

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD 500 007



SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

STYLISTICS
2016-2017

(This set of assignments is printed on 10 pages.)

Instructions: Study each block carefully before you attempt the assignments for that block. Try to adhere to the word limit prescribed for each question. Do not reproduce content from books, web sites or the course material. Write in your own words and cite any sources that you refer to.

Assignment I
(based on Block I, Units 1, 2 & 3)

- I.
 - i. In what way can both New Criticism and Stylistics be considered “intrinsic” approaches to literature? (200 words)
 - ii. If New Criticism and Stylistics are both “intrinsic” approaches, how are they to be distinguished from each other? (200 words)
 - iii. What in your view are the “extrinsic” approaches to literature? (200 words)
- II. Describe the important developments in Linguistics in the 20th century which have had a bearing on the development of Stylistics. (500 - 750 words)
- III. What do think would be the advantages of adopting a stylistic approach to the teaching and/or learning of literature at the intermediate or undergraduate level? Discuss also the difficulties in following such an approach. (250 + 250 words)
- IV. Read the poem “The Road Not Taken” given below, examine the analysis that follows the poem and then answer the questions given after the analysis:

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

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Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same, 10

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back. 15

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference. 20

Analysis

This poem intrigues readers because it is at once so simple and so deeply resonant. Recalling a walk in the woods, the speaker describes how he came upon a fork in the road, which forced him to choose one path over another. Though “sorry” that he “could not travel both,” he made a choice after carefully weighing his two options. This, essentially, is what happens in the poem; there is no other action. However, the incident is charged with symbolic significance by the speaker’s reflections on the necessity and consequences of his decision.

The final stanza indicates that the choice concerns more than simply walking down a road, for the speaker says that his chosen path has affected his entire life – “that [it] has made all the difference.” Frost draws on a familiar enough metaphor when he compares life to a journey, but he is also calling attention to a less commonly noted problem: despite our expectations, aspirations, appetites, hopes, and desires, we can’t have it all. Making one choice precludes another. It is impossible to determine what particular decision the speaker refers to: perhaps he had to choose a college, a career, a spouse; perhaps he was confronted with mutually exclusive ideas, beliefs, or values. There is no way to know, because Frost wisely creates a symbolic choice and implicitly invites us to supply our own circumstances.

The speaker’s reflections about his choice are as central to an understanding of the poem as the choice itself; indeed, they may be more central. He describes the road taken as “having perhaps the better claim, / Because it was grassy and wanted wear”; he prefers the “less traveled” path. This seems to be an expression of individualism, which would account for “the difference” his choice made in his life. But Frost complicates matters by having the speaker also acknowledge that there was no significant difference between the two roads: one was “just as fair” as the other; each was “worn . . . really about the same”; and “both that morning equally lay / In leaves no step had trodden black.”

The speaker imagines that in the future, “ages and ages hence,” he will recount his choice with “a sigh” that will satisfactorily explain the course of his life, but Frost seems to be having a little fun here by showing us how the speaker will embellish his past decision to make it appear more dramatic. What we hear is someone trying to convince himself that the choice he made significantly changed his life. When he recalls what happened in the “yellow

wood,” a color that gives a glow to that irretrievable moment when his life seemed to be on verge of a momentous change, he appears more concerned with the path he did not choose than with the one he took Frost shrewdly titles the poem to suggest the speaker’s sense of loss at not being able to “travel both” roads. When the speaker’s reflections about his choice are examined, the poem reveals his nostalgia instead of affirming his decision to travel a self-reliant path in life.

The rhymed stanzas of “The Road Not Taken” follow a pattern established in the first five lines (*abaab*). This rhyme scheme reflects, perhaps, the speaker’s efforts to shape his life into a pleasing and coherent form. The natural speech rhythms Frost uses allow him to integrate the rhymes unobtrusively, but there is a slight shift in lines 19-20, when the speaker asserts self-consciously that the “less traveled” road – which we already know to be basically the same as the other road – “made all the difference.” Unlike all the other rhymes in the poem, “difference” does not rhyme precisely with “hence.” The emphasis that must be placed on “*difference*” to make it rhyme perfectly with “hence” may suggest that the speaker is trying just a little too hard to pattern his life on his earlier choice in the woods.

1. Would you consider the above analysis to be a stylistic analysis of the poem in question? Give reasons for your answer. [100 words]
2. What are the linguistic features of the poem that the analysis takes into account? [100 words]
3. What other linguistic features of the poem would you like to consider in your interpretation (for example, the tense and aspect)?

