A Corpus-Stylistic Analysis of Color Symbolism in Sidhwa's *Water*

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Abstract

This non-empirical corpus stylistic study examines the use of colors and their significance in supporting the theme in Sidhwa's *Water* (2006). The study has explored the way colors are used symbolically in the novel along with their frequency, regularities and collocations. Corpus stylistics is used as a method of analysis of the text. The findings are based on the qualitative part, supplied by textual analysis, whereas AntConc software provided and analyzed quantitative data, revealing the frequency and regularities in the use of particular color words. The key arguments reveal that the white color (used 79 times) symbolizes the theme of widowhood to give voice to 'husbandless' women living on the margin of society. The second most used color, red (40 times), accounts for Indian culture, marriage and gods. The blue (19 times) color symbolizes freedom, intuition, calmness or the color of open spaces, whereas the black (18 times) is associated with death, patriarchy, power and authority. The study will aid in the understanding of themes, characteristics, and the author's style of using colors to create meaning in *Water*.

***Keywords*:** Corpus stylistics, color symbolism, frequency, collocation, *Water*

Introduction

Symbols are an important and integral part of what makes literature a great piece of writing. Symbolism as an art movement emerged in the literary field in the late 19th century. Wang (2011) defines symbolism as representing things through symbols or attributing symbolic associations to objects, events, or relationships. Among different symbols, the role of color symbolism and terms is rather significant in fiction. Woolf (1985) stresses the painterly quality of the writers by reflecting that all great writers are great colorists. According to her, "painting and writing have much in common; the novelist wants readers to see. It is a very complex business, the mixing and marrying of words that goes on, probably unconsciously, in the author's mind to feed the reader's eye" (Woolf, 1985, p. 241). Color words in literature inevitably gravitate towards symbolic associations which are sensitive mediums for expressing both individual and universal experiences. According to Zettl (2004), a color can serve as a powerful visual element that acts as a code that provides a deeper level of meaning to those who can interpret the signs. It is through color terms that the authors depict nature, create their protagonists, and spotlight national, religious, or individual preferences. Hence, color symbolism establishes links between human activity, emotions, mood and psychological state. The revolving lights and colors play on the reader's sensibility like light waves on the retina, and characters come to be known by their auras. The colors used symbolically give us great insight into the characters and their lives. It symbolizes some human values, vital to the progression of the theme. In short, the experience of color relations is more than an optical sensation, a complex experience hard to put into words, a stimulus and a revelation.

Colors are an integral part of Sidhwa's novel Water. The use of a wide spectrum of colors by the author makes the novel interesting for the readers. Sidhwa paints the events in the novel with pure colors (not shades) to make the picture visual and bright. These colors impact readers' sensibility and characters in the novel come to be known by their auras. Colors give insight into, and explain the life of the characters. These numerous colors bring forth different aspects that can be studied and interpreted. This article discusses the use of colors in the Water as symbols. The study explores the colors like white, blue, red, and black quantitatively as well as qualitatively using the corpus-stylistics method of analysis. In recent years, the study of corpus-stylistics has become very prominent. It is adopted in various fields ranging from media and applied linguistics to literary studies. According to Semino & Short (2004), corpus stylistics has recently been introduced as a branch of stylistics and has been used by several critics in various domains. Corpus-based stylistics is recent, and a new field of research that has emerged after the use of corpus linguistic tools in literary stylistics.

Keeping the significance of color symbolism and corpus stylistics in mind, the study analyzes the use of colors in the novel, Water. It aims to recognize the situations in which the color words are mentioned, their symbolic meaning, frequency and regularities. Furthermore,

this study will help readers decode colors and the hidden meanings behind them. Besides, it helps readers analyze the characters of the novel.

Literature Review

Several different techniques, terminologies and taxonomies are used in the field of corpus stylistics. These techniques assist literary critics in analyzing, categorizing, and identifying various trends and themes in literary texts. As a result, in recent years, corpus stylistics as a method of analyzing literary text has grown in prominence. Under this heading, we will glance at the methods and terminologies of corpus stylistics and the previous studies that have practically inculcated these methods in the research.

Corpus Stylistics: An Overview

Style is the way of using language. The notion of style is fundamentally based on making comparisons across genres, authors and texts. For measuring style or stylistic variation across any text, there has emerged a recent field termed as 'Corpus Stylistics'. Mahlberg (2013) defines it as: "the application of corpus methods to analyze texts by combining linguistic descriptions with literary appreciations" (p. 05). Hence, corpus stylistics is based on the combination of two disciplines: literary stylistics and corpus linguistics. It has got much impetus where literary style is being studied with the aid of corpora and computational advances made in the relevant fields. Corpus literary stylistics can be both quantitative as well as qualitative in nature. Semino & Short (2004) also assert that doing corpus-based work is highly quantitative, but this does not mean that qualitative analysis should be excluded. On the contrary, if both are combined, they help to reach a higher degree of understanding of literary works or any other selected data. Corpus stylistic analysis is a relatively objective methodological procedure that is guided by a relatively subjective process of interpretation (Carter, 2015).

The subject of stylistics has gained a lot of attention recently. It is adopted in various fields ranging from media, applied linguistics to literary studies. It included techniques and models that allow the researcher to thoroughly understand the patterns of meaning and structure in the text and objectively apprehend the writer's perception. Stylistics is the linguistic study of the text in literary works. It is the study of the style of a text (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998). Similarly, Crystal (1969) describes stylistics as a systematic and scientific study of intra-language variations. It helps researchers to clarify the author's perception of an object, person or ideology. Traditionally stylistics was very narrow and just emphasized upon studying text about the style. Recently, the introduction of corpus-based stylistics has brought a paradigm shift by widening the scope of stylistics. Corpus can be defined as a "collection of more than one text" (Wislon, 20021, p. 29). Corpus is the body of the text in a

soft or electronic form that is readable in the software. The study of the corpus with the principles of stylistics gave rise to a new and unique model of research called corpus stylistics.

