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Eulogizing Black in *Love's Labour's Lost*

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- 1 In his study of the parodic treatment of Petrarchan conventions in *Love's Labours' Lost*, Neal Goldstein claims that the often-quoted line on the beauty of black ("And therefore is she born to make black fair," IV.iii.252) is merely an example of Shakespeare's anti-Petrarchism:

Berowne's mockery is aimed, of course, at the Petrarchan notion of the ideal beloved, her golden hair loosed to the breeze. Even a skimming of the love poetry of the period will prove the point – Petrarch's Laura and Astrophil's Stella are golden-haired. And an examination of the many quattrocento renderings of the Virgin can only reinforce the notion.¹

- 2 Despite his accurate reading of stereotypical beauties in the Renaissance, Goldstein tends to actually "skim" through the seeming antithesis of black and fair in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. Berowne's eulogy of black in IV.iii represents one discourse on female beauty, a subject rousing varied debates among the characters who often voice opposite opinions on the interpretation of the polysemous word "fair". Beyond its initial connotations implying that a woman's outward appearance is pleasant to men's eyes, the term "fair" can sometimes allude to a person's white complexion or describe blonde hair, two main features of the Renaissance archetypal female beauty. In a play hinging upon constant reversals and challenges to poetical and rhetorical discourses on beauty, or more broadly fairness, one might wonder how to value and interpret the actual scope of Berowne's celebration of the fairness of black.

Fair vs. Black: Shakespeare's stereotypical beauties?

- 3 The binary opposition between black and fair, dark and light structuring Berowne's celebration of Rosaline's dark beauty might have sounded rather familiar to an Elizabethan audience insofar as it calls to mind several eulogies of blackness voiced in

Shakespeare's early comedies and tragedies. Many of the plays listed in Francis Meres' *Palladis Tamia*,² that can thus be dated before 1598, explore the chromatic dichotomy between black and white to varying degrees. In one of Shakespeare's first tragedies, *Titus Andronicus*, performed around 1594, these opposite colours are used to dramatize the immoral love of the black Moor Aaron and the fair Tamora, Queen of Goths and new wife to the Roman emperor. Aaron launches into a defence of blackness when the Nurse, bringing his newborn baby on stage, describes his and fair Tamora's son as "a joyless, dismal black, and sorrowful issue" (IV.ii.68). Outraged by these comments, Aaron denounces the duplicity of white people:

What, What, ye sanguine shallow-hearted boys,
Ye white-limed walls, ye alehouse painted signs!
Coal-black is better than another hue,
For all the water in the ocean
Can never turn the swan's black legs to white
Although she lave them hourly in the flood.
Titus Andronicus, IV.ii.99-105³

- 4 White is perceived here as the colour of corruption, cowardice and hypocrisy, whilst black symbolises truth and stability, encapsulated by the unchanging colour of the swan's legs. Although *Titus Andronicus* is not concerned with Petrarchism and even if devilish Aaron is not a character meant to arouse the spectator's sympathy and approval, his speech already foreshadows the chromatic readings and interpretations of black and white in *Love's Labour's Lost*.
- 5 *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, two other comedies mentioned by Meres along with *Love's Labour's Lost*, present their audiences with rather unconventional discourses on female beauty, both in a context of male rivalry and one of friendship. In the opening act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Helena is confused by her former lover Demetrius's attraction to Hermia's beauty: "Call you me fair? That 'fair' again unsay. / Demetrius loves your fair – O happy fair" (I.i.181-182). But once Demetrius and Lysander's visions are altered by Puck's magic juice in the forest, both young men start praising Helena as "the princess of pure white" (III.i.144) while they reject Hermia for being an "Ethiope" and a "tawny Tartar" (III.i.257 and 263), even though she is no doubt as "fair" as she used to be (III.i.274). *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* similarly revolves around competing female beauties heightened by the combat between fair and black. Speed warns his master Valentine that his vision of Sylvia's beauty is "deformed" (II.i.59) in that her beauty could be artificial: "Marry, sir, so painted to make her fair that no man counts of her beauty" (II.i.55-56). Whilst the adjective "fair" primarily alludes to Sylvia's beauty, the verb "painted" hints that this beauty results from the use of cosmetics, mainly red for the lips and cheeks, and white powder to heighten a woman's complexion. When Proteus, Valentine's best friend and Julia's lover, lays his eyes on the fair Sylvia, his vision is in turn "deformed": "And Sylvia – witness heaven that made her fair – / Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiope" (II.vi. 25-26). This celebration of a more radiant whiteness reveals Proteus's distortion of reality since Julia represents archetypal fairness. Indeed, although her skin is as white as Sylvia's, her hair is naturally blonde or golden ("yellow"), while Sylvia's is auburn, which was considered as whitish blonde in Shakespeare's time ("Her hair is auburn, mine perfect yellow", IV.iv.187).⁴ These theatrical reversals of conventional fairness