Assignment II
(based on Block I, Unit 4)

I. Comment on the **foregrounding devices** employed in each of the following utterances and on the effect they create. Do not write more than five sentences for each item:

1. Sensing a poem about to happen
Two letters demanded to be written
- From Tony Connor, “An Evening at Home”
2. And all the air a solemn stillness holds.
- From Thomas Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”
3. I scream, you scream
We all scream
For ice cream
4. But where’s the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleas’d to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbias’d, or by favour, or by spite;
Not dully prepossess’d, nor blindly right;
Tho’ learn’d, well-bred; and tho’ well-bred, sincere,
Modestly bold, and humanly severe
- From Alexander Pope, “An Essay on Criticism” ll. 631-36

- II. Identify and comment on the major foregrounding device employed in the following poem. (Clue: Observe the relationship in spelling and meaning between the two words in each line.) [250 words]

Robert Morgan
Mountain Graveyard
for the author of “Slow Owls”

<i>spore</i>	<i>prose</i>
stone	notes
slate	tales
sacred	cedars
heart	earth
asleep	please
hated	death

(Note: “Slow Owls” was the title of a poem by another poet, Jonathan Williams.)

Assignment III
(based on Block II, Unit 1)

- I. Analyse the following poem relating its stylistic features to its theme and tone. Pay particular attention to (a) phonological patterning (b) repetition and parallelism and (c) lexical contrasts and collocations. [1000 words]

G.M. Hopkins
God’s Grandeur

THE world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last light off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

- II. Identify and explain the chief foregrounding devices(s) used in the following poem, relating it to its theme. [500 words]

Benjamin Zaphaniah

De rong song

Your tea is
Dry
Your ice is
Hot,
Your head is
Tied up in a
Not,
Don't worry
Be happy.

You worry
Because
You're hurrying
And hurry
Because
You're worrying,
Don't happy
Be worried

Assignment IV

(based on Block II, Unit 2 and Unit 3)

- I. Read the short story "Cat in the Rain" provided with the course material in **Appendix VIII** and identify the mode of narration/ point of view employed. What perspective results from this choice? Explain. [1000 words]
- II. Given below is an extract from the opening of Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Analyze and explain the mode of speech and thought presentation used in the extract. [1000 words]

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.

For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning — fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was)

solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, “Musing among the vegetables?”— was that it? —“I prefer men to cauliflowers”— was that it? He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out on to the terrace — Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull; it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished — how strange it was! — a few sayings like this about cabbages.

She stiffened a little on the kerb, waiting for Durtnall’s van to pass. A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright.

- III. Given below is an extract from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Read it carefully and then analyze it in terms of what you have learned about Conversational Maxims and Conversational Implicature in Unit 3 of this block. [1000 words]

[Just before the conversation in the extract, Polonius claims, (before Queen Gertrude, Hamlet’s mother, and King Claudius) to know the reason for Hamlet’s affliction. He proceeds to read out a letter he had confiscated from Ophelia, his daughter, written by Hamlet. Criticizing the style in which Hamlet has written the letter, Polonius tells Claudius and Gertrude that he has forbidden Ophelia from accepting any advances from the Prince. And this, he claims, has led poor Hamlet into madness. Polonius then suggests that he and Claudius hide themselves behind a needlework wall hanging so they can eavesdrop on the couple when Ophelia meets with Hamlet to return his love gifts. Claudius agrees, just as Hamlet enters reading. Polonius asks the King and Queen to leave them so that he may speak to Hamlet himself.

Extract begins:

LORD POLONIUS

Away, I do beseech you, both away:
I’ll board him presently.

Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, and Attendants
Enter HAMLET, reading

LORD POLONIUS

O, give me leave:
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

HAMLET

Well, God-a-mercy.

LORD POLONIUS
Do you know me, my lord?

HAMLET
Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

LORD POLONIUS
Not I, my lord.

HAMLET
Then I would you were so honest a man.

LORD POLONIUS
Honest, my lord!

HAMLET
Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be
one man picked out of ten thousand.

LORD POLONIUS
That's very true, my lord.

HAMLET
For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a
god kissing carrion,--Have you a daughter?

LORD POLONIUS
I have, my lord.

HAMLET
Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a
blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive.
Friend, look to't.

LORD POLONIUS
[Aside] How say you by that? Still harping on my
daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I
was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone: and
truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for
love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.
What do you read, my lord?

HAMLET
Words, words, words.

LORD POLONIUS
What is the matter, my lord?

HAMLET
Between who?