According to Semino & Short (2004), corpus stylistics has recently been introduced as a branch of stylistics and has been used by several critics in various domains. Corpus-based stylistics is recent, and a new field of research emerged after the use of corpus linguistic tools in stylistics. Critics of stylistics believe that meaning lies in the text. According to Biber and Conard (1999), corpus stylistics is an extension of the traditional linguistic-based grammatical and lexical stylistics. They further explain that corpus study enables literary researchers to investigate the language of literary texts. Thus, corpus-based literary stylistics enables the researcher to get pure data through scientific and objective means rather than just subjective data arising from text interpretations. It also increases the reliability of the research in the literature. Sinclair (2004) while defining corpus stylistics, states that it shows patterns of frequencies, repetition and clusters of words in the text that are associated with a particular theme.

Collocation

Exploration of collocation is the descriptive tool of the study. Collocation is defined as "the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (textual) context" (Hoey, 1991, p. 6). The idea of collocation at the baseline pertains to the field of linguistics where the relation of two words is studied. Khellmer (1991) argues that there is no single keyword but words function in larger phraseological units that are sometimes fixed and at other times variable. In corpus studies, collocation is the co-occurrence of words that is mostly non-random. While characterizing collocation, Wijitsopon (2013) says that it is "greater than random probability in a textual context" (p. 45). The collocation of two words can be simply understood by the critic by looking at the frequency of that collocation. If two words are collocated more than once or twice, it gives a hint of non-random collocation.

Two collocated words combine to form the meaning or aid the style that a single word is unable to do. Collocation can be syntactic or lexical. This combination of relations of words involves multiple parameters. Most importantly collocation is the measure of the association of words by choice. This research involves lexical collocation. Lexical collocation allows a critic to find out and study the relationships between lexical items in a corpus. This also helps to understand the way words are to creating a theme and meaning. However, it is difficult to define which collocations are significant in the corpus. According to Wijitsopon (2013), narrowing down the elements of the study and particularizing the keyword can make way for an effective search of collocation and their interpretation in text. In this study, collocation is related to the keywords that are colors. In this study collocation and their frequency are

extracted using AntConc software. Each collocation is separately discussed as it symbolizes a different meaning.

Frequency

Frequency is the defining and most important feature of corpus stylistics. In corpus stylistics frequency is the number of times a word or collocation of words appears in the corpus under study. According to Bennet (2010), frequency is the count of occurrences of a word. A critic understands the themes, patterns and meaning of the text by looking at the frequency. The higher the frequency of a word, the more significant it becomes in the corpus. This study will also draw results from the frequency of the keywords and collocations.

Color Symbolism

The study analyzes and decodes the symbolic meaning of the colors found through a corpus-based stylistics approach. Thus, the study of color symbolism depends upon the study of the corpus. The traditional method of exploring color symbolism was just studying the color and its association with symbols e.g., an association of red with the danger of love. But this corpus-based study of color symbolism objectively analyzes not only color symbolism but collocation and frequency as well. Thus, it is a holistic approach to studying color symbolism.

Any color, object or thing has unlimited meanings. When someone looks at the red rose he may only think about plants or petals. But the red rose is not just limited to being a part of the plant. It may also create thoughts of romance, love and Valentine's Day and many similar things in our minds. This is what we call the symbolic meaning of a rose. Symbolism is a literary device that uses objects, marks, locations, ideas, colors and many other elements to represent a meaning that does not lie in the word itself. According to Tauke (1994) study of symbolism is considered a connotative study of the text. This study decodes the colors and tries to find their meaning. The Corpus-based approach is used to study the key colors, their collocation and frequency in Sidhwa's Water.

All great writers are great colorists (Stewart, 1985). Post-impressionist movement introduced colors and paintings to literature. According to Stewart, Fry being a champion of the post-impressionist movement stated that literature should parallel painting. This marks the beginning of the study of colors in literature. Colors are the most symbolic of all the symbols (Hunt & Chenciner, 2006). Colors can move in, out, on, above, below and between to specify the meaning they carry. The use of color symbolism helps authors to express their opinion without using words and to enhance their style. Contrary colors help readers to

correlate the ideas and themes of the characters into themselves (Deckeed & Lazarus, 2015). Decoding colors therefore helps the readers to interpret text and understand it from the perspective of the author.

Previous Studies

In just a few years, many research projects have used corpus stylistic models. This shows growing prominence and popularity in this area of research. It is regarded by many primarily as a methodology that can be used in many branches of linguistics. For example, researchers have successfully combined Corpus stylistics tools with various theoretical approaches in investigating socio-political, cultural, and other aspects of language as reflected in literary works (Sotillo, 2022).

Nurcahyu (2007) stylistically analyzes symbols in Golding's Lord of Flies. According to him, symbols play an important role in the construction of meaning. Symbols that are frequently used in the study refer to the theme of the novel. His qualitative analysis includes objects, characters and colors as symbolic. According to him, there are many symbols like fire, Piggy's glasses, a conch shell, a rock, etc. All these symbols refer to the theme of the novel which is human's inherent capacity for evil. Nurcahyu's (2007) study is descriptive as he doesn't address the frequency and collocations of the symbols in the selected corpus.

Samkanashvili (2013) studies color symbolism in Fitzgerald's Great Gatsby from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. This mixed method study relates the frequency of colors in various chapters with the story of the same chapters to relate the number of times a color is used and the meaning that the same color conveys. The researcher not only studies key colors but also brings shades and collocation into the study. The colors like Green (used 19 times), golden (used 13 times), white (49 times), blue (21times) and black (13 times) are used to develop the theme and the characteristics of the characters. The study concludes that each color in Great Gatsby creates a canvas in the mind of the reader and symbolizes a character, human value or theme of the novel.