anticipate the poet's challenge of Petrarchan white beauty in the *Sonnets* to the Dark Lady where black is "fairest in my judgement's place" (Sonnet 131, l. 4).

- 6 Beyond the influence of neo-platonism in the Renaissance,⁵ the black-and-white dualism, which was deeply ingrained in European culture, may also have been partly shaped by the Elizabethans' perception of colours. In a pre-Newtonian world, scientific theories related to vision still largely relied on Aristotle's works. According to him, colours emerged from objects depending on the intensity of light and were then ranged in a spectrum of brightness and darkness, starting from white and ending with black.⁶ The intermediary colours were understood as a coalescence of these two colours. In *Colour and Culture*, the art historian John Gage structures Aristotle's spectrum as follows: black, grey, deep blue, leek-green, violet, crimson, yellow, white.⁷ Hence, fairness encompasses the whole of the chromatic spectrum related to light, ranging from white to yellow or golden.
- 7 These eulogies of black, including Berowne's, were voiced at a time when black was gradually endowed with new positive values. In his invaluable study of black, Michel Pastoureau has demonstrated that the standard colour of the devil in the Middle Ages came to symbolise virtue and austerity in European courts as early as the thirteenth century.⁸ English royalty favoured that colour, and Edward I and Richard II were both known for wearing black garments, while Elizabeth I promoted black as well as white as her official colours.⁹ Besides, black was now part of the features of archetypal literary beauty, since its darkness highlighted the beauty of white. Even before Petrarch, European courtly literature was influenced by various *artes poeticae* listing fixed metaphors to write the portrait of perfect beauty, such as the rhetorical portrait of Helen of Troy, the quintessence of female beauty according to Matthew of Vendôme in his *Ars Versificatoria* (published in 1175) where "Her dark eyebrows, neatly lined twin arches, / Set off skin that is like the Milky Way."¹⁰ Herman Pleij underlines that brown eyes were perceived as another essential feature of female beauty, unlike green eyes, which were the sign of the devil and, when combined with blonde hair, signified folly.¹¹
- 8 Furthermore, in the Renaissance, fairness was perceived as a whiter shade of white, as is evidenced by many Renaissance treatises describing female beauty, such as Agnolo Firenzuola's *Dialogo delle bellezze delle donne* (1541) where the author draws a distinction between fair and white. According to him, "candida è quella cosa che, insieme con la bianchezza, ha un certo splendore, come è l'avorio; e bianca è quella che non risplende, come la neve."¹² In his analysis of "Shakespearean beauty marks", Stephen Greenblatt claims that "Shakespeare often conveys the sense of beauty's radiance with the word 'fair' which he uses more than seven hundred times in his work. 'Fair' can denote lovely, clear, fine, or clean, but it also has the distinct sense of shining lightness."¹³ The radiance inherent in fair, this particular shade of white, is anatomised by many characters in *Love's Labour's Lost*, who debunk all discourses on fairness, bringing to the fore its dark side.

