

Tutorial Letter 202/1/2016

GENRES IN LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE: THEORY, STYLE AND POETICS

ENG2602

Semester 1

Department of English Studies

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BAR CODE

Dear students

PRE-EXAMINATION INFORMATION

The examination will be a two hour paper. You will be expected to write two essays. The paper will be divided into two sections: a section on language and a section on literature. You will be expected to answer one question per section.

The section on language will have a question on Persuasive Writing and a question on Conversation Analysis. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

The section on literature will have a question on Prose Fiction, a question on Poetry, and a question on Drama. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

Even though you will have a choice in the exam, we suggest that you do at least some preparation on all the sections, and perhaps prepare at least two units per section in detail. If you only prepare one unit per section there is a risk that you could find the question on the unit that you prepared to be difficult. If, on the other hand, you are prepared to answer a question on more than one unit per section, you would be able to switch to answering on a different unit.

In each unit, you can expect the following types of questions:

Persuasive Prose: you will be given a short passage from an unseen persuasive text (such as a newspaper article, an advertisement, a political speech, etc.). You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage: this means that you will have to outline briefly **what** the passage is about, **why** it has been written, and **who** the target audience is, and then to explain in detail **how** it has been written. Your essay should focus on **how** the author **uses language** to persuade his/her target audience.

Conversation: you will either be given a transcript of a conversation or asked to construct one yourself. You will then be asked to analyse the conversation according to specific aspects and features of Conversational Analysis. You could also be asked to write an essay on an aspect or a range of aspects of Conversation Analysis, such as (but not limited to) turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, fillers, cooperative principles, implicature, politeness, etc. Refer to the 'Conversational analysis additional resource' document under the 'Additional Resources' tab on myUnisa for a survey of the key facets of this section.

Prose fiction: you will be given a short passage from an unseen prose fiction text. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage, discussing in detail how it uses language, for example, to portray character, shape, tone and setting, for thematic and symbolic effects, etc.

Poetry: you will be given a poem from the list of poems provided under 'Additional Resources' on myUnisa. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the poem, discussing in detail how it uses language to present and explore its main themes and concerns.

Drama: you will be given an excerpt from an unseen play. You will be expected to write an essay in which you analyse how the passage uses language, for example, to form imagery or reveal the qualities of the characters in relation to the passage's main themes and concerns.

Use the following additional guidelines to help you prepare for the examination:

- Read your study guide and the prescribed book. Make notes of the important features of each genre of writing.

- Read as widely as possible, including newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, poems and dramas. Write notes on the texts that you read, outlining the way they use the strategies that are appropriate to each genre.
- Pay attention to general features of language use, such as point of view, register, diction, tone, irony and figures of speech as you analyse extracts from texts in preparation for the examination.
- Write sample essays in which you examine the way each extract in the reader uses the resources of its genre.

Good luck with your preparations!

RESPONSE TO ASSIGNMENT 02

QUESTION 1: POETRY

The assignment consisted of **THREE** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1, Question 2 or Question 3. If you had chosen Question 1, you would have been required to answer a question on Poetry.

Read Study Unit 4 in your Study Guide before beginning this assignment. The activities in your study guide will train you to provide a relevant and insightful reading of the poem and will guide you in tackling such important aspects of the poem as the poetic subject, form and argument, diction and mood, main ideas and tropes, and poetic language.

Study Dorothy Parker's poem, "Symptom Recital," closely and identify the main theme of the poem. Write an essay in which you analyse how she communicates this theme by using syntax, tropes, schemes, diction, and other linguistic features.

The poem is available at the following URL:

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/symptom-recital/>

To answer this question, you could have approached in the manner outlined below. Please note that there is not one, correct way to write a literature essay and that you could have approached the question differently, as long as you address the question and demonstrate that you have reached the outcomes of the module (you can find these on p.4-5 of Tutorial Letter 101).

If you read the assignment question carefully, you will see that it asks you to do two things. Firstly, you need to identify the main theme (or poetic subject) of the poem. Secondly, it asks you to discuss how that theme is communicated through linguistic and poetic devices.