Ali et al. (2020) studies patriarchal adjectives in the corpus of Sidhwa's The Bride using AntConc. They state that the corpus-based study of adjectives helps in understanding and interpreting the themes in the text and decoding the author's ideology. The study of the corpus of The Bride suggests that adjectives like embarrassed, bare, black, silent, tired and weak are frequently used for the female characters. The study also focuses on the frequency of these adjectives and the woman characters to whom these adjectives address. The use of these patriarchal and derogatory adjectives asserts the theme of women's oppression, melancholy and fragmentation in Sidhwa's The Bride. Wijitsopon (2013) in his corpus stylistics study of Jane Austin's six novels focuses on the style of the author. He brings into the study articles, nouns, adjectives and phrases that contribute to the peculiar style of Austin.

In his study, Wijitsopon (2013) does not consider "the" as a keyword even though it is the most used by Austin in his works. According to him "the" is an article and is mostly found in the writings of every writer more than any other word therefore there is neither significance nor does it refer to a hidden meaning. Similarly, he considers "very" as a keyword in Austin's writing on the pretext that Austin uses it more than other writers.

Asif et al. (2021) conducted a corpus-based study of the novel, 'Pride and Prejudice' by using the Cirrus tool. A mixed-method approach was applied to find out the significant characters and themes in the novel. The findings reflected that the Cirrus tool can quickly extract 59 words from the novel, the most frequent 59 words/themes were found in Voyant Tools from the complex text. The corpus of the text of the novel represented the main characters and the themes. Mansoor et al. (2021) studied Urdu words in the corpus of Sidhwa's Crow Eaters (1978) and Water (2006). Researchers divide the Urdu nouns into broader categories of religion, culture, music, politics and clothing. According to the study in Sidhwa's Water, there are 8 Urdu nouns in the category of religion and all are related to Hinduism. Similarly, 9 Urdu nouns are cultural, 2 Urdu nouns are political, 5 Urdu nouns are related to clothing and no noun in the category of music. The use of Urdu nouns in Water (the latest work of Sidhwa) is then compared to the Urdu nouns in Crow Eater (the earliest work of Sidhwa). Based on this comparison, researchers conclude that Sidhwa has maintained her writing skills for a 28-year timespan. She has largely used similar Urdu nouns belonging to identical categories in two different novels. The study also suggests that by using Urdu words Sidhwa gives a South Asian touch to the English language by making it indigenized.

The review of the previous studies suggests that the corpus-based stylistic approach has been used by several critics in various ways. Most corpus-based studies tend toward searching and analyzing specific parts of speech and words in each corpus. In addition, symbolism has also been analyzed in different works. These studies used a traditional way of extracting the symbol and decoding its meaning. But this paper converges both color symbolism and corpus stylistics. It is descriptive and qualitative as it interprets hidden meanings of colors as well as quantitative and numerical when it discusses the number of times color words is used. Thus, this study uses the corpus-based stylistics technique to study the color patterns and color symbolism in Sidhwa's *Water.*

Research Methodology

The current study employs a non-empirical research approach in which the data is based on the analysis and interpretation of the literary text to present the major findings of the research. The study uses the text of Water (2006) for analysis through corpus stylistic techniques. Morrow and Brown (1994) describe non-empirical research as text-based research. Further, Mouton (2001) reflects that non-empirical research is based on the theory

that starts with its application and ends with results controlled by the theory. The present study pertains to the application of corpus techniques using computer software AntConc (version 4.0.5) developed by Laurence Anthony, to direct the results of color symbolism. Corpus stylistics is the application of corpus methods to analyze texts by combining linguistic descriptions with literary appreciations (Mahlberg, 2012). Hence, corpus stylistics is based on the combination of two disciplines: literary stylistics and corpus linguistics. It has got much impetus where literary style is being studied with the aid of corpora and computational advances made in the relevant fields. In this context, corpus construction is an important undertaking that requires access to large amounts of different types of texts in electronic format (Sotillo, 2022).

Corpus literary stylistics can be both quantitative as well as qualitative in nature. Semino and Short (2004) also assert that doing corpus-based work is highly quantitative, but this matter of fact does not mean that qualitative analysis should be excluded. On the contrary, if both are combined, they help to reach a higher degree of understanding of literary works or any other selected data. Corpus stylistic analysis is a relatively objective methodological procedure that is guided by a relatively subjective process of interpretation (Carter, 2015). Hence the analysis and presentation of the data in this paper are both qualitative and quantitative. On the one hand, the study tried to reveal symbolic meanings of color words, and on the other hand, it attempted to find regularity and frequency that is how often each color word and collocation are used. The qualitative part was based on textual analysis, carried through close, in-depth reading to analyze the color symbols, whereas, quantitative data was collected through AntConc software, revealing the frequency and regularities in the use of particular color words.

In addition, the current study is corpus-based and corpus-driven analyses. It differs from corpus-assisted analysis, in which text is treated analytically as a corpus in its own right. The analysis of the text of Sidhwa's Water is based on the comparison between the target corpus and a reference corpus. For corpus-driven analysis, this study follows the procedure of analyzing the style propagated by Shepherd and Sardinha in 2013. Shepherd and Sardinha (2013) call this type of corpus analysis intertextual analysis. According to them, corpus stylistic studies should explain the form of certain content that may express particular, unusual and deviant patterns within text. It is the method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language. (Shepherd & Sardinha, 2013).

This research explains how the use of colors in the text gives meaning and generates themes that are otherwise hidden from the eyes of the reader as guided by Shepherd and Sardinha (2013). In this process, different descriptive tools are used. Firstly, four color words are randomly selected for the study; white, blue, red, and black. Secondly, collocation is the juxtaposition of one word with another word in the text. Collocation will aid in the

understanding of the context in which key color words are used. Thirdly, the frequency describes the use of key color words and collocation in numbers. It explains how often the color words are used in the plot. Fourthly, symbolism is the hidden meaning that color or its collocation represents. Besides, the dispersion of the colors in the plot of the novel is also discussed. Results achieved through these descriptive tools are simplified in the tables and concordance lists given in the discussion section.

