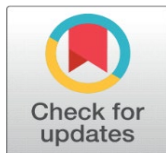
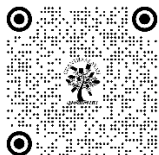


# CHROMATIC CHRONICLES: EXPLORING THE SYMBOLISM AND SIGNIFICANCE OF COLOR IN ANURAG KASHYAP'S FILMS

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## ABSTRACT

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap is known for his unique and gritty approach to storytelling, which often explores the inner lives of individuals while also presenting the harsh realities of the world outside. Most notable aspects of Kashyap's cinematic approach are his dexterous use of color as a narrative instrument, visually assisting storytelling and conveying deeper meanings. This research paper investigates the significance of color in the films of Anurag Kashyap, concentrating on the analysis of five selected films: "Black Friday" (2004), "Dev. D" (2009), "Gulaal" (2009), "That Girl in Yellow Boots" (2010), and "Bombay Velvet" (2015). The purpose of this research is to investigate the color signature and symbolisms used in Kashyap's films, as well as analyze the significant use of primary colors in various scenes. By analyzing the specific color palettes and combinations utilized, the researcher will try to understand how Kashyap effectively employs colors to emphasize key moments and themes of his films. To justify the study's objectives, qualitative content analysis methodology is employed, involving a systematic viewing and analysis of each film. Color occurrences will be recognized, coded, and categorized to reveal their symbolic meanings. A comparative analysis will be conducted to identify similarities and differences in the films' use of color. The results of this study will illuminate the aesthetic and narrative significance of color in Kashyap's filmmaking, explaining how color choices enrich the depiction of emotions, themes, and character dynamics. This research is significant because it reveals Kashyap's distinctive aesthetic philosophy via an examination of the symbolism embedded in his use of color. This study enriches our appreciation and interpretation of Anurag Kashyap's films by clarifying the symbolic representations and visual storytelling strategies he employs in them.

**Keywords:** Film Color, Anurag Kashyap, Film Analysis, Color Symbolism, Visual Storytelling, Cinematic Color Palette

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Anurag Kashyap, known for his guerilla style of filmmaking, is not someone who would hand you a plate with some opulent cuisine since he believes in bringing the audience to grasp the genuine origins. His films will not leave you with any catharsis, but they will touch you to your core and make you reconsider certain parts of society. The suspenseful and thought-provoking nature of his films will have audiences talking long after they've left the theatre [Nijhara \(2020\)](#). Kashyap, a

zoology graduate from the oldest city Varanasi, initially lacked connections with the influential figures in Bollywood. However, he managed to make a name for himself as a screenwriter by collaborating with renowned directors such as Ram Gopal Varma and Hansal Mehta. Although he faced numerous challenges with censorship and encountered lukewarm commercial success in his early directorial ventures, Kashyap persevered [Kumar \(2020\)](#). Along with his powerful storyline, his films are distinguished by their careful and thoughtful use of color. Kashyap is an expert colorist, employing hues and tones to convey meaning in his stories, stir viewers' emotions, and enrich their time at the movies.

Color is and always has been an essential part of visual narrative, as is shown in many different types of art. Colors in movies are used to set the mood, communicate information, and elicit responses from audiences. Filmmakers often use color as a potent technique to increase viewer comprehension and involvement in the story. Anurag Kashyap, a director known for his meticulous attention to detail, takes this technique to new heights via the strategic use of color to further emphasize his stories. [Levin et al. \(2004\)](#)

In the film 'The Girl in Yellow Boots,' the boots represented struggle and survival as a symbol. The yellow symbolizes the uncertainty and unpredictability of protagonist's life thanks to her profession at a massage parlor [High on Films. \(2023\)](#). The color yellow also represents optimism, while the colors blue and white serve as sobering reminders of the actual world. Color-wise, 'Black Friday' and 'Gulaal' by Anurag Kashyap are more representative, both of which include extensive use of the color red in their costumes, set design, and even the film's overall tone. Blood red meant war, strife, fear, and death [Shastri \(2013\)](#). In "Dev. D" (2009), the protagonist's mental deterioration is shown using the application of color. Kashyap employs jealous greens to symbolize the character's growing inner agony throughout the movie. [Li et al. \(2015\)](#)

The significance of analyzing the color utilization in Anurag Kashyap's films resides in deciphering their concealed nuances, aesthetic choices, and symbolic representations. By dissecting Kashyap's meticulously woven web of visual storytelling, we may learn more about the relationships between characters, plot points, and ideas.

