee"  
 110 "Of armes, and of fyr with rede lines"

The Miller's Prologue

- 6 "His presse y-covered with a falding reed"  
 131 "His robe was reed, his eyen grey as goos"  
 130 "In hoses reed he went fetisly"

The Reeves Prologue and Tale

- 34 "And she came after in a gyte of reed"  
 230 "Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed"

Tale of Garnetyn

- 427 "Of the rede wyne"

Man of Law Prologue and Tale

- 258 "She shal have reed to wasche away the reed"

The Shipman's Prologue and Tale

- 111 "And of his owene thought he wex al reed"

Chancer's Tale of Thopas

- 16 "His lippes reed as rose"  
 37 "That bereth the rede hepe"  
 158 "His shield was al of gold so reed"

The Mouk's Prologue and Tale

- 173 "Or in a fourneys ful of flambees reed"  
 554 "That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed"

The Physicien's Tale

- 33 "And reed a rose"

Pardoner's Tale and Prologue

- 230 "Now kepe you from the whyte and fro the reed"

The Wife of Bath's Prologue

- 540 "That made his face ful of ten reed and hoot"

The Clerk's Tale

- 317 "That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking"

The Squires Tale

- 115 "With both her wings, til the rede blood"

The Frees Tale

- 85 "An hat upon his hed with fringes blak"

The Frankelengas Tale

120 "Some times a vyne, and grapes whyte and rede"  
The Secound Hours Tale

313 "Men shoulde him burnen in a fyre as rede"  
315 "Burne his right in a bath of flam bes rede"

The Canois Geomaris Tale

174 "And when my colour was both-fresh & rede"  
342 "For shame of him my chekes wexen rede"  
345 "For rednesse have I noon, right well I knowe"

The Mancipis Tale

20 "This cook that was ful pale and nothing rede"

The Parsons Tale

1124 "in de partinge of his hoses in whyt and rede"  
1426 "or blak and rede"

House of Fame

135 "And also on her heed, pardie. His rose-garland whyte & rede"  
-1079 "Be hit clothed rede or blak"  
1935 "Was made of twigges, fulwe, rede"

Legend of Good Women

112 "Then love I most these floures whyte and rede"  
112 "A gayn the sounne, that roos as rede as rose"  
28 "In with a fret of rede rose-leves"  
235 "Two fyry darles, as the glades rede"  
533 "And Mars gaf to his coroun rede, pardie"  
535 "There-with this quene wex red for shame a lyte"

Legend of Dido

1199 "With sadel rede" x x x

Legend of Ariadne

1893 "Be red for shame! now I thy lyf beginne"

Legend of Hypermnestra

2589 "And red Mars was, that tyme of the yere"

## In A. B. C

- 87 "Moussis, that saugh the bush with flammes rede"  
The Book of the Duchesse
- 886 "Soth to seyn, hit was not rede" 955 "Right whyte  
215- "Ful of te & wex both-pale & red" hands and nayles rede  
The Complaynt of Mars
- 2 Lo! Venus risen among you rowes rede!
- 37 "Whan Phebus, with his fyry torches rede"  
The Parlement of Foules.
- 186 "With flouris whyte, blewe, yelowc and rede"
- 189 "With fuines rede and scales silver brighte."
- 1112 "Right as the fresche, rede rose newe"
- 383 "The turtel seyde, and wex for shame al red."  
Amelida and Arcite
- 1 "Thou fere god of armes, Mars the rede"
- 106 "Not I not whether in whyte, rede, or grene"  
Troilus and Criseyde
- 158 "And swote smellen flouris whyte and rede"
- 867 "For he was hit, and wex al red for shame"
- 8-61 "That fresche flouris, blewe, and whyte and rede"
- 538 "And well the hollir been the gledes rede"
- 645 "For which he wex a litel red for shame"
- 652 "For of his owene thought she wex al red"
- 1255 "May, may, quoo she, and wex as red as rose!"
- 82 "But Lord, as he wex soheinliche red"
- 94 "Goodly abayat, and now his hewes rede"
- 956 "But Lord, as she wex soheinliche red"
- 1384 "They shal forgo the whyte and eke the rede"
- 1570 "With the sheti, and wex for shame al red"
- 1633 "For alas newe as red as every fyr"
- 18-925 "And with that word he gan to wex red"

Some of Chaucer's Tales, and many of the shorter poems have no color in them.

The Tale of Melibens, The Sounour's Tale, and several of the prologues are colorless. Of the shorter poems, The Complaynt unto Pitee, Chaucer's Words unto Adam, Merciless Beaute, Balade to Rosamonde, Truth, Gentilesse, Lark of Stedfastnesse, Lenvoy to Scogan, Lenvoy to Bukton, The Complaynt of Venus, Proverbs of Chaucer, An Amorous Complaynt, A Balade of Complaynt, Balade Chaucer Made, Complaint to my Mortal For and Complaint to My Lode-Stere, are all colorless - only once in the Astrolabe is color referred to. Once a 'white star' is spoken of. On the other hand some poems are replete with color. The Knights Tale takes the lead with fifty seven color references and Troilus Criseyde follows with fifty-six. The Legend of Good Women has thirty-one. These three are the brightest in color of all Chaucer's poems. The Knights Tale uses red thirteen times, green, fourteen, and yellow, six. In Troilus and Criseyde, red is used fourteen times and green twelve. After examining all Chaucer's references to color I am lead to think that our ancestors of the Chaucerian period regarded color much as we do - perhaps made freer use of bright colors in articles of dress - at least the men did. Chaucer at least was not color blind in any respect. To conclude, I give a tabulated statement of all the references to color in his works.