Results and Discussion

Bowker and Pearson (2002) define the word corpus as "a large collection of authentic texts that have been gathered in electronic form according to a specific set of criteria" (p. 9). Simply, the corpus is a collection of texts stored in a computer-readable file according to the criteria and rules of corpus building. The corpus of the current study consists of 55700 words of the novel Water. In that corpus four color words (White, Red, Blue and Black) were searched, identified and categorized using AntConc. Four primary colors are randomly selected for the analysis. Selected colors are not necessarily words of high frequency but words of lexical significance. Hence these color words are not always the most frequent word in the corpus. Color words are important as they aid in the understanding of the meaning of the text.

In this study, colors are the keywords. Colors fall in all three categories of keywords mentioned by Scott and Tribble (2006). Firstly, they are proper nouns. Secondly, they are considered important by the critics as they symbolize hidden meaning and finally, they occur in unusual (high and low) frequencies and are significant to the meaning and style of the novel. This study revolves around the analysis of color patterns and their symbolic meaning. Colors of unusually high as well as unusually low frequencies are both considered. Each color is discussed from the perspective of symbolic meaning, collocation, frequency, and association with the characters. The symbolic study of each color decodes the hidden meaning while collocation aids in the understanding of the context and the object with which the color is associated. Frequency shows the significance of color in the novel and how frequently it is used in the plot by the author. Lastly, colors are associated with characters. This association of colors with characters helps in analyzing and understanding the characters of the novel.

Color Word Application in the Novel, 'Water'

Table 1

Analysis of Color Word White

Frequency	Collocations	Meaning	Character/ Objects Association
12	White sari/ saris	Innocence, purity, asexuality, emptiness, hollowness of widows	Chuyia, Kalyani, Madhumati, Ashram
6	White dhoti	Power, dominance, hypocrisy	Somnath, HiraLal, Narayan, Gandhi,
5	White cloth	Death, mourning, purity	HiraLal, Shakuntala, Gandhi's followers
3	White stone	Purity, Innocence	Shakuntala
3	White statue/s	Worshipping/ religious faiths	Shakuntala
2	White Kurta	Power, dominance	Dwarkanath
2	White length	Innocence, purity, asexuality, emptiness, hollowness of widows	Chuyia
2	White sheet	Theme of widowhood	Chuyia
2	White smoke	Hopes to start a new life	River Ganges in the context of Narayan and Kalyani's love
2	White goats	Emptiness/ colorlessness in widows' lives	Chuyia
2	White temples	Religious faiths, purity	Temple
2	White dots	Innocence, purity	Chuyia
1	White blouse	Hollowness	Chuyia
1	White brush	Power, dominance	Gandhi

Figure 1

Frequency of color Word White in the Plot

DocTokens	Freq	NormFreq	Dispersion	Plot
55764	79	1416.685	0.829	
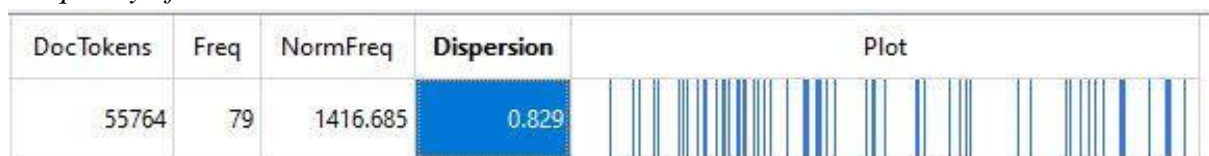
The color word white (79 times mentioned in the novel) is the most frequently used color with the highest dispersion in the plot of the novel. It is used in almost every chapter of the novel. The white word color is conventionally associated with purity, innocence and cleanliness (Bortoli & Maroto, 2001; Vaughan et al., 2005). With the help of the 'White' word color, the novel brings to light the age-old customs that marginalize and victimize women. The concordance list (given below) shows the most frequent collocation of the color word 'white' is 'white sari/ saris' that is used for the widow characters in the novel, hence representing the theme of widowhood. The protagonist of the story, 6 years old Chuyia, a playful daughter of a Brahmin was married to a 44-year-old, HiraLal. For Chuyia, marriage was not more than an exciting offer of new clothes, delicacies and an opportunity to be the centre of attention. After two years of her marriage, her husband died, and the carefree little girl was surrounded by the constant stench of funeral pyres. She was secluded and was transferred to an 'Ashram' (a place for widows to live). Her head was shorn as a trademark of her ill fate and was directed to wear only white cloth, not colorful or stitched.

In this context, the color word collocation 'White sari/ saris' represents multiple aspects of the widows' lives: purity, innocence, asexuality and hollowness. This custom of wearing a white unstitched sari is an act to deprive widows of their womanly charms. As the textual lines reveal, "The barber cut her hair, black hair littered Chuyia's bare shoulder and her white sari; with her white sari and bald yellow head, she was a very different child" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 25).

Figure 2

Concordance list of Color Word White

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
s turmeric. It cools the head," she said. With her	white	sari and bald, yellow head, Chuyia was a very
offered. She untied the knot at the corner of her	white	sari and took out a dried chapati. She gave
fifty-odd years, and though she wore the same drab	white	sari as the other widows and her grey hair
sweetly. She waddled to her bed and pulled a new	white	sari out from under her pillow. She held it
boat with her back to Gulabi. She was swaddled in	white,	and just a sliver of brow and the tip
great spread of the banyan. Her head was draped in	white,	and she was framed by the golden leaves strewn
the river continued all around them. A body wrapped in	white	and tied to the litter at the ankles and
school. As she watered the holy basil bushes, Somnath, in	white	dhoti and shirt, armed with his basket of sacred
The skinny, dark old man was naked except for the	white	dhoti covering his hips and thighs. His mustache was
round-eyed at the splendid man. He wore a sparkling	white	dhoti with long, graceful pleats in front, and a
on a low table. She covered her head with a	white	cloth and, adjusting the oil lamp, began to read.
Gandhi stood up. His followers, in white homespun khaddar and	white	cloth caps, hustled him onto the dilapidated green train,
perfectly made little body. "Here," she said, holding out a	white	length of homespun cloth. "From now on you will
she had thought were men. She had presumed that the	white	length of cloth they were wrapped in was a
ribbon, except for the temple fires it reflected. Wisps of	white	smoke curled up against the black, star-pricked sky.