LORD POLONIUS
I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

HAMLET
Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here
that old men have grey beards, that their faces are
wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and
plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of
wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir,
though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet
I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for
yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab
you could go backward.

LORD POLONIUS
[Aside] Though this be madness, yet there is method
in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

HAMLET
Into my grave.

LORD POLONIUS
Indeed, that is out o' the air.
[Aside]
How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness
that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity
could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will
leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of
meeting between him and my daughter.--My honourable
lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

HAMLET
You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will
more willingly part withal: except my life, except
my life, except my life.

LORD POLONIUS
Fare you well, my lord.

HAMLET
These tedious old fools!

Assignment V
(based on Block III)

- I. In Unit 1 of this Block, we looked at how sexism in language is reflected in the generic usage of pronouns and words like ‘man’, ‘writer’, ‘nurse’. In the light of this, read the poem given below and comment on the use of the following words in the poem: ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘one’, ‘those’, ‘poet’. Do you think the poem addresses a gender-neutral readership? Explain your answer. [750-1000 words]

Nissim Ezekiel
Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher

To force the pace and never to be still
Is not the way of those who study birds
Or women. The best poets wait for words.
The hunt is not an exercise of will
But patient love relaxing on a hill
To note the movement of a timid wing;
Until the one who knows that she is loved
No longer waits but risks surrendering -
In this the poet finds his moral proved
Who never spoke before his spirit moved.

The slow movement seems, somehow, to say much more.
To watch the rarer birds, you have to go
Along deserted lanes and where the rivers flow
In silence near the source, or by a shore
Remote and thorny like the heart's dark floor.
And there the women slowly turn around,
Not only flesh and bone but myths of light
With darkness at the core, and sense is found
By poets lost in crooked, restless flight,
The deaf can hear, the blind recover sight.

- II. An important concern of feminist stylistics with regard to literary discourse is the description of women by male writers (refer to Section 1.6, Unit 1, in this Block). Now, read the following extract from Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and then analyse the manner in which Tess is portrayed and ‘viewed’ by the male figure in the extract, Angel Clare. Cite and explain specific words/phrases. (This scene occurs in Chapter 27 of the novel, after Clare has declared his love for Tess.)

[1000 words]

He unbridled and fed his horse, and as he re-entered the house the clock struck three. Three was the afternoon skimming-hour; and, with the stroke, Clare heard the creaking of the floor-boards above, and then the touch of a descending foot on the stairs. It was Tess's, who in another moment came down before his eyes.

She had not heard him enter, and hardly realized his presence there. She was yawning, and he saw the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's.

She had stretched one arm so high above her coiled-up cable of hair that he could see its satin delicacy above the sunburn; her face was flushed with sleep, and her eyelids hung heavy over their pupils. The brim-fulness of her nature breathed from her. It was a moment when a woman's soul is more incarnate than at any other time; when the most spiritual beauty bespeaks itself flesh; and sex takes the outside place in the presentation.

Then those eyes flashed brightly through their filmy heaviness, before the remainder of her face was well awake. With an oddly compounded look of gladness, shyness, and surprise, she exclaimed--'O Mr Clare! How you frightened me--I--'

There had not at first been time for her to think of the changed relations which his declaration had introduced; but the full sense of the matter rose up in her face when she encountered Clare's tender look as he stepped forward to the bottom stair.

'Dear, darling Tessy!' he whispered, putting his arm round her, and his face to her flushed cheek. 'Don't, for Heaven's sake, Mister me any more. I have hastened back so soon because of you!'

Tess's excitable heart beat against his by way of reply; and there they stood upon the red-brick floor of the entry, the sun slanting in by the window upon his back, as he held her tightly to his breast; upon her inclining face, upon the blue veins of her temple, upon her naked arm, and her neck, and into the depths of her hair. Having been lying down in her clothes she was warm as a sunned cat. At first she would not look straight up at him, but her eyes soon lifted, and his plumbed the deepness of the ever-varying pupils, with their radiating fibrils of blue, and black, and gray, and violet, while she regarded him as Eve at her second waking might have regarded Adam.

- III.** In Unit 2 of this Block you read about the different strategies used by postcolonial writers to appropriate English—glossing, syntactic fusion, neologism, calques, etc. Examine the use of one or more of such strategies in fiction by any Indian English writer that you have read. You must provide examples of such strategies used, and explain them. [1000 words]
- IV.** One of the characteristic features of postcolonial literatures is the representation of differences in proficiency levels and codes of “english”. Explain the effects and purposes achieved by such representation, with reference to the short story “Bride for the Sahib” provided with this Block as Appendix X. [1000 words]