Therefore, your first step would be to read attentively through the poem a few times. It also helps to read the poem out loud. What do you think the poem is about? Can you identify any linguistic and poetic devices? As you read through the poem, annotate it with your own notes.

Due to copyright limitations, I am not allowed to reproduce the poem in this letter. You are, however, welcome to copy it line by line in the table below. That way the annotation will make more sense.

My annotation looks like this:

Symptom Recital By Dorothy Parker		The title creates the expectation that a list of symptoms to an illness will be recounted. The reader is curious to hear the list of symptoms which will determine an illness that the speaker is supposedly suffering from.
L1		The poem starts with an announcement that the speaker is dissatisfied with her disposition. The speaker is self-critical and the expectation is created that she would prefer a different mind-set.
L2		The second line explains the above mentioned state of mind and describes it with a list of words: "bitter," "querulous," and "unkind." (L2) This not only points inward to the speaker's own mood, but also outward to her interaction with others, since she describes herself as "querulous," (L2) which means difficult and fussy and "unkind," (L2) which suggests that she is unpleasant towards other people.
L3		The speaker's dissatisfaction now turns from her emotional state to her body. The severity of her frustration is emphasized with the alliteration of the "h" in "I <u>h</u> ate my legs, I <u>h</u> ate my <u>h</u> ands" (L3).
L4		Instead of listing what she feels, the speaker now tells us what she does not do: she does not long for "lovelier lands" (L4), this can refer to the fact that she has no desire to travel or merely just to better her circumstances. In the latter case, "lovelier lands" (L4) is a metaphor . The expectation of self-improvement that is created in the first line is therefore contradicted. The speaker is dissatisfied with her current state, but also does not feel the desire to remove herself from her current situation. The speaker also possibly uses the alliterating "lovelier lands" (L4) sarcastically, since it contrasts so sharply with the situation that she has sketched so far.
L5		In this line, the speaker voices pessimism about the future. The "dawn's recurrent light" (L5) refers metonymically to the speaker's future. Instead of looking forward to a new day and taking comfort in the certainty that the sun will rise every morning, the speaker "dreads" or fears (L5) this. That which should be regarded with hope is feared. This notion is emphasized by the alliteration of the "d" in " <u>d</u> read the <u>d</u> awn's" (L5).
L6		While the preceding line might suggest that, if the speaker dreads the arrival of the morning, she might find comfort in sleeping. The poem, however, does not present the reader with any escape from the speaker's miserable circumstances – she also detests going to sleep in the evenings (L6).
L7		In the seventh line, the speaker confesses her snobbery towards well intentioned, if somewhat naïve, people.
L8		The speaker's difficulty in relating to other people is continued in the eighth line when she admits that she has lost her sense of humour. These two lines thus point to the speaker's troubled interactions with other people due to her snobbery and disagreeableness.
L9		The artistic ventures of painting or writing, sometimes assumed to calm restlessness, do not soothe the speaker. Keep in mind that this poem itself is one such venture. The poem is therefore self-reflexive, since it refers to itself.