Since white is taken as the symbol of purity and cleanliness, it reflects how widows are secluded through this color as they are considered 'sexually threatening' hence the oppressive constraints would help them save their sexuality and make them pure and clean.

Sidhwa uses the color word 'white' to focus more on the widows' sexuality in a variety of ways. She has shown that a widow's body is a space in which the contradictory meanings of her sexuality are exploited for the convenience of a patriarchal society. On one hand, the white sari is making the widows asexual; at the same time, we can see how the widows' sexuality is abused. Sidhwa criticizes the hypocritical male-dominated society where on the one hand they want to save widows' purity and on the other hand, they are polluting their sexuality. We can see in the novel the sexual victimization of the widow characters as the hypocritical desire of Rabindranath's father is indiscriminately interested in widows of all ages and physical appearances. Madhumati suffers after her husband's death as she was raped by her brother-in-law for a week, "shorn and beaten into the wilderness and discarded" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 70). Kalyani and Chuyia's rape events are also metaphorical presentations of the pollution of purity.

'White sari' color collocation also symbolically shows the emptiness and hollowness of the widows' lives as they were not permitted to wear ornaments and colorful saris. They also must shave their heads, hence being deprived of their feminine charms and beauty. As in the novel, on the eve of Holi, the festival of color, Narayan asked Kalyani if she did not need to wear white all the time. It shows that widows' lives are deprived of all colors, charms and happiness.

The second most collocated word with white is 'white dhoti' (appeared six times) which is used for male characters in the novel. Here, the white color collocation of dhoti is symbolizing the power and authority of the male-dominated society that could be seen to exert different forms of domination over those being subordinated. At one point, 'white dhoti' is used for Narayan as, "He wore a sparkling white dhoti with long, graceful pleats in front and a white shirt. He had heavy artfully arched eyebrows; his strong features were set off by a close-cropped mustache" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 61). At other points, the color collocation, 'white dhoti' is used for Somnath and HiraLal, reflecting patriarchal predicaments and oppressive constraints imposed on Indian women, specifically Hindu widows where all the decision-making powers go to males.

Another collocation of white color is 'White cloth' (used 5 times) which symbolically reflects the idea of death or mourning. Firstly, 'white cloth' is used in the context of HiraLal's death as, "Chuyia watched two men enter the ghat, carrying HiraLal's body. His body was wrapped in a white cloth, but his face was exposed" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 23). At another point, 'white cloth' is used in the context of widowhood where widows are supposed to wear white clothes as a sign of mourning the death of their husbands. When Shakuntala's husband died, "Her grief was compounded by her ill-treatment at the hands of her in-laws. Her head was shaved to remove sin and pollution. She was stripped of all her possessions and could cover her body with only a piece of white cloth" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 78).

Another collocation of the color word white is 'white smoke', used twice for the river Ganges, which symbolizes life or hope to start a new life. In the novel, the river is also presented as a background when the love between Narayan and Kalyani flourishes, the river seems to be calm and beautiful as "the river was a dark ribbon, wisps of white smoke curled up against the black" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 109). Here, the white color symbolizes Kalyani's hopes to start a new life with Narayan, but her dreams were shattered as Seth Dwarkanath, Narayan's father exploited her sexually.

Conclusively, the white color word is used in the novel, symbolizing the theme of widowhood to give voices to 'husbandless' women living on the margin of society. The collocation of the color 'White sari' reflects how widows are marginalized and victimized by cruel violent practices. Another collocated word, 'white dhoti' symbolizes the power and dominance of male characters in decision-making.

Table 2

Analysis of Color Word Red

Frequency	Collocations	Meaning	Character/ Objects Association
9	Red paste	A married woman (Sindoor, kum-kum)	Chuyia, Kalyani, Bhagya
4	Red glass	Wine, lust	Seth Bhupindernath
4	Red glass bangles	Marriage	Chuyia, Shakuntala
4	Red face	Anger	Madhumati,
3	Red blouse	Sex	Chuyia, Gulabi
3	Red sari	Marriage	Chuyia
2	Red tikka/mark	Joy, Good omen	Shakuntala, Chuyia
1	Red flower	Love	Kalyani
1	Red light	Danger	Narayan
1	Red earth	Sorrow, worries	Chuyia

Figure 3

Frequency of Color Word Red in the Plot

DocTokens	Freq	NormFreq	Dispersion	Plot
55764	40	717.309	0.753	

Red is another primary color that is used ingeniously in the novel in several shades and collocations. According to Tauke (1994), the red color represents love, sex, and joy. He further reflects that red is also the color of revolution, blood, and marriage in Eastern culture. Red is also the color of femininity and represents women's presence. Hiler (1946) categorizes pink and red as feminine colors as they are mostly liked by females, simultaneously red highlights both love and romance and its opposite danger and war as well. Ryan (1976) considers red the most ambiguous color. Red is also the color of the dying day as it augurs the arrival of night. Red has the longest wavelength among all the other colors; therefore, it lasts longer and can be seen from a large distance. All these attributes of red make it a complex and ambiguous color.