Our primary aim of this study is to illustrate what color means in Anurag Kashyap's movies. The color signature and symbolism that permeate his narratives will be untangled via a methodical examination of a selection of his works, including "Black Friday" (2004), "Dev.D" (2009), "Gulaal" (2009), "That Girl in Yellow Boots" (2010), and "Bombay Velvet" (2015). By analyzing the significance of basic colors, we want to learn how Kashyap uses them to highlight important events, create feelings, and convey deeper meanings in his films. [Berardinelli \(2016\)](#)

The goals of this investigation are to track down recurring color schemes, interpret the hidden meanings of various color combinations, and inquire into the possible thematic connections between various hues. In addition, the paper aims to dissect color's function in the story, its effect on characters, and its contribution to the expression of ideas and emotions. To assess the meaning and relevance of the detected color occurrences, the chosen films will be viewed and studied systematically using a qualitative content analysis technique, classifying and categorizing the found color instances. [Bjgtjme. \(2022\)](#)

There is a wealth of aesthetic decisions and visual narrative strategies hidden in the color palettes of Anurag Kashyap's films. Color study of these films will not only shed light on Kashyap's cinematic vision but also on the larger implications of color in narrative and its effect on audience perception and participation. Knowing

how Anurag Kashyap uses color in his films is crucial to appreciating the nuance of his narrative and the care with which he crafts each scene. In this study, the researchers have attempted to discover the meanings, symbolisms, and creative complexity behind Kashyap's use of color in his storylines, making sense of what makes his films so arresting to the eye and so moving to the heart. [Chen et al. \(2004\)](#)

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Color performs an unfathomably vital role in our lives. The film's color palette, costuming, and props are all given careful consideration before the final result is shown in cinema. Behaviors, moods and situations are beautifully expressed through the vibrant spectrum of colors. Colors add depth, richness, and positivity to our experiences, enhancing our understanding and perception of the world around us. They breathe life into our emotions, influencing our moods in uplifting and inspiring ways. Color has been used to convey meaning since far before *Kisan Kanya*, Bollywood's first color film. The black-and-white dichotomy was so significant that the white-is-good, black-is-evil cultural and media trend persisted for decades [Shastri \(2013\)](#). After assessing literature on color symbolisms, it was found that there is no work done on Anurag Kashyap's use of color in his films and that is why this study is going to fill the void in this research space.

In her work, Kalmus talks about how advancement in color has led to realism in films. She proposed that color and its various shades have psychological implications such as red denotes danger, blood, life, heat while green denotes nature, outdoors, freedom, freshness etc. She propounded that colors can be used for building personalities on screen and harmonizing emotions and situations. [Kalmus \(1935\)](#). Goethe in his work 'Theory of Colors' elaborated on nature, function and psychology of colors. He had claimed that colors have psychological impact of mood and emotions. According to him yellow depicted brightness, serenity, happiness; red portrays warmth, fire. [Von Goethe \(1970\)](#)

One study delineates how color helps in expression of emotions and strengthening the narrative of the film. [Ren \(2021\)](#) In one of the international studies, it was concluded that popular Chinese films mainly used color for cultural expression. These films associated certain philosophies, connotations and aesthetic consciousness with a particular color. For instance- white depicted innocence, honesty, mourning, death while blue depicted purity, responsibility, holiness, calmness and red depicted heat, celebration, blood, life, sun. [Chen & Chu \(2022\)](#)

A study mentions how color alters perception of reality and attracts attention. The film directors try to convey a mood, tone or a character through use of color. The researchers give example of *Schindler's List* by Steven Spielberg where the girl is depicted in red coat in an entirely black and white film. Another instance they cite is from Manoj Night Shyamalan's film *Unbreakable* where predominantly purple and green is being used. [Kovsh & Dziuba \(2022\)](#) Another research talks about how a color can convey meanings at several levels such as physical, psychological and aesthetic. It discusses how color was initially used to represent the reality accurately but now it is also used to depict 'unreal' genres such as musicals, adventures, cartoons etc. Even color is useful for dramatic and aesthetic purpose such as representation of emotions or description of a character. [Braga & Da Costa \(2011\)](#) In a study, there is mention of how colors can be linked with various moods. For instance, black may convey hatred while white may convey mourning. Red can denote love and yellow may denote happiness. [Wei et al. \(2004\)](#) One of the studies explores the idea of developing a color analysis protocol where typical colors used in various film genres such as romance, comedy, horror, sci-fi, action etc. were

evaluated. Later the study concluded that colors in romance and comedy have higher contrast and brightness and are rich in yellow and red while horror, sci-fi and action films are totally opposite. [Chen et al. \(2012\)](#)

### 3. OBJECTIVES

This research seeks to evaluate the implementation of color scheme in Anurag Kashyap's films. For this purpose, following objectives have been decided for this research:

- To analyze the significance of color in Anurag Kashyap's films and its role in visual storytelling
- To explore the color signature and symbolism employed in Kashyap's films
- To examine how Kashyap strategically employs primary colors to emphasize key moments

These goals are intended to lead the research and analysis in a clear and focused way, meeting the purpose of researching the importance of color in Anurag Kashyap's films and giving a framework for the research paper.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For analyzing the significance of color in Anurag Kashyap's films, this research paper employs a qualitative approach based on content analysis using Color Theory to understand the depiction of scenes and delve into the psyche of the characters. This research concentrates predominantly on the analysis of five films: "Black Friday" (2004), "Dev.D" (2009), "Gulaal" (2009), "That Girl in Yellow Boots" (2010), and "Bombay Velvet" (2015). These films have been selected for in-depth examination due to their diverse narratives, genres, and use of distinctive color schemes.