L10		The speaker here uses a metaphor to compare her world to “a lot of tripe” (L10). The speaker’s disposition (L1), body (L3), interactions with other people (L7-8) as well as her artistic pursuits are therefore compared to something which is worthless and should be discarded.
L11		In this line, the speaker states that her good opinions or beliefs about the world have been shattered. The figurative use of the word “empty-breasted” (L11) is interesting. It is a variation on the more commonly used “empty-handed” in which a person declares that he or she did not get what they wanted, or have nothing to contribute. By using “empty-breasted” (L11) instead of “empty-handed,” the speaker not only voices her dissatisfaction and disappointment in not having gotten what she wanted, but also the fact that she is emotionally deprived since the word “breast” can refer to the chest area, where emotion and feeling lie. The word can also refer to the female breast. In this sense, the breast can have either a sexual or a nurturing function. By stating that she is “empty-breasted” (L11), the speaker thus implies that she is emotionally depleted and unable to nurture or respond sexually to another person.
L12		With this line, the speaker suggests that, apart from the rather dismal and depressing thoughts she has shared with the reader up to this point, she has even darker thoughts which could lead to her incarceration. The reader can only speculate on these unknown thoughts which make them seem even darker. A person cannot actually be arrested for their thoughts, which makes this an example of hyperbole . This poetic device then emphasizes the idea that the speaker’s unnamed thoughts are very dark and disturbing.
L13		The speaker’s list of symptoms continues into the fourth quatrain. Whereas the reader can assume that she is not “well” (L13) or healthy from what precedes this line, she denies any easy diagnosis by stating that she is “not sick” (L13). The assumption is then that the speaker does not have a physical problem or sickness that can be diagnosed and treated. In being neither sick nor well, the speaker is not only unwilling, but also unable to change her disposition. It is also possible that because she is not “sick” (L13), her ailment is not one of the body, and yet it still affects her as if it was, since she is also “not well” (L13).
L14		In line fourteen, the speaker states that the dreams that she once had are completely destroyed. The phrase “shot to hell” (L14) is a metaphor which emphasizes the vehemence with which the speaker’s dreams were annihilated. The word “hell” (L14) is associated with unredeemable and unbearable situations. The dreams that the speaker thus once cherished have been irretrievably lost.
L15		While the speaker has used diction throughout the poem which suggests an exaggeration or light mockery, she deviates in this line from her tongue-in-cheek cynicism by stating earnestly that her “soul is crushed” (L15). The word “soul” can mean many different things. It can refer to the spiritual part of a person, his or her inner character, a strong and good human feeling, or simply to a person. By stating that her “soul is crushed” (L15), the speaker implies that her entire being is undone. She emphasizes this with the next part of the line: “my spirit sore” (L15), which suggests that her mind, feelings and character are aching. This is emphasized by the alliteration in “my <u>s</u> pirit <u>s</u> ore” (L15).

L16	In this line, the speaker confesses that her disposition and actions have lead her to dislike herself.
L17	The last quatrain starts with another list, this time of the speaker's negative behavior. To "cavil" is to complain unnecessarily (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000:173). To "quarrel" is to engage in angry arguments or disagreements (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000:954). To "grumble" is to complain in an ill-tempered way (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000:526), while "grouse" means to complain in a manner that annoys other people (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000:525). The idea that the speaker is annoying those around her with her complaints about her current state is thus emphasized by listing four words with more or less the same meaning to describe her behavior. The reader clearly knows that the speaker not only complains in an unnecessary and bad tempered way, but also engages in arguments with others in the process. The use of four short, bi-syllabic words, the first three of which ends on the same "el"-sound and the last two of which alliterate on the "gr"-sound, speed up the pace of the poem. This also suggests impatience about her distress on the speaker's side.
L18	According to the Oxford Dictionary of English (2015), the "narrow house" refers to the grave. Used in this sense, this phrase is therefore a metaphor which compares a grave to a constricted residence. This is ironic, since one would not need a house or home once dead and the fact that it is constricted would not matter. In line eighteen of this poem, the speaker states that she is contemplating the grave – or metonymically – death. This, in turn, points to the fact that the speaker's dark thoughts have truly reached a depressive point.
L19	Linking with the above mentioned reference to her inability to respond sexually, the speaker now states that the thought of men makes her "shudder" (L19). The word is used ambiguously. One can either shudder because one is cold or frightened, or because one is overcome with emotion. The emotion which overcomes one can be either positive or negative, as long as it is a strong emotion. The line ends with an ellipsis which suggests that her thought is unfinished. The ellipsis also slows the pace of the poem down. The reader is prepared for a conclusion to this thought which should follow in the next line.
L20	This line is the conclusion of the poem and stands in contrast to the rest of the poem. After a very gloomy description of the speaker's disposition and symptoms, her final diagnosis is that she is about to fall in love. This contradicts traditional ideas about love as an enriching and romantic experience – usually something that people look forward to. The fact that the speaker uses the word "again" in this line, suggests that her reticence over falling in love is rooted in bitter experience. Love is therefore not seen as an enriching romantic experience, but rather as an illness.