In Water, the red color word is used 40 times in the plot. It is the second most used color word in the novel after white. The color word red is mostly used at the beginning and the end of the novel as noticed in Figure 3. The higher frequency of red can be rationalized in two ways. Firstly, Water has multiple female characters and the theme touches on issues of women. In this case, Hiler (1946) states that red, being a feminine color, accounts for women. Therefore, to highlight the quantitative dominance of women, red is mostly used in the novel. Besides, Water underlines marriage, widowhood, love and sex as the major themes. Chuyia's marriage, Kalyani's and Narayan's love, Gulabi's sex, and the ashram as a haven for widows are the points of discussion in the novel. The red color is mostly correlated with the concepts already mentioned. In reference to Indian culture, red color is used by brides in their dresses, bangles and sindoor. Thus, red staunchly symbolizes marriage. Besides that, red is also the color of Indian god's like Durga Mata. So, the higher frequency of the word red in the novel accounts for Indian culture, marriage and gods.

Figure 4

Concordance List of Color Word Red

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
the day she was born, staring at the vibrant little	red-	and-blue heap her clothes made. The woman steered
gold and silver tinsel, fluffed out in a richly embossed,	red-	and-gold brocade sari with a wide beaded fringe.
squeezed Chuyia's supple hands in theirs to push tight	red-	and-green glass marriage bangles onto her wrists. Chuyia
goddess of childbirth Shiva a major Indian god sindoor the	red	paste applied along the part of a married woman'
the sindoor (red paste); also the ceremony in which the	red	paste is applied to a bride for the first
cotton kheer a rice sweet Krishna a god kum-kum	red	paste used on ceremonial occasions kurta a shirt laddoo
sari, the glittering gold pendant hanging on her forehead, the	red	and green bangles jangling on her wrists. As soon
you?" Rabindra asked, probing his friend's face in the	red	and orange light that radiated around them. Dots of
Chuyia's hand and, using a brick, violently smashed the	red	glass bangles that hung from her wrist. Then, methodically,
a reddish glow to the room; it came from a	red	glass lamp that stood on a table next to
over their heads. The earth of the dirt road was	red.	The cloud of roseate dust they left in their
grew rigid with anger, and her face flushed a dusky	red.	Who was Madhumati to deny her friend her marriage,
Chuyia reluctantly rolled over to face Shakuntala. Her eyes were	red	and "I won't ask about Mitthu," Shakuntala said.
Karmi Ghat name of a particular ghat katha paste a	red	betel-nut paste, which is applied to the fresh
his shoulder. Struck by the vibrant colours of Chuyia's	red	blouse and peacock-blue skirt, the man smiled at

A study of the concordance list indicates that 'red paste' collocation is used 9 times. The red paste is mostly used for *kumkum*or*s indoor* in Indian culture. It is the identity of a married woman in India. In the novel it is mentioned that "The groom applied the red sin door paste to the parting in the bride's hair and her forehead. As a Hindu woman, the bride would wear this symbol from the time of the Sindoor Daan until her death" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 19). The novel focuses on marriage as the major theme; therefore, the use of the word 'red paste' becomes very pertinent. Moreover, the red paste is also used in the context of male characters for Katha. Red Katha paste is considered a symbol of manhood and sexual vitality. But the 'red paste' collocation is only used once for Katha out of 9 hints. Furthermore, the 'red glass bangles' collocation is used 4 times. Red bangles in Indian culture are a symbol of marriage and happiness. As said in the novel, "red glass bangles circling her wrists and the smudged mark on her forehead, and he concluded that the girl was on her way to her bridegroom's village" (Water, 2006, p. 26). A female with red bangles is considered a married woman. Furthermore, after the death of HiraLal, Chuyia's red bangles are broken by the mother-in-law. Red bangles are used about Chuyia and Shakuntala whose marriages are part of the novel's plot.

The collocation 'red glass' is used 4 times. It is used in the context of red wine consumed by Seth Bhupindernath. The novel exposes Seth as a lecherous and lustful man. He sexually exploits widows like Kalyani and Chuyia. The red glass of wine symbolizes a lascivious man and his treacherous acts. In addition, a red flower is a symbol of happiness and marriage. It is only used once in the novel. Besides red rose, Jasmine is used 4 times, marigold 5 times and lotus 3 times. This is interesting to note that the most saleable and admired flower is the red rose, and it is only used once in the novel. *Water* is not a romantic story but a heart-wrenching tale of a woman's victimization, therefore red flower is only used once.

Table 3

Analysis of Color Word Blue

Frequency	Collocations	Meaning	Character/ Objects Association
1	Blue and White cotton cloth	Love, care	Kalyani
1	Blue and yellow scarf	Freedom, open spaces	Chuyia wearing on Holi festival
1	Blue cloth	Calmness, serenity	Krishna
1	Blue coverlet	Serenity	HiraLal
1	Blue Door	Freedom	Shakuntala
2	Blue evening sky	Open spaces	Narayan
2	Blue-grey waters of the Ganges	The contrast of life and death	Chuyia
2	Blue, the color of Krishna	Internal strength, freedom	Kalyani
2	Blue sheet	Calmness	HiraLal
2	Blue shirt/ skirt	Calmness	Narayan, Chuyia
1	Blue silk sari	Freedom	Kalyani

Figure 5

Frequency of Color Word Red in the Plot

DocTokens	Freq	NormFreq	Dispersion	Plot
55764	19	340.722	0.620	

Color word blue is used 19 times in the novel. It is mostly used (6 times) in Chapter 18 of the novel. The chapter addresses the meeting of Narayan and Kalyani near the ghats. The blue color word symbolizes freedom, intuition, calmness or the color of open spaces. Therefore, the collocation 'blue and yellow scarf' reflects the colors of the freedom in the life of widows as on the festival of colors, Holi, Chuyia was decked out as a little Krishna "Her Forehead decorated with a blue and yellow scarf tied around her head" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 145). Here the blue color is connected with Lord Krishna, whose blue color is emblematic of internal strength, calmness and serenity. As Krishna did not die but his skin turned blue while struggling with the poison; similarly, the widows' struggle with the oppressive

practices did not make them lose their lives but they turned blue as a sign of internal strength, calmness and serenity.