The purpose of this methodical watching and study is to examine each film's color choices, palettes, and pivotal moments. Instances of color will be recognized, classified, and categorized according to their importance in terms of plot, character development, and overall themes. In order to fully grasp Kashyap's color aesthetics, it will be necessary to interpret the significance and symbolism underlying the detected color patterns. To determine the similarities, variances, and nuances in the films' color use, a comparative study will be conducted. The use of qualitative content analysis will help in examining Kashyap's use of color in his films in great detail, gaining important insights into the creative and narrative influence of his use of color. [Chen et al. \(2018\)](#)

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Kashyap's way of making movies is often marked by reality, grit, and showing the complexity of society. The corruption, brutality, and humanity that permeate his films provide a stark and unvarnished portrait of modern India. Anurag Kashyap has played a crucial part in delivering the necessary change and dissolving the borders throughout the years between independent and commercial Bollywood cinema [Singh \(2020\)](#). Kashyap's use of color in this cinematic setting is crucial to conveying his story's meaning.

## 1) Black Friday

One of Kashyap's notable works, 'Black Friday', a film based on a novel by a journalist Hussain Zaidi, investigates the bombings of 1993 in Bombay. The film depicted how religious intolerance led to bombings. It was authentic to the core [Shastri \(2013\)](#). Bravely based on exhaustive research and interviews, the film presents the incidents as they occurred. There are no fictitious names or characters introduced. The film focuses on the investigation of the explosions by police commissioner Rakesh Maria. Tiger Memon, we find, carried out the explosions in Dawood Ibrahim's direction. The filmmaker doesn't capture the movie in a dramatic manner, but the narrative is so full of drama that it seems like a roller-coaster excursion [Masand \(2011\)](#).

With films such as Gangs of Wasseypur, Dev. D, and Ugly, Kashyap introduced a new visual language to mainstream cinema, as his subsequent works demonstrated. Considering this, it's remarkable how well Kashyap balanced form and substance in Black Friday. Kashyap, working with DOP Natarajan Subramaniam, developed a unique visual palette for each segment of his story. The scenes of interrogation in solitary confinement have a horrifying red hue, as does the investigation. The warm tone in these procedural sequences is too much intense. A frigid blue hue permeates flashbacks and conspiratorial scenarios. His passion of striking visuals is only partially indulged; what really holds our attention is the riveting non-linear story, conveyed with remarkable nervous intensity [Harsh \(2022\)](#).

The film is famous for its realistic recreation of the days leading up to the bombings and their immediate aftermath. The use of color is an important element of the film's visual language, as it lends an additional layer of meaning and significance to the narrative. To symbolize the emotional distance and societal hypocrisy, Kashyap uses extensively filtered, cold blue-tinted visuals in this movie. During interrogation sequences, the use of a deep red filter symbolizes tension and intensity.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** Use of Yellow, Film: Black Friday

**Source** YouTube Movies

Color is used symbolically by director Anurag Kashyap in Black Friday to convey the characters' feelings and the dynamics between them. The film's opening warm yellow color grading establishes a distinctive visual atmosphere that serves as the backdrop for the subsequent intense sequences. During the police interrogation and torture scenes, warm yellow was chosen for a number of reasons. First of all, it makes viewers feel uncomfortable and uneasy, which induces apprehension and tension. The yellow color intensifies the psychological impact of the scenes by highlighting the gravity of the circumstances and the anguish felt by the characters. The warm yellow color scheme can also be interpreted as a collision

of opposing emotions. On the one hand, yellow typically denotes positivity and optimism and stands for the search for accuracy and justice. On the other hand, a darker and more sinister element is introduced in the context of police interrogation and torture. The complex and morally ambiguous nature of the events playing out on screen is reflected in the warm yellow color grading, which combines these opposing emotions.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** Use of Blue, Film: Black Friday  
**Source** YouTube Movies

Anurag makes symbolic use of the color blue in scenes involving conspiracies, blast preparations, and criminal activity. This serves to evoke the mood and themes typically associated with these topics. The color blue is commonly linked to a variety of ideas and states of mind, such as serenity, introspection, and even melancholy. But in the context of "Black Friday," the color blue takes on a darker and more ominous tone, reflecting the secretive nature of the conspiracy and the sense of foreboding that surrounded the blast preparations. Anurag Kashyap successfully establishes a mood of mystery, danger, and intrigue through the use of the color blue in scenes involving the conspiracy and the planning of the bombing. The presence of the color blue heightens the sense of suspense and mystery, implying that something hidden and potentially dangerous is taking place. Additionally, blue can represent emotional distance and aloofness. It represents the characters' willingness to commit violent acts and their emotional distance from them in the context of the film's conspiracy plot. The moral ambiguity and dehumanizing character of the activities are emphasized by the blue color, which conveys a sense of coldness and detachment. Apart from that, the color blue is consistently used to represent the film's depiction of the criminal underworld. It gives these scenes their own voice, setting them apart from the rest of the story while also emphasizing the risk and illegality of what the characters are doing.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** Use of Red, Film: Black Friday  
**Source** YouTube Movies

There are a few reasons why the police investigation scenes are set in a dark red. For starters, it represents the intense feelings and focus that have surrounded the investigation. Passion, anger, and a sense of urgency are just some of the intense feelings associated with the color red. The film's use of deep red serves to visually emphasize the growing sense of urgency and resolve of the detectives as they delve deeper into the case. Red can also be a symbol of violence and death. It's a somber reminder of the lives lost in the explosion and its effects on the investigation scenes. The use of a deep red color serves as a visual reminder of the seriousness of the situation and the importance of getting to the bottom of the matter. The use of a dark shade of red may also be interpreted as a metaphor for the social wounds caused by the explosion. Both the victims and the investigators can be reminded of the anguish and chaos that the events brought about through this visual aid. By using a deep red hue, Anurag Kashyap amplifies the drama, emotion, and visual impact of the scenes in which police investigate the blast's aftermath. It adds to the tension, highlights the seriousness of the situation, and echoes the characters' internal turmoil.