Note on the structure: The structure of the poem is carefully controlled. Each sentence is written over one or two lines. The poem contains five quatrains each of which contain two rhyming couplets. Parker's frankness about seemingly banal issues (her dissatisfaction with her body, describing her world as "a lot of tripe" (L10)) contrasts with the rigid formal structure of the poem. This results in a tongue-in-cheek tone.

The poem is written in the first person – almost every line is started with either "I" or "my." This suggests that the list of symptoms recited in the poem is the result of a self-evaluation. Together with the frankness with which some of the critical claims such as "I do not like me any more" (L16) is made this suggests that the poem can be seen as a confession.

Note on the diction: Parker uses quite a few words that have such established positive connotations that they become almost saccharine and clichéd. These words include “lovelier lands” (L4), “the dawn’s recurrent light” (L5), “earnest” (L7), and “gentlest joke” (L8). When Parker uses these words, they are accompanied by a **negative polarity**. For example, the speaker “do[es] not yearn for lovelier lands” (L4) and “dread[s] the dawn’s recurrent light” (L5). Instead of creating a light and pleasant atmosphere, these words therefore rather express bitterness and cynicism.

Apart from these words with positive connotations, Parker also uses words with quite definite negative connotations such as “bitter” (L2), “querulous” (L2), “unkind” (L2), “hate” (L3), “dread” (L5), “snoot” (L7), “tripe” (L10), “disillusioned” (L11), “hell” (L14), “crushed” (L15), “sore” (L15) etc. These words can all be associated with a state of dissatisfaction, disappointment, cynicism and hostility. Therefore, the diction in this poem creates a dark and depressive atmosphere.

Note on the poetic subject: Through my interpretation of the poem, I have come to the conclusion that the main theme of the poem is “love as an illness rather than an enriching romantic experience.”

References:

Oxford Dictionary of English. 2015. 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press. Online: <http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.oasis.unisa.ac.za/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/acref-9780199571123> (Date of Access: 15 December 2015).

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. 2000. 6th Edition. Oxford University Press.

Parker, Dorothy. 2003. “Symptom Recital.” Online: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/symptom-recital/> (Date of Access: 15 December 2015).

Firstly, you should know that this analysis is by no means exhaustive – there are more observations that you could have made about the poem. Secondly, you should note that the only sources that I used when making these notes were the poem itself, the study guide, and dictionaries. While this may seem daunting to you, it is a skill that you should acquire in this module.

It is also very important to note that these notes of mine are only the result of the first step of answering the question. Now that I have an idea what the poem is about, identified the main theme of the poem and some of the poetic and linguistic devices that are used, it is time to plan my essay.

Writing an essay:

As stated, I identified the main theme of the poem as “**love as an illness.**” Now that I have done that, I must go back to my annotation and identify the devices that support this theme. You could have identified a different theme in the poem and would then have to go back to your own analysis to identify devices that support that theme.

I argue that Parker surprises the reader of this poem by only revealing at the very end that the reason that the speaker is suffering (her illness) is the fact that she is about to fall in love. If I read through my analysis again, I see that two contrasting ideas (love and illness) are therefore presented and supported by the following features of the poem (there could be more, but these are the ones that I chose):

- 1.) The diction alternates between being sweetly pleasant and depressingly dark and banal. This creates a tongue-in-cheek tone (which, in turn contrasts with the formal structure).
- 2.) The poem makes use of exaggerated metaphors which sharply contrast with the last line of the poem.
- 3.) The poem makes use of metonymy to express the speaker’s disposition

Now that I have determined my main argument, I can plan my essay:

Introduction: briefly **state my main argument** and **map out the rest of my essay**. In this case, my introduction would look something like this:

Dorothy Parker's poem, *Symptom Recital*, represents love as an illness rather than an enriching romantic experience. Parker takes the reader by surprise by only revealing in the last line of the poem that the list of depressingly dark symptoms that she lists are symptoms of being on the cusp of falling in love. In this essay I shall argue that Parker supports the comparison of two contrasting ideas, namely love and illness, through diction and exaggerated metaphors and metonymy in the poem.