The darkness of fairness

- 9 Right from her first appearance on stage, the character of the Princess rejects rhetorical ornamentation when she claims that her beauty "needs not the painted flourish of [...] praise" (II.i.14). Ironically enough, her attending ladies perceive fairness and beauty in a very different way. Maria conjures up the word "fair" to allude to

Longaville's virtue: "The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss, / If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil, / Is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will" (II.i.47-49). Likewise, Rosaline's sensitiveness to Berowne's "fair tongue" and "gracious words" (II.i.72 and 73) highlights the linguistic sense of the term "fair", which can refer to elegant wording (*Oxford English Dictionary*, sense 3). Annoyed by her ladies' "bedecking ornaments of praise" (II.i.79), the Princess challenges the King's hypocritical welcome:

KING. Fair Princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.

PRINCESS. 'Fair' I give you back again, and 'welcome' I have not yet. The roof of this court is too high to be yours, and welcome to the wide fields too base to be mine.

(II.i.90-93)

The Princess's rejection of the stereotyped "fair Princess" interjection (II.i.90) to welcome her is aimed at exposing the King's shallow language, since his words do not correspond to the reality of the conditions in which she is received – not at 'the court of Navarre' at all, but kept outdoor in the fields.

- 10 In a mirror-like effect, the Lords comment the beauty of the Princess's attending ladies, focusing more particularly on their whiteness:

LONGAVILLE. I beseech you, a word. What is she in the white?

BOYET. A woman sometimes, and you saw her in the light.

LONGAVILLE. Perchance light in the light. I desire her name.

(II.i.193-195)

- 11 The pun on lightness and wantonness endows white and fair with sexual innuendos that also pervade Berowne's portrait of Rosaline as "a whitely wanton with a velvet brow / With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes" (III.i.188-190). Although Rosaline partly corresponds to the rhetorical portrait of the fair Helen of Troy set by Vendôme, the sensuality and bawdiness attributed to white undermines conventional discourses on fairness. The soft touch of the black velvet reinforces this eroticised portrait of Rosaline. Beyond the rhetoric of this anti-Petrarchan portrait, the shade of black used to depict Rosaline's brow is evocative of some pictorial techniques to prepare certain types of black. In his *Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning* (c. 1600), the Elizabethan miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard contends that "velvet black" is the "best black", a shade obtained by burning ivory: "the best black is velvet black, which is ivory burnt in a crucible and luted, that air enter not."¹⁴ This blending of white and black is rendered in his portraits, more precisely in the painting of eyes. The luminosity of velvet black enabled the painter to add lustre to the sitter's eye, which was heightened by white. As Raphaëlle Costa de Beaugard has shown in her study on *Silent Elizabethans*: "black and white are juxtaposed in the painting of the eye, these two bright colours being the source of the sharpest conceivable chromatic contrast, as Hilliard sees it."¹⁵ To a certain extent, the radiance of Rosaline's fairness is created by the delicate mingling of white and luminous black.
- 12 The conventional beauty of white is also challenged by Moth, Armado's page, when he reminds his master that white and red, the traditional "marks" of European beauties are artificial: "Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked under such colours" (I.ii. 76). Critical studies devoted to the role of cosmetics in Elizabethan society have demonstrated that women's – and to a certain extent men's, especially courtiers – white complexions were far from being natural. Women, including Queen Elizabeth

herself, resorted to bleaching and whitening beauty products that were (and still largely are today) highly toxic.¹⁶ Aaron's diatribe against the "white-limed walls" and the "painted signs" in *Titus Andronicus* reveals the reality of the artificial complexions of white women and of some men in Shakespeare's time. The accumulation of white powders and bleaching resulted in the production of "masks of youth", to take up Roy Strong's phrase to describe Queen Elizabeth's white face in her later portraits.¹⁷ To a certain extent, these artificial white masks were visible on stage through the boy actors' make-up. The literary and linguistic games related to the ambiguity of white are constantly mirrored on stage with the supposedly fair ladies impersonated by boy actors wearing cosmetics. The reality of the stage production exposes the artificiality of discourses on fairness, which look like mere "plast'ring art" (*Hamlet*, III.i.51).