## 2) Gulaal

In the film 'Gulaal' (2009), Anurag tackles themes of power, love, and rebellion. The harsh truths of modern civilization are unavoidable in Anurag Kashyap's reality. Questions of masculinity, politics, ragging, caste pride, love, rage, desire, and betrayal are portrayed from all angles in Gulaal. [Shastri \(2013\)](#). The protagonists of Gulaal are members of the former royal family who want to reclaim the province of Rajputana and the monarchical system it formerly supported from the democratic administration. Rajeev Ravi, the film's cinematographer, sets the tone for the Gulaal symbolism through his use of red-pink lighting [Malani \(2009\)](#).

Like an enthusiastic painter eager to fill every space with every possible hue, Anurag tackles a dizzying array of topics [Bhaskaran \(2009\)](#). The color red represents revolution, passion, love, and brutal betrayal, all of which are recurring themes in Anurag Kashyap's newest film. The characters in 'Gulaal' represent a modern India that is grappling with its identity and history. And Kashyap comes very close to succeeding [Gupta \(2009\)](#).

**Figure 4**



**Figure 4** Revolutionary Red, Film: Gulaal

**Source** YouTube

In this film the color red is used to symbolize the various protests and revolutionary movements shown throughout the story. The film's consistent use of the color red serves to emphasize the fervor, energy, and revolutionary spirit of

these demonstrations. To begin, the color red is used to symbolize the opposition to the democratic government's oppressive control and the resort to violence. The protagonists, brothers and sisters, take part in these demonstrations to challenge the status quo and fight against the system. The color red is frequently associated with revolutionary movements and the pursuit of social justice. It's a visual cue for how serious the characters are about making a difference in the world. An important figure in the demonstrations and attempts to rally support for retaking the province is Dukey, a member of the royal family. The color red is used extensively to symbolize the revolutionary fervor and the revolutionary fires that have spread to his home and his face when he makes a deceptive offer to the class. His preference for red hints at his covert revolutionary goals and his participation in the movement.

**Figure 5**



**Figure 5** Use of Red Light and Dresses, Film: Gulaal

**Source** YouTube

A John Lennon fan, Dukey's brother wears red from head to toe as he uses poetry to question the assumptions of everyone around him, including us. Then there's the shy law student who gets caught up in politics and crime but keeps his distance from everyone besides the girl he loves. When he finally musters the courage to face everyone he holds responsible for his love's betrayal, he does so in a blaze of blood-red anger. The color red is often used as the driving force behind a revolution. As an added contrast, the revolutionary fires are depicted in their natural colors. This contrast emphasizes the genuine grievances and passionate desire for change among the characters, highlighting the authenticity and realism of the protests. The use of earth tones conveys the sincerity of the characters' goals and their connection to reality.

### 3) Dev D

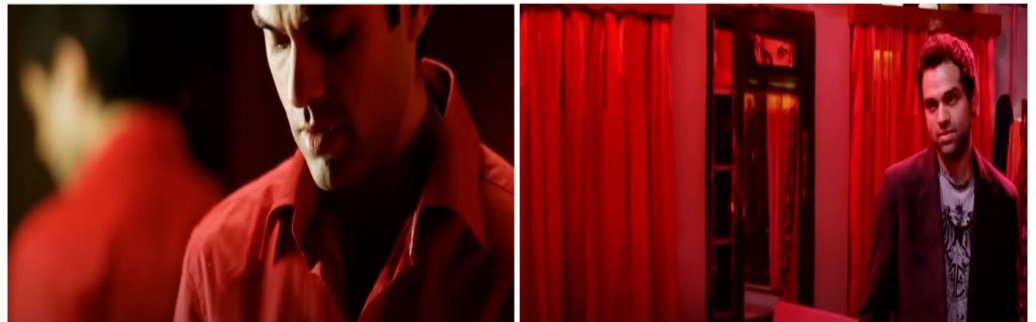
Anurag Kashyap's *Dev.D*, a modern adaptation of Saratchandra Chatterjee's Bengali novel 'Devdas', is a remarkable work of art. Modern life and love are well portrayed in the film. Kashyap's interpretation of the source material exemplifies the creative and aesthetic potential of an adaptation. The film portrays Punjab and Delhi's atmospheres, not Bengal. Kashyap captures the color and sparkle of rural Punjab, and Delhi's morbidity and darkness. Generation X urban Devdas prefers heroin, vodka, ganja, and whisky. Paro isn't the typical homely female, and she's willing to give her naked picture to her lover. This film is intended for an adult audience only due to its explicit content. *Dev D* is a technical marvel; cinematographer Rajeev Ravi did an excellent job, and the camerawork when the protagonist was high was refreshingly original and engaging. Abhay Deol stars in the film and comfortably plays the character [V \(2009\)](#).