Paragraph 1: Diction

- Words with negative connotations.
- Words with positive connotations – exaggerated, saccharine and clichéd.
 - Coupled with negative polarity.
- Significance?
- Mood/tone created?

Paragraph 2: metaphors

- Metaphors are exaggerated. Increases contrast with last line:
 - “yearn for lovelier lands”
 - how?
 - why?
 - “My world is but a lot of tripe.”
 - how?
 - why?
 - “shot to hell.”
 - how?
 - why?

Paragraph 3: Metonymy

- The speaker metonymically refers to the dawn of a new day and death.
 - “I dread the dawn's recurrent light;”
 - how?
 - why?
 - “I ponder on the narrow house.”
 - how?
 - why?

Conclusion: briefly summarize **how devices and features support the main theme of the poem**.

For example,

I conclude that in *Symptom Recital*, Parker uses various strategies to compare two seemingly contrasting ideas: that of love and illness. Throughout the poem the speaker seems to be describing an illness. The diction used in this description is either light and pleasant, to the point that it becomes saccharine and clichéd, or very dark and depressing. When the diction is pleasant, it is used with a negative polarity which then only strengthens the dark, depressing mood of the poem. The metaphors in the poem further exaggerate the speaker's cynical disposition. The use of metonymy supports the speaker's tongue-in-cheek tone and portrays her disposition and desperate and extreme. When the last line of the poem is considered in light of the above observations, *Symptom Recital* therefore suggests that being on the cusp of falling in love is akin to an illness in which one's disposition is hopeless and bitter.

Remember to give credit to your sources (see Tutorial Letter 301). If, for example, you want to define terms like "metaphor," "metonymy," or "negative polarity" you need to cite your study guide or tutorial letters. If you use a dictionary, you need to cite it as well (as I did in the analysis above). List all the sources that you used in your bibliography.

TOTAL: 50

Best wishes for the exams!

Lida Krüger

QUESTION 2: PROSE

The assignment consisted of **THREE** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1, Question 2 or Question 3. If you had chosen Question 2, you would have been required to answer a question on Prose.

In this question you were required to perform a close reading of the passage from "Unto Dust" by Herman Charles Bosman and then **write an essay** of **approximately 1000** words in which you analysed it. Your analysis had to be **restricted to the given passage only** and you were supposed to focus on the following aspects:

The narrative perspective (point of view)

How the theme is introduced

How characters are portrayed

How tone and diction influence meaning

How poetic devices and other language techniques are used to convey meaning

The sample below is a guide on how your essay could have been presented. Take note of the italicized comments as you read along.

The Sample Response

This excerpt from *Unto Dust* by Charles Bosman focuses on death and how people react to it depending on different circumstances. This essay will explore the point he makes, through an analysis of the narrative perspective and its effect, the portrayal of characters, the influence of tone and diction on meaning and the use of poetic devices and other language techniques to convey this point.

(This is just an example of an introduction you could write, modelled on the idea of paraphrasing the given topic to give your essay direction. A more accomplished writer will have a more intricate presentation.)

Death being a rather sensitive topic, the writer brings the reader closer to it through the use of the first person's narrative perspective, recognizable by the pronoun "I". As a reader one does not only absorb the events in the narrative but becomes subjective and reflective trying to determine how much one concurs with the narrator through similar experiences or by putting oneself in the shoes of the narrator. The narrator says, "And I think that your past life has got a lot to do with the way you feel when you get near the end of your days." As a reader you may agree or disagree with the claim, whichever one you decide on is immaterial; the fact is you will have been drawn into the narrator's world, which is the point of this narrative perspective.