- 13 The dubious nature of whiteness and fairness is brought to the fore in act IV. This act opens onto the Princess's renewed criticism of discourses on fairness when she conflates the hunter's phrase "fairest shoot" (IV.i.10) with another spurious compliment about her beauty. She then launches into another diatribe against the shallowness of rhetoric:

PRINCESS. Nay, never paint me now.
Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.
Here, good my glass, take this for telling true;
(*Giving him money*)
Fair payment for foul words is more than due.
FORESTER. Nothing but fair is that which you inherit.
PRINCESS. See, see, my beauty will be saved by merit!
O heresy in fair, fit for these days!
(IV.i.16-22)

- 14 Through her constant challenge of the word "fair", the Princess throws light upon the deceiving nature of fair words, as they can be analogous to specious words and flattery (*Oxford English Dictionary*, sense 4), another negative aspect of "fair". The Princess's criticism is immediately illustrated by Don Armado's letter to Jaquenetta, which is brought on the stage and read by Boyet. Don Armado's abuse of fair words ("that thou art fair is most infallible"; "More fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous", IV.i.61-62 and 63-64) ironically introduces the sonnet-reading scene, where fledgling sonneteers labour to lay down fair words to celebrate female beauties.

Making black fair?

- 15 In the light of all these variations on fair and white, Berowne's intention to "make black fair" (IV.iii.252) is tinged with the colour of irony. The sonnet-reading scene opens with Berowne's soliloquy, which reveals his infatuation with dark Rosaline:

The King, he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself. They have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch, pitch that defiles. Defile, a foul word. [...] I will not love; if I do, hang me! I'faith, I will not. O, but her eye! By this light, but for her eye, I would love her – yes for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. By heaven, I do love, and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy. And here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy.
(IV.iii.1-3 and 7-14)