Throughout the film, greens, yellows, and reds are primarily used to depict negative emotions like jealousy, anger, and lust. The use of color intensifies throughout the course of the movie. The brothel's red light, the drug den's green light, and the bar's yellow haze all add to the film's seedy, gloomy atmosphere. Color is also used to emphasize the love, loss, and redemption themes in the movie. For instance, Chandramukhi (Kalki Koechlin), who symbolizes Dev's lost love, is connected to the color pink. The final scene of the film, in which Dev and Chandramukhi ride off into the sunset, is illuminated by a warm yellow and pink glow. This suggests that Dev has at long last attained redemption and satisfaction.

In the film, color selections represent the protagonist's psychological decline. The use of a red color scheme and a green door add a significant visual dimension to the scene where Dev enters Chanda's room, enhancing the scene's impact and meaning. The predominant color scheme changes to various shades of red as Dev enters Chanda's room. This carefully selected color has a powerful visual impact and establishes the mood of the scene. Red is frequently linked to strong feelings, passion, and desire. The complicated and turbulent relationship between Dev and Chanda is represented in this context by the red color scheme. The door in Chanda's room is portrayed in green in contrast to the predominately red color scheme. Green has long been thought to represent growth, hope, and freshness. The green door in this scene serves as a visual contrast to the intense feelings and conflicts developing between Dev and Chanda. It stands for a sense of renewal, escape, and the potential for a new direction or a second chance. The deliberate use of color in this scene by Anurag Kashyap gives the story more depth and complexity and helps the audience better understand the emotions of the characters and the dynamics between them.

**Figure 6**



**Figure 6** Use of red, Film: Dev D

Source YouTube

On the other hand, Red is also a color that is frequently linked to strong feelings, passion, and turbulence. It stands for a variety of feelings, such as rage, desire, and even peril. Red takes on a new meaning for Dev's character in the context of his inner turmoil, emotional instability, particularly in the depiction of Dev's room, curtains, and even blanket. It reflects Dev's erratic mental state, reflecting his rage, frustration, and the internal conflicts he goes through throughout the movie. The color red is used in his immediate environment to represent the intense emotions that control his behavior and decisions. Dev's red blanket in his room also represents his mental state symbolically. It surrounds him in a passionate and turbulent aura that highlights his internal conflicts and the force of his emotions. The constant use of red not only grabs the audience's attention but also deepens the protagonist's emotional journey, ratcheting up the tension and revealing Dev's complex psychological state.

**Figure 7**



**Figure 7** Green-Yellow Mixed Color Palette, Film: Dev D

**Source** YouTube

A specific green-yellow mixed color palette is used to create a striking and memorable visual atmosphere in a scene where Dev takes a drag. The color scheme switches to a combination of green and yellow tones as Dev indulges in his vices. This intentional use of color accomplishes several things in the scene. Yellow is a symbol of energy, warmth, and optimism while green is frequently connected to envy, jealousy, and decay. A complex juxtaposition of emotions and themes is suggested by the use of a mixed color scheme of green and yellow. It effectively conveys the duality of Dev's character, who is simultaneously drawn to self-destruction and looking for a way out of his tumultuous life. The green components represent his inner turmoil, his feelings of resentment and jealousy, as well as the breakdown of his relationships and decisions in life. It depicts his spiraling into madness and destructive habits. Anurag Kashyap skillfully conveys the complexity of Dev's emotional state and the conflicting forces at work within him by utilizing a green-yellow mixed color palette.

**Figure 8**



**Figure 8** Pink Color Scheme, Film: Dev D

**Source** YouTube

Chanda's attire, cosmetics, and overall color scheme are primarily pink, which has deeper significance and enhances the visual storytelling of the character. Chanda's character and her journey in the movie are represented by the color pink, which is customarily linked to femininity, tenderness, and compassion. Chanda's

persona is characterized by innocence, vulnerability, and sensitivity, all of which are frequently expressed by the color pink. Chanda, played by actress Kalki Koechlin, is a young woman who finds herself in a hostile and exploitative environment. The stark contrast between her character and the harsh realities she encounters is highlighted by her pink clothing and makeup, which reflect her innate innocence and purity. Pink serves as a visual reminder of her frailty and the precariousness of her circumstances. Pink also represents empathy and compassion, two important qualities that Chanda exemplifies. She continues to be kind and considerate toward others, especially the main character Dev, despite her circumstances. Pink is used to emphasize how kind and compassionate she can be, even in trying circumstances. This choice also contrasts with the movie's darker themes and ideas. It serves as a symbolic reminder of the character's resiliency and ability to maintain compassion and hope in the face of hardship.