At another point, when Kalyani was hoping to start a new life with Narayan, Narayan asked her about the first color she would wear after these white saris. Kalyani answered, "Blue, the color of Krishna" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 144). In response, Narayan said that he would ask his mother to bring Kalyaniaa blue silk sari with a gold border. Here, the blue color represents the freedom that Kalyani wanted from the shackles of Ashram/ widowhood. Since, being a widow, she only had to wear white saris, whereas after meeting Narayan, she realized her internal strength, wanted to break the law and wished to start a new life with her lover. But her dreams were shattered by Narayan's father, and as a result, this forbidden love ended with Kalyani's suicide.

Figure 6

Concordance List of Color Word Blue

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
upstream. "Give me the towel." Chuyia handed over the frayed	blue-	and-white cotton cloth. Kalyani, keeping a firm grip
brows outlined by a series of white dots. The striped	blue-	and-yellow scarf tied around her head like a
high, and the sky and water were a matching pale	blue.	Bathed in sunlight and warmed by it, Kalyani soaped
question the attention it merited. "Blue?" she said, tentatively. "Yes,	blue.	The colour of Krishna," she said. "I'll tell
dark, filled with heavy mahogany furniture. The walls were painted	blue.	There was a reddish glow to the room; it
drenched the lemony marigold flowers at Krishna's feet. A	blue	cloth bundle hung from a nail on the wall
Hira Lal's foot stuck out from under a dirty	blue	coverlet, and the husk she spat out landed on
moment, she stood nervously on the balcony outside the battered	blue	door. The uncertainty passed. She slipped the key into
the horizon, to the pink clouds banked against the deepening-	blue	evening sky. But outside the orbit of his adoring
cart arrived at the bank of the Ganges River. The	blue-	grey waters, dappled by the shadows from overhanging trees,
she was born, staring at the vibrant little red-and-	blue	heap her clothes made. The woman steered her beneath
and, composing herself, gave the question the attention it merited. "	Blue?"	she said, tentatively. "Yes, blue. The colour of Krishna,"
and did not play with her. Chuyia quietly lifted the	blue	sheet and ran a finger down Hira Lal's
post to observe what was going on. Covered by the	blue	sheet, Hira Lal lay motionless, his eyes closed, his
head to look at Narayan. He wore a long, pale	blue	shirt over a white dhoti. His feet were bare.

The concordance list displays that another collocated word with blue is 'blue sheet' which symbolizes calmness. When HiraLal was ill and was breathing his last, he was taken to the banks of the Ganges. His body was covered with the blue sheet, symbolizing calmness or respite of his body as he was motionless and was not able to speak or move. As the textual lines reveal, "covered by the blue sheet, HiraLal lay motionless, his eyes closed, his head and shoulders cradled in the folds of Somnath's body" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 12). Hence, the blue sheet reflects the serenity and calmness of HiraLal when he was taking his last breaths.

Another collocation of blue is the shade of grey as 'Blue-grey waters of river Ganges'. Here, the blue-grey color gives a sense of separation or loss. The collocation is used when HiraLal was ill and was breathing his last; he was taken to the bank of the Ganges. His body was covered with a blue sheet, and he was motionless and was not able to speak or move.

The lines reflect, "The bullock cart arrived at the bank of the river Ganges; the blue-grey waters, dappled by the shadows from overhanging trees, lapped at the shore in tiny ripples" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 31). Here, the blue-grey waters of the river Ganges symbolize separation as HiraLal was taking his last breaths. Blue and grey colors make contrasting schemes, similarly, blue water is taken as a source of life, but when the grey shade is added, it reflects loss or death.

Table 4

Analysis of Color Word Black

Frequency	Collocations	Meaning	Character/ Objects Association
6	Black hair	Beauty, adulthood	Chuiya, Kunti, Gulabi,
2	Black stone	Lord Shiva	Pandit
2	Black door	Fear, exploitation	Chuiya
2	Black skin	Hard work, poverty	HiraLal, Narayan
1	Black Umbrella	Protection from powerful forces	Narayan
1	Black stain	Rebel, iconoclast	Narayan
1	Black paint	Oppression	HiraLal
1	Black star	Rebellion, resistance	Kalyani and Narayan
1	Black tongue	Bad, hated	Chuiya
1	Black sky	Tranquility, Romance, Secrecy	Kalyani

Figure 7

Frequency of Color Word Black in the Plot

DocTokens	Freq	NormFreq	Dispersion	Plot
55764	18	322.789	0.671	

In *Water,* black color is used only 18 times. In comparison to it, white is used 79 times, red 40 times and blue 19 times, just slightly higher in frequency than black. Besides, the color word black is used in the middle chapters and only once in the last chapter. There can be two possible justifications for it. Firstly, the novel addresses the issues of Indian women and their plight in a male-dominated society, therefore, the use of black color

becomes weird. Tauke (1994) argues that black is the color of males and patriarchy, therefore, the use of it becomes unfit in this context. Most of the major characters in the novel are women including the protagonist Chuyia, in this case, black color does not stand for them. Secondly, the characters in the novel are not powerful and authoritarian. Even politicians like Gandhi are represented as amicable and nonviolent. As mentioned in the novel, Gandhi is leading "Passive Resistance! How long can the British fight someone who refuses to fight? Gandhi is a modern-day prophet! A prophet for our times" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 63). The peaceful and no violent representation of characters even politicians further lead to lesser use of black color in the novel as black symbolizes power, authority and force.