- 16 Whilst the pun on the term “pitch” calls to mind Rosaline’s dark eyes (“two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes”, IV.iii.190), Berowne’s love is metamorphosed into a “black sticky substance”¹⁸ that corrupts his soul (“defile”). While suggesting the part of the melancholy lover and poet (“it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy”, IV.iii.13-4), a humour signified by black bile since Antiquity,¹⁹ the term “pitch” is also evocative of ink, another “sticky substance” which remains invaluable for the rhymes on melancholy. Berowne is turned into the mirror image of the pedant Armado who complains in one of his letters of being “besieged with sable-coloured melancholy, [...] the black oppressing humour to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air” (I.i.221-223). This new role as a dark poet is undermined by the constant sexual innuendos pervading Berowne’s supposedly serious soliloquy, as when he alludes to the ambiguity of the source of black – Rosaline’s two or one eye(s) which may evoke her vagina, as is suggested by H. R. Woudhuysen in his Arden edition.²⁰ Before mocking the King’s and his followers’ sonnets, Berowne also positions himself in the shadow of poetic melancholy, ready to praise his Rosa/eline. But Ladan Niayesh notes that the near homophony between Berowne and the colour brown favours the character’s proximity to his dark lady,²¹ whilst the name Rosaline can ironically evoke a white, rather than a pink rose. Berowne’s impersonation of the love sonneteer and courtier in this soliloquy is reminiscent of the young aristocrat pictured by Nicholas Hilliard in *Young Man among the Roses* (c. 1585-95),²² produced prior to the first performance of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. In this miniature portrait, a handsome brown-haired young man, dressed in black and white, leans against a tree, surrounded by white roses. The chromatic contrast between white and black in this painting is another example of one of the typical features of Hilliard’s aesthetic that has already been mentioned, and this play on the opposition of colours may well have been aimed at pleasing Queen Elizabeth through choosing her favourite colours. The celebration of the beauty of the rose, a longstanding literary conceit that is conjured up in the opening lines to Shakespeare’s very first sonnet (“From fairest creatures we desire increase, / That thereby beauty’s rose might never die”)²³ was also imbued with political connotations, as the union of the red and white roses was part of the Tudor political propaganda.
- 17 Whilst the King, Longaville and Dumaine enter the stage in turn to read their sonnets, Berowne takes on the role of the cynical poet ready “to whip hypocrisy” (IV.iii.130) and rejects artificial elements in the poetic tradition of sonnet writing, such as the literary conceit of the blazon (IV.iii.180-182). The three sonnets seem to gradually move from light and brightness with the metaphors of the “golden sun” and the “silver moon” used by the King (IV.iii.23 and 27) to darkness, as Longaville’s “fair sun” (IV.iii.66) is equated with “an amber-coloured raven” by Berowne (IV.iii.85), and Dumaine’s eroticised sonnet on “a blossom passing fair” (IV.iii.100) strikes a comparison between fairness and blackness (“Thou for whom Jove would swear / Juno but an Ethiop were,” IV.iii.114-115). Berowne’s satire of this “scene of foolery” (IV.iii.160) is interrupted by the production of Berowne’s letter to Rosaline that was sent by mistake to Jaquenetta. After “whipping hypocrisy”, Berowne is asked to remove the mask of the cynical poet to read his own version of fairness: “Of all complexions the culled sovereignty / Do meet as at a fair in her fair cheek” (IV.iii.230-231). Niayesh remarks that the pun on the term “fair” understood as both beauty and marketplace metamorphoses Rosaline into a “mere commodity”.²⁴ Berowne’s awkward stylistic exercise on the praise of female

beauty encourages his fellow sonneteers to turn his celebration of black fairness into ridicule.

- 18 The poetical and satirical anatomy of Berowne's sonnet is structured around an agonistic exchange, which is reminiscent of the rhetorical exercise of *disputatio* where two parties present opposed views on a subject. To defend his vision of black beauty, Berowne relies on the chromatic combat between black and white, showing the duplicity of white through the biblical figure of the white devil ("Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light", IV.iii.253)²⁵ or the controversial nature of cosmetics already raised by Moth in I.ii. ("It mourns that painting and usurping hair / Should ravish doters with a false aspect," IV.iii.255-256, and "Your mistresses dare never come in rain, / For fear their colours should be washed away," IV.iii.266-7). The most surprising conceit used by Berowne remains his interpretation of the beauty of ebony:

KING. By heaven, thy love is black as ebony.
 BEROWNE. Is ebony like her? O word divine!
 A wife of such wood were felicity.
 (IV.iii.238-241)

- 19 Berowne's celebration of black fairness or fair blackness sounds ironically Petrarchan, since ebony is promoted to the same rank of divinity as Petrarch's Laura is. This fledgling, yet cynical poet who accepts to step down from the "sky" where he was acting as a "demi god" (IV.iii.71) resumes the stereotypical speech used by the pedant Armado that he mocked in the opening act. In his letter, Armado used chromatic clichés to allude to the act of writing: "Then for the place Where – where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene and most preposterous event that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebon-coloured ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest" (I.i.228-232). Berowne's celebration of fair blackness is ironically connected to this very first chromatic opposition where the snow-white pen is evocative of the archetypal Petrarchan simile to describe white. The chromatic intertextual echo implied by ebony suggests that Berowne is another pseudo Petrarchan poet,²⁶ drawing the beauty of Rosaline in ink (that is, only in words), while his celebration of black is purely rhetorical. The chromatic contrast between the white page and the black ink is conjured up in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in order to celebrate the poetry's ability to preserve the image of the beloved for eternity: "that in my black ink my love may still shine bright" (*Sonnet* 65, 14). Hence, through the intertwined images of ebony and ink, Berowne might be writing down Rosaline's beauty to preserve the memory of his beloved for ever and ever or for his own posterity as a budding poet, thus applying the King's Horatian exhortation to "let fame, that all hunt after in their lives, / Live registered upon our brazen tombs" (I.i.1-2). His chromatic use of antithesis, in which white is endowed with negative meanings, sounds all the more ironic as Berowne indulges in the Petrarchan metaphor of the white hand to praise Rosaline's beauty before his celebration of black ("Ask for her, / And to her white hand see thou do commend / This sealed-up counsel," III.i.161-3), while later he mistakes the Princess's white hand for Rosaline's ("white-handed mistress," V.ii.230).
- 20 His fellow sonneteers relish in challenging his supposedly fresh poetics of colours when they compare Rosaline to a chimney-sweeper:

DUMAINE. To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.
 LONGAVILLE. And since her time are colliers counted bright.
 (IV.iii.262-263)

- 21 Dumaine and Longaville not only turn into ridicule his defence of Rosaline's darkness, but also expose the shallowness of his discourse. By focusing on the vegetal nature of ebony, they bring to the fore its evanescent materiality as the wood ends up as a burnt residue, dirty ashes smearing chimney-sweepers' faces. Through the metaphor of soot and coal, Dumaine and Longaville mock Berowne's rhetorical exercise on the beauty of black, insofar as the seeming solidity and radiance of ebony can be reduced to simple ashes, just like his fair discourse which is both attractive and specious. Even in the *Sonnets*, a more experienced Shakespeare challenges his own celebration of black beauty. After reversing Petrarchan stereotypical white beauty by "making black fair", the poet discovers the Lady's "heart of darkness": "For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright, / Who art as black as hell, as dark as night" (*Sonnet 147*, l. 13-14). In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the dark nature of black is exposed by Katherine in the final act when she reminds Rosaline that her beauty is not pure:

ROSALINE. What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?
 KATHERINE. A light condition in a beauty dark.
 ROSALINE. We need more light to find your meaning out.
 KATHERINE. You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff,
 Therefore I'll darkly end the argument.
 ROSALINE. Look what you do, you do it still i'th'dark.
 (V.ii.19-24)

- 22 The polyptoton built around the adjective dark is not only reminiscent of the Renaissance prejudice against black beauties who were perceived as lascivious,²⁷ but also calls to mind the pun on light and bawdiness voiced by the male characters in II.i. All in all, the discourses on female beauties, whether black or white, seem to be constantly undermined by the reality of desire and lust. By turning into ridicule all literary speeches on female beauties and interrupting the men's retreat, *Love's Labour's Lost* counters the characters' vision of women to make them understand that women are desirable and have desires too. This veiled invitation to discard the masks of literature and rhetoric entices young roses to fully bloom, as Boyet reminds the Princess at the end of the masque in V.ii: "Fair ladies masked are roses in their bud; / Dismasked, their damask sweet commixture shown, / Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown." (V.ii.295-297).

NOTES

1. Neal Goldstein, "Love's Labour's Lost and the Renaissance Vision of Love", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25.3, 1974, 335-350, quote from p. 340.