**Figure 9**



**Figure 9** Titillating Conversations with Paro, Film: Dev D  
**Source** YouTube

As Dev was chatting online and having titillating conversations with Paro on the side of Thames at London, Anurag used the color blue to emphasize the intimacy between Dev and Paro and to hint at their shared dreams and fantasies. It symbolizes a brief reprieve from their troubled lives and the freedom to indulge in secret desires while remaining anonymous in cyberspace. The use of blue color palette here emphasizes the idea of an idealized bond that transcends the material world they inhabit. Their virtual connection is a place of escape and unrestrained passion, and the color blue serves to amplify both the romantic undertones and the fantastical nature of their conversation.

#### **4) That Girl in Yellow Boots**

Anurag Kashyap's mystery drama 'That Girl in Yellow Boots' (2010) explores the life of Ruth, a foreigner in India searching for her missing father. This is a mood piece written by Kashyap and starring Kalki Koechlin, set in the underbelly of a dirty Indian city and propelled by misogyny, brutality, and black money [Kumar \(2020\)](#). It was shot in only 13 days using a 7D DSLR camera. The conclusion of the tragic, quixotic, and twisted story of love and desire (that is Kalki's search for her absent father) is shocking. Also, it's a sad story about incest and sexual assault. The film's cinematic idiom is what really grabs the attention. The shady flat, the sketchy massage parlor, the lifeless romance, and the claustrophobic immigration office are all parts of Kalki's reality, which is dark and oppressive. The sole hope is the girl's will to locate her father. Kashyap gives just as much thought to framing and

technique as he does to plot and character development, and the result is a cinematic and wholly satisfying experience. Kalki convincingly portrays the protagonist's suffering as a lone, lost soul [TOI. \(2016\)](#).

**Figure 10**



**Figure 10** Use of Yellow, Film: That Girl in Yellow Boot

**Source** Netflix

The color yellow is used extensively as a visual motif and holds significant symbolism in this film. The protagonist of the movie, Ruth, is most frequently associated with the color yellow. It plays a significant role in illustrating her journey, challenges, and quest for identity and contentment. The color yellow can be found throughout the movie, which helps with character development and overall thematic exploration. First of all, Ruth's affinity for the color yellow is emphasized by the title "The Girl in Yellow Boots," which also serves as a summary of Ruth. In an otherwise grey and gloomy environment, her distinctive yellow boots serve as a symbolic representation of her individuality and uniqueness. She stands out from the other characters visually thanks to her yellow boots, which also draw attention to her unique personality.

**Figure 11**



**Figure 11** Use of Yellow Light, Film: That Girl in Yellow Boot

**Source** Netflix

Additionally, yellow is strategically used to create a visual contrast to Ruth's life's background, which is primarily grey and depressing. Ruth's struggles as a

foreigner in India without a work permit are portrayed in the movie as she makes her way through the seedy massage parlor industry. In this situation, the color yellow stands for a glimmer of hope and brightness amidst the darkness and difficulties she must overcome. The search for Ruth's missing father, which is marked by longing and unanswered questions, is also symbolized by the color yellow. As she looks for solutions and makes an effort to fill the void in her life, it stands for her tenacity and resiliency. Yellow represents both her desire for a better future and her ties to the past. A sense of warmth and intimacy is also evoked in the movie by the use of the color yellow. Yellow is used to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in Ruth's personal space, such as her apartment, in contrast to the chilly and impersonal setting of the massage parlor. It provides a warm and cozy touch in contrast to the harsh realities she encounters outside.

**Figure 12**



**Figure 12** Use of Blue Light, Film: That Girl in Yellow Boot  
**Source** Netflix

Blue is also very significant color for this film. Ruth's gloomy view on life is reflected in the color blue selected for the parlor curtains and the walls of her dilapidated apartment. Sadness, melancholy, and reflection are common emotional responses to the color blue. Ruth's emotional condition, loneliness, and hopelessness are all represented by this image. The predominant hue of blue in her space emphasizes the hopelessness of her situation and her quest to find joy in a harsh and alien setting.

**Figure 13**



**Figure 13** Contrast between Blue and Reddish-Yellow, Film: That Girl in Yellow Boot  
**Source** Netflix

The film's concluding frame features a striking visual contrast. Ruth is bathed in blue, whereas the land she is fleeing is shown in reddish yellow. Ruth's choice to abandon her familiar past in favor of an unknown future is reflected in this contrast. The reddish yellow indicates the world she is leaving behind, the world of her previous hardships and failures, while the calm blue light around her may suggest a feeling of separation and closure. When she shuts her eyes, it may symbolize her giving up on a brighter tomorrow as she faces an uncertain future and let go of the past.