Black is the opposite of white color. It has various connotative meanings in different cultures around the world. In Arabic and Islamic culture, black symbolizes mourning and death (McFadden, 1969). Most psychologists associate the black color with power and authority. According to Tauke (1994), black is associated with males therefore it represents patriarchy. So the association of black color with death, patriarchy, power and authority has scientific reasons as well. Black color absorbs all the spectrum of light and does not reflect any light. Thus, it becomes a symbol of authority that takes everything and returns nothing. In this regard, Hurly (2005) studies black children. According to him, for children black symbolizes night and fear. Therefore, psychologically, children tend towards bright colors rather than dark ones. In the novel *Water,* Sidhwa artfully used black to convey desired feelings and meaning.

Figure 8

Concordance List of Color Word Black

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
graceful pleats in front, and a white shirt. His thick	black	hair, gleaming with oil and slicked back, reached to
dangling earrings, a cuff bracelet and multiple ornaments in her	black	hair, which was oiled and pulled back from her
Kunti had brown skin the colour of creamed coffee and	black	cropped hair. She stooped to pick up Chuyia's
nursing a very sick man, bhaiya." His swarthy skin was	black	from the sun, and he wore a white sleeveless
her. The puppy licked Chuyia's face. He had short	black	fur with patches of white on his chest and
s skin was smooth, and her cropped hair was a	black	fuzz. "Sit with your back to me," instructed Shakuntala.
cropped her hair to within a centimetre of her scalp.	Black	hair littered Chuyia's bare shoulder and her white
mother led them past it to a door with worn	black	paint. The walls on either side were marked with
fate of his daughter. Hira Lal's mother pulled the	black	panels together and firmly shut the door of the
razor on his arm; it was soon covered with a	black	scum of hair. As the razor scraped across her
swaying with the movement of the carriage, lightly touched a	black	stain on his shirt pocket: "What's that?" Narayan
it reflected. Wisps of white smoke curled up against the	black,	star-pricked sky. A boat glided silently along the
the ghats, its east wall open to the river. A	black	stone lingam nestled among the gigantic roots of an
luck, wealth and prosperity (also called leechee a fruit lingam	black	stone representing the god Shiva's phallus; symbolizes Bhagyalakshmi)
upon her head. When there was nothing remaining but fine	black	stubble, the barber rubbed water all over Chuyia's

Analysis of the collocation through the concordance list brings forth 'black hair' as the most dominant cluster that is used 6 times in the novel. Black long and straight hair in Indian culture denotes beauty, adulthood and womanhood. Most characters in the novel are

females and the novel raises the issue of womanhood thus black hair becomes a symbol of it. Nowhere in the novel black hair is used for male characters. Besides, an association of black hair is mostly with the Chuyia who was young but unluckily being a widow her thick black hair was cut. As mentioned in the novel "With her bald yellow head, Chuyia was very different" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 39). Cutting off the black hair of widows is akin to disfiguring their beauty and making them look ugly. Therefore, the use of black hair with Chuyia highlights her adulthood and beauty but being a widow, adulthood and beauty is no more acceptable to a hypocritical and patriarchal society.

The Black stone that is used twice in the novel represents lingam, which is lord Shiva's idol in Hindu Culture. In addition, the black door is also used twice and both times in the context of Chuyia. The door symbolizes entrance or journey and black represents misfortune, thus, this collocation black door is the beginning of misfortune and intimation of the arrival of evil. Firstly, at the moment of Chuyia's marriage at the age of six, she was led to the house of in-laws through a black door. As mentioned in the novel "HiraLal's mother led them past it to a door with worn black paint" (Sidhwa, 2006, p. 34). Secondly, when Chuyia was deceitfully carried to Seth Bhupindernath's mansion by the Gulabi, she entered the black door. Chuyia was assaulted and raped there. Thus 'black door' symbolizes misfortune. Moreover, black skin is not used for female characters but for HiraLal, Narayan and the man who runs the bullock cart, all males. Black skin is the Indian identity; besides, it represents the hard and manual work of the males. In addition, the black sky symbolizes tranquility and love. It is used in association with the secret meetings of Narayan and Kalyani. Their secret romantic relationship is represented by the word black sky when everyone sleeps but Kalyani and Narayan make love.

Conclusion

This non-empirical corpus stylistic study has examined the role of colors in creating the theme of widowhood in Sidhwa's novel, '*Water*' (2006). The study has explored the way colors are used symbolically in the novel along with their frequency, regularities and collocations. Since the present study is about color symbolism, Corpus stylistics as a method of analyzing the text has guided this study. The findings are based on the qualitative part, supplied by textual analysis, carried through close, in-depth reading to analyze the color symbols, whereas, quantitative data was collected through AntConc software, revealing the frequency and regularities in the use of particular color words. The study has justified the use of colors and their connotative meanings in light of data achieved through corpus stylistic tools.

The key arguments based on the findings of this study reveal that the white color word, used 79 times in the novel symbolizes the theme of widowhood to give voices to 'husbandless' women living on the margin of society. The collocation of the color 'White sari' reflects how widows are marginalized and victimized by cruel violent practices. Another

connoted word, 'white dhoti' symbolizes the power and dominance of male characters in decision-making. The second most used color word, red (40 times), staunchly symbolizes marriage and the color of Indian gods as Durga Mata. Hence, the higher frequency of red in the novel accounts for Indian culture, marriage and gods. Moreover, red as a feminine color highlights the quantitative dominance of women in the novel. Besides, the red color supports the theme of marriage, widowhood, love and sex in *Water*. The blue color (used 19 times) word symbolizes freedom, intuition, calmness or the color of open spaces. The blue color is mostly used in the middle of the novel especially in chapter 20 in the background of Narayan and Kalyani's secret love. Black color word (18 times) is the least used in the novel. Black is associated with death, power and authority. In contrast, the characters in the novel are not powerful and authoritarian as most of them are women. Even politicians like Gandhi are represented as amicable and nonviolent. Therefore, the use of black color is ill-suited to the theme of the novel thus, least used.

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