2. The plays mentioned by Meres are *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love Labours Lost*, *Love Labours Won*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*. See E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1930, vol.1, p. 244.
3. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays, with the exception of *Love's Labour's Lost*, are taken from *The Oxford Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998.
4. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, auburn etymologically alluded to a shade of yellowish white. The sense of golden or reddish brown that is used today appeared in the sixteenth century. However, Shakespeare always resorts to the original meaning of this word in his texts.
5. Camilla Caporicci explores the impact of neo-Platonism and Petrarchism in her contribution to this volume.
6. See for details his treatise *De sensu et sensibilibus*.
7. John Gage, *Colour and Culture*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1993, p.12-13.
8. Michel Pastoureau, *Noir: Histoire d'une couleur*, Paris, Seuil, 2008. The book is also available in English: *Black: The History of a Color*, trans. J. Gladding, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009.
9. See their portraits reproduced in Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*, London, Paul Mellon, 1969.
10. Quoted in Herman Pleij, *Colors Demonic and Divine, Shades of Meaning in the Middle Ages and After*, trans. D. Webb, New York, Columbia University Press, p. 52.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 50. See also Michel Pastoureau's recent study of green: *Vert: Histoire d'une couleur*, Paris, Seuil, 2014; also available in English as *Green: The History of a Color*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2014. In his book devoted to blue, Michel Pastoureau signals that blue eyes were perceived as a new "mark" of beauty in the Renaissance (*Bleu: Histoire d'une couleur*, Paris, Seuil, 2000; also available in English: *Blue: The History of a Color*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001).
12. Agnolo Firenzuola, *Opere*, ed. D. Maestri, Torino, UTET, 1977, p. 731. Here is an English translation: "Fair is a colour that besides being white, also has a certain lustre, as ivory does while white is that which does not glow such as snow" (Agnolo Firenzuola, *On the Beauty of Women*, trans. Konrad Eisenbichler and Jacqueline Murray, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, p. 15).
13. Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespeare's Freedom*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2011, p. 25.
14. Quoted in Nicholas Hilliard, *Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, ed. R. K. R. Thornton and T. G. S. Cain, Manchester, Mid Northumberland Arts Group and Carcanet New Press, 1981, p. 91.
15. Raphaëlle Costa de Beauregard, *Silent Elizabethans*, Montpellier, Collection Astraea, 2000, p. 87.
16. See for instance Annette Drew-Bear, *Painted Faces on the Renaissance Stage. The Moral Significance of Face-Painting Conventions*, Cranbury, Associated University Press, 1994; Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
17. Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1987, p. 147.
18. This interpretation is given by H. R. Woudhuysen in his edition of *Love's Labour's Lost*, London, Bloomsbury, 1998, p. 199.
19. See Sujata Iyengar, *Shakespeare's Medical Language. A Dictionary*, London, Bloomsbury, 2011, p. 73-78.

20. *Op. cit.*, p. 199.

21. See her contribution to this volume.

22. This picture is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Roy Strong provides a full analysis of this miniature in *The Cult of Elizabeth. Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry*, London, Pimlico, 1999, p. 56-83.

23. Sonnet 1, l.1-2.

24. See her contribution to this volume.

25. See *2 Corinthians*, 11.14.

26. Camilla Caporicci clearly demonstrates Berowne's abuse of Petrarchan language in her article for this volume.

27. The example of Shakespeare's Cleopatra and her "tawny front" making Antony "become the bellows and the fan /To cool a gipsy's lust" comes to mind (*Antony and Cleopatra*, I.i.9-10).

ABSTRACTS

This paper aims at exploring the varied senses and shades of black in *Love's Labour's Lost* through its chromatic opposites embodied by white and fair. By taking into account the diverse conventional speeches on colours, shaped among other things by rhetoric, science, Petrarchism and treatises on the art of painting, this study of black and white throws light upon the ways the codification, or even the stylistics, of colours are more broadly challenged, and even dislocated by Shakespeare.

Cet article analyse le contraste entre le noir et le blanc qui structure les discours sur la beauté féminine dans *Love's Labour's Lost*. Influencé par les théories scientifiques, picturales, poétiques et par les couleurs flatteuses de la rhétorique, Shakespeare dissèque les codifications de la couleur ainsi que l'éloquence du noir et du blanc, de l'ombre et de la lumière afin de mettre à nu l'hypocrisie du langage poétique.

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Mots-clés: blanc, couleur, noir, Peines d'amour perdues

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