### 5) Bombay Velvet

'Bombay Velvet' is a crime drama set in 1960s Mumbai, and it's a rare big-budget film directed by Anurag Kashyap. The film's noir aesthetic is reflected in its realistic and visually appealing production plan [Singh \(2020\)](#). Besides the book 'Mumbai Fable's by Gyan Prakash, the script was inspired by the works of journalist and novelist Naresh Fernandes. Anurag, and his two co-writers Prakash, and Vasan Bala skilfully incorporate references from 1930s gangster films, film noir, and movies like 'LA Confidential' and 'Chinatown,' revealing hidden histories and Mumbai's vibrant past. Thus, elements such as Prohibition, tabloid warfare, real-estate scams, and the development of Nariman Point are woven into the storyline. The focal point of this intricate tapestry lies in the romantic tale between Johnny Balraj and Rosie Noronha [Chopra \(2015\)](#). The film's narrative involving extortion over photographic negatives and newspaper editors issuing "stop press" orders is gives a hot of bygone period. The opening part of the film, in which Balraj and Rosie's history is revealed is surprisingly powerful and straightforward. This kind of tight writing about a love affair is really unusual. The period drama Bombay Velvet is aesthetically pleasing. The club, Bombay Velvet, itself seems alluring, and the time travel aspect adds to the experience. The outfits are equally beautiful and well-staged [Redkar \(2015\)](#).

Depiction of Bombay- In the film, there is a use of lots of contrasting colors which may signify the extremities to which people residing in Bombay are resorting to become successful. The underbelly of Bombay has been shown as dark, dull, shabby by using grey and brown colors. In comparison to this, the larger-than-life and lavish lifestyle of the rich and the criminals has been depicted by using bright colors and use of multiple colors such as red, green, blue, purple etc. The film centers around night club "Bombay Velvet", which is owned by gangster Kaizad Khambatta and uses the club for illegal activities. Like most Spaghetti Western/gangster/mafia films, most of the characters (be it gangsters, accomplice, police) are sharply dressed and wear suit throughout most of the scenes.

The film represents the 1960s era of India and borrows heavily from the noir as well as the neo-noir gangster genre and that's why there is plenty of use of sepia (reddish-brown) throughout the film. The film uses colors such as purple, dark red etc. to convey the vintage look. The reason behind naming the film Bombay Velvet could be attributed to the significance of color Velvet which was commonly used in the 60s and 70s films representing night club and casino scenes where dancers performed cabaret item numbers and singers sang jazz songs. The 60s vibe has been recreated in this film using vibrant colors such as velvet, golden yellow, red etc. in props, hairstyle, costumes, lighting etc. The streets, vintage cars, buildings, and background of the scenes beautifully capture the essence of that era.

**Figure 14**



**Figure 14** Use of Sepia in Bombay Velvet, Film: Bombay Velvet  
**Source** Disney+ Hotstar

**Figure 15**



**Figure 15** Depiction of Jazz, Film: Bombay Velvet  
**Source** Disney+ Hotstar

Rosie Noronha (The Love Interest of Johnny) and Kaizad Khambatta (The Antagonist)- The character of Rosie is very prominent in the film who is the love interest of Johnny. The naming of the character i.e., Rosie speaks immensely about her innocent, delicate yet gifted personality. Rosie aspires to be a jazz singer and that is why escapes from her abusive trainer to Bombay. The colors have been subtly used to convey certain perception regarding Rosie. For instance, she initially dresses in white but as soon as she hits her abusive master, she soon changes to green (pine green) colored clothes as she escapes which might depict change in her mindset. As she starts working at Bombay Velvet as a 'Star' Singer, she is seen wearing plenty of colors such as golden yellow, red, purple etc. throughout her performances. This use of multiple bright colors depicts change in her lifestyle after becoming famous. Towards the end of the film, when she plays her dead sister 'Rita', she is seen wearing black which signifies that she is hiding/masking her real identity.

**Figure 16**



**Figure 16** Rosie Performing at Night Club, Film: Bombay Velvet

**Source** Disney+ Hotstar

Kaizad Khambatta is the antagonist of the film who in the beginning of the film hires Johnny and then assigns him to run his night club 'Bombay Velvet'. He wears different colored suits such as grey, mustard yellow, black, red etc. throughout the film and wears goggles/shades in most of the scenes (which may symbolize masking of his intentions/cunningness). Johnny finds Kaizad as an inspiration and tries to emulate his clothing style in several scenes of the film. In the end, Kaizad is shown wearing a red-colored suit when he orders his men to kill (shoot) Johnny. The red color may denote his intention of bloodshed and his urge for taking revenge.

**Figure 17**



**Figure 17** Kaizad Wearing Suit and Goggles in One of the Scenes, Film: Bombay Velvet

**Source** Disney+ Hotstar

Johnny aka Balraj- Balraj is the main character of the film who along with his longtime friend Chimman joins the world of crime to fulfill his desire to be rich. In the beginning, Balraj is portrayed as a small-time crook who indulges in petty crime. He watches a film called 'The Roaring Twenties' in which he gets fascinated with the character of 'Eddie Bartlett' and then decides to become a 'big-shot' i.e., reputed gangster like him. He then tries to emulate the dressing style and personality of 'big shot'. This transition is shown by change in costume of Balraj who now decides to ditch white sando and dress sharply while executing theft/loot. He also develops a liking for bare knuckle street fighting which makes him feel alive even though he gets badly bruised/hurt in many such fights. The scenes of street fighting have been



depicted in yellow bulb lighting (sepia). Later, he meets another inspiration Kaizad Khambatta who renames him 'Johnny', makes him a 'big shot' and decides his fate towards the end of the film.

