SHADOWS AND SPECTRUMS: UNDERSTANDING LOSS IN "THE COLOUR COLLECTOR" THROUGH HUMAN AND AI PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: This article analyzes Roger McGough's poem *"The Colour Collector"* using the IMRAD format and explores two interpretations: one by the author (a university student) and one generated by artificial intelligence (AI). The poem, rich in color imagery and emotional symbolism, tells the story of a stranger who removes all the colors from the world. The AI interprets this act as a metaphor for depression and emotional loss, while the author sees it as a magical tale of misunderstood beauty. Through this dual analysis, the paper reveals how human emotion and machine logic can work together to deepen literary understanding. The biography of Roger McGough is also included to provide context.

Keywords: poetry analysis, artificial intelligence, emotion, symbolism, literary interpretation, dual perspective, IMRAD, color imagery.

Аннотация: В статье представлен анализ стихотворения Роджера МакГофа *«Сборщик красок»* в формате IMRAD и рассматриваются две интерпретации: авторская (университетский студент) и предложенная искусственным интеллектом (ИИ). Стихотворение, насыщенное образами цвета и эмоциональной символикой, рассказывает о незнакомце, который забирает из мира все краски. ИИ видит в этом метафору депрессии и утраты чувств, в то время как автор трактует произведение как волшебную историю о непонятой красоте. Двойной анализ показывает, как эмоции человека и логика машины могут взаимодействовать для более глубокого понимания поэзии. Также кратко представлена биография Роджера МакГофа для контекста.

Ключевые слова: анализ поэзии, искусственный интеллект, эмоции, символизм, литературная интерпретация, двойной взгляд, IMRAD, цветовая образность.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Roger McGoughning *"The Colour Collector"* sheri IMRAD uslubida tahlil qilinadi va ikki xil talqin keltiriladi: biri muallif (universitet talabasi) tomonidan, ikkinchisi esa sun'iy intellekt (AI) yordamida yaratilgan. Ranglar va hissiy ramzlarga boy bu sher dunyodagi barcha ranglarni yig'ib ketgan begona haqida hikoya qiladi. AI bu voqeani tushkunlik va hissiy yo'qotish ramzi sifatida ko'radi, muallif esa uni go'zallikni anglay olmaydigan sehrli syujet deb talqin qiladi. Bu ikki yo'nalishli tahlil she'rdagi manolarni chuqurroq anglashga yordam beradi. Kontekst uchun Roger McGoughning tarjimai holi ham keltirilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: sher tahlili, sun'iy intellekt, hissiyot, ramziylik, adabiy talqin, ikki qarash, IMRAD, rang obrazlari.

Introduction. Roger McGough is one of Britain's most celebrated contemporary poets, known for his witty, accessible, and emotionally resonant poetry. Born in Liverpool in 1937, McGough was a central figure in the "Liverpool Poets" movement during the 1960s, alongside Adrian Henri and Brian Patten. His work is often characterized by humor, irony, and childlike wonder, yet beneath the surface, deeper themes of loss, identity, and societal reflection can be found. In his poem *"The Colour Collector,"* McGough presents a surreal and sorrowful story of a stranger who arrives one morning and takes all the colors from the world. The poem uses sensory imagery to reflect on what is lost when vibrancy and joy disappear from life. This paper explores the poem through an IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results, Analysis, Discussion) structure, integrating two perspectives: my own interpretation and that of artificial intelligence (AI). This comparison offers a broader understanding of the poem's meaning and emotional impact.

Methods. To explore the poem's themes, I used a two-part method. First, I read the poem carefully and reflected on my personal emotional and symbolic interpretation. Second, I asked an AI language model (ChatGPT) to analyze the poem's structure, imagery, and potential themes. The AI provided a logical, structured view of the poem based on literary patterns and symbolic analysis. I then compared both perspectives, identifying where we agreed and where our interpretations diverged.

Results. The AI interpreted *"The Colour Collector"* as an allegory for emotional loss, depression, or the fading of joy from everyday life. It suggested that color in the poem represents liveliness and emotion, while the stranger may symbolize grief, trauma, or the passage of time. In contrast, I saw the poem as a magical, bittersweet fairy tale. To me, the "Colour Collector" is not a villain, but a lonely, misunderstood figure — perhaps an artist or a whimsical traveler — who collects beauty without realizing the sorrow he leaves behind. The poem felt like a dream interrupted: colorful and full of life at first, then suddenly muted, like the silence after laughter.

Analysis. The poem is filled with vivid imagery that appeals to the senses — "the goldenness of cornflakes," "the silverness of soup spoons," "the orangeness of oranges." These playful yet precise descriptions create a childlike, joyful tone. But this tone is quickly interrupted by the arrival of the stranger "dressed all in black and grey." The colors are taken away, one by one, until the world becomes shadowed and lifeless. The AI's interpretation focused on psychological and symbolic meaning: color as emotional energy, the stranger as depression, and the final "monochrome clown" as a metaphor for emotional emptiness. It highlighted how the structure and pacing of the poem enhance the sense of loss. I, however, imagined the monochrome clown — "Wizzo" — as a poetic figure who cries not only because the world has lost its colors, but because

he may be the Colour Collector himself. A misunderstood artist who takes beauty, perhaps to preserve it, not knowing he leaves sorrow in his wake. I felt the poem wasn't only about loss but also about the hidden sorrow behind creation, and how beauty sometimes demands a price.

Discussion. This dual approach — combining AI's structured literary analysis and my own emotional, imaginative reading — brought greater depth to my understanding of the poem. AI offered valuable insights into themes like grief and detachment, but it was my human connection that added a layer of storytelling, empathy, and wonder. This project was completed with the help of artificial intelligence, which assisted in identifying key literary devices and symbolic meanings. Yet, the final interpretation reflects my voice and imagination. While AI helped guide my thinking, it was my emotional reaction that shaped the heart of this paper. The inclusion of Roger McGough's poetic style — his ability to layer meaning beneath playful language — made this poem especially powerful. Knowing his background as both a humorist and a poet of serious reflection helped me understand how he could turn a simple tale about color into a meditation on emotional absence and artistic sensitivity.

Conclusion. Roger McGough's *"The Colour Collector"* is more than a charming narrative — it is a layered poem about what happens when joy and beauty vanish from the world. Whether interpreted as a metaphor for emotional numbness or a magical tale of misunderstood creativity, the poem leaves a lasting impression. By combining my personal interpretation with AI analysis, I explored both rational and imaginative approaches to poetry. This process reminded me that literature is not only about structure or symbolism but about feeling, imagination, and personal connection. Through this experience, I came to see that two interpretations can coexist — not in contradiction, but in complement — much like light and shadow within a single frame.

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