In many scenes, the transition from good to the bad side has been depicted with change into darker colors to depict loss of morality. For instance, Johnny while being a petty criminal wears light colors such as white but after meeting Khambatta and resorting to killing on his instructions starts wearing darker colors such red, purple etc. He starts imitating Khambatta by wearing suits and goggles. There is one scene where Kaizad gives black goggles to Johnny which is symbolic in nature as it shows that now Johnny is getting to see world from Kaizad's perspective. There is a change in costume of Johnny when he meets Rosie. He wears red (maroon) when romance blossoms between them. The standoff scene that leads to death of Johnny is in sepia tone that conveys how Johnny's life became a film and he died a hero's (big shot) death, just the way he wanted.

**Figure 18**



**Figure 18** Johnny's Sepia Costume, Film: Bombay Velvet

**Source** Disney+ Hotstar

**Figure 19**



**Figure 19** Death Scene in Sepia Tone, Film: Bombay Velvet

**Source** Disney+ Hotstar

Apart from the main characters, the side characters such as the police officers (Inspector Vishwas Kulkarni and Basil) investigating death of Rosie are sharply dressed and are often seen wearing colors such as grey and blue (baby blue) which may signify trust and authority.

Through the table given below, a brief overview is given for what each color represents in films of Anurag Kashyap.

**Table 1**

Table 1 Summary of Various Colors in Different Films					
Film	Yellow	Blue	Red	Green	Pink
<b>Black Friday</b>	Apprehension and tension, positivity and optimism, gravity of the circumstances	Flashbacks and conspiracy scenarios, emotional distance, societal hypocrisy	Symbolizes tension, intensity, passion, anger, and a sense of urgency	-	-
<b>Gulaal</b>	-	-	Represents revolution, passion, love, and brutal betrayal	-	-
<b>DevD</b>	Anger	Dreams and fantasy	Lust, passion, and desire	Jealousy and resentment	femininity, Kindness and compassion
<b>That Girl in Yellow Boots</b>	To provide individuality, uniqueness, visual contrast	Sadness, melancholy, and reflection	-	-	-
<b>Bombay Velvet</b>	Vintage look, fight and struggle	Trust and authority	Bloodshed, romance		

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Anurag Kashyap is a director well-known for his bold ideas and distinctive storytelling, which frequently examines issues of politics, crime, and corruption. Kashyap's unconventional and gritty filmmaking style relies heavily on color, which serves to both advance the story and create a distinct visual style. Kashyap, uses color as a potent visual tool to elicit feelings, improve storytelling, and convey deeper meanings. Kashyap demonstrates his mastery of crafting a multi-layered cinematic experience by using color as a visual storytelling element. He invites the audience to explore the nuances and complexity of human relationships as well as the transformative power of emotions through the use of bold color palette. [Ironi et al. \(2005\)](#)

The use of color is rather blatant in his first film, 'Black Friday', which was set in the Palm neighborhood of 93 Bombay. While a blue filter is used to depict the crucial events leading up to the explosion and the carnage itself, representing the emotional disconnection of all those involved, a deep crimson filter is used to depict the interrogation of a few suspects. [Koleini et al. \(2010\)](#)

The protagonists of the film 'Gulaal' take part in a variety of protests. People protest for many different reasons, including the pursuit of power, the pursuit of love, the rejection of the monarchy, and the pursuit of the rush that comes from defying authority. Both brothers and sisters are protesting the democratic

government's control and the use of violence. Red has become a ubiquitous symbol of these protests, though its exact meaning varies depending on who you ask. Dukey, a member of the royal family, attempts to rally support for his cause of retaking the province by projecting the idea of a movement onto his supporters. The revolutionary fires have spread to his house and his face. They've been drawn using natural colors. [Lavvafi et al. \(2010\)](#)

Anurag Kashyap uses color brilliantly as a symbolic language in 'The Girl in Yellow Boots', illuminating the inner lives of his characters and the dynamics between them. Yellow symbolizes both Ruth's search for her father and her own sense of identity. The human eye is most attuned to the color yellow, and it also appears to be the only splash of color in Ruth's otherwise drab life as a migrant in India without a valid work visa. To supplement her income, she takes a job at a massage parlor that has a questionable reputation. The gloomy mood of her parlor drapes and the walls of her dilapidated apartment is reflected in her outlook on life. In the final scene of the film, after Ruth has come to terms with the unpleasant truth about her father, she takes off the boots, signifying the end of her quest for happiness. The world she's leaving behind is depicted in sunny yellow, while a soothing blue light surrounds her in the final shot. When she goes to sleep, she throws away her last chance at a better day. [Liu \(2022\)](#)

The protagonist's mental breakdown in 'Dev.D' was also conveyed through the use of color. The envious greens used at the start of his "emotional attyachar" grow even more so as the film progresses. Dev is drawn to the lonely, blue landscapes of self-destruction, and he finds company among those who encourage his substance abuse. As he walks deeper into the neon-lit streets, the vivid colors symbolize his thoughts as they wander off into the dangerous but momentarily brilliant world of trucks. However, this is mitigated by the film's later use of the color pink, which represents empathy and is associated throughout the film with Chanda, the character from whom Dev seeks atonement. In this illustration, he is literally covered in pink.

## **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

None.

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