This way of engaging the reader is effective as it sets the foundation for the narration that follows which is an example of someone who is nearing the end of his life and considers the life he led. For the readers that had earlier agreed, this example reaffirms their perspective, while for the opposers, the narrative perspective could reaffirm that this is not to be believed in its entirety as this narrative perspective being subjective is limited to one perspective and therefore not entirely credible. The last two sentences of the excerpt would vindicate this line of thought as they have the incredibility of an urban legend. However since death is the dominant theme, there will always be that doubt as people take death seriously and may not expect people to lie about it or what relates to it.

The conversational tone used through the pronoun "you" also compels the readers to be more subjective in the reading as this gives a feeling of being addressed personally. This may lead the readers to reflect on what the writer says about death of elderly people, by imagining themselves in that situation where nobody cares how they die.

This theme of death is introduced from the onset in the title of this fictitious excerpt, *Unto Dust* which is part of a commonly used expression in the Christian faith during funerals, "Remember man that you are dust and unto dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19) . The title immediately alerts the reader to the fact that the text is about death. This is confirmed in the first line when the narrator mentions, "When you grow old, nobody is interested in the manner of your dying". The fact that it seems to be linked to age makes it noteworthy as it alludes to the thought that death should come when people are aged and are expected to have accomplished their goals in life. This extends the theme to not only be about death in general but more specifically about the stage of life one is at when death comes. There is an implication that if one dies young then people become concerned as they may worry about what led to that person's death. This implication gives rise to a misconception that people tend to have about death being justified in the case of the aged and not young people, since young people "have so much to live for".

Diction like “past life”, “death-bed” has also been used to reiterate this theme of death throughout the excerpt, as “past life” in this context has implications of having come to the end of this life and taking stock of one’s past. “Death-bed” is self-explanatory as it should be considered literally. The phrases “end of your days” and “lay down his burdens” have connotations of death as this is what people euphemistically say when referring to someone’s death. The latter is connected to the Christian belief of there being no more trouble or sorrows after death. This Christian belief is further alluded to in “heavenly hosts” and “angels around him” as some Christians believe that if one has led a good Christian life, when one dies one will go to heaven and there will be angels and saints ready to welcome him/her.

The character of Andries Wessels is used to create humour through his death experience, where he has such clear visions. He is portrayed as a pious Christian who believes so strongly that he led an exemplar Christian life that he says it is a “blameless path”. This claim leads to him believing that he is surrounded by “heavenly hosts and angels” when he is about to die, because as a “deserving Christian” he probably believes he is going straight to heaven. The irony comes towards the end, when he claims to even see the “angels”, yet the description of “cloven hoofs and [carrying of] forks” shows nothing angelic about his vision. This ironic twist creates humour as it implies that Andries is so delusional about his past life that he does not realise till the end that he is going straight to hell because the images he describes have connotations of the devil. His character comes across as hilarious since he is so stuck in his belief of his goodness that he even tells people what he sees even when the “reality” is the opposite of what he claims.

There is juxtaposition created through the use of words like, “peace”, “tranquilly”, “happy”, “heavenly” and “angels” which all have a link to what people would associate with heaven, which would be a reward to someone who has led a “blameless” life. This image of serenity and joy is juxtaposed with the menacing image of “cloven hoofs” and “forks” and leads one to imagine the “imminent torture” thus adding to the humorous tone of the text. By so doing the writer makes the theme of death to be less somber and this relates back to the introductory line showing that not only do people not care about how an old person dies, but it can even be found to be funny depending on the circumstances.

The narrator’s credibility through this irony may become questionable as the hilariousness of the situation contradicts the somber tone with which he started his narration. On the other hand it could strengthen his argument on the society’s attitude to the death of elderly people. If they end up rambling like Andries and lose touch with reality then people may find it hard to care much about the “manner of [their] dying.”

(The above essay body is an example of how you are expected to write; without subheadings and trying to keep related ideas together in paragraphs. The content presented is a sample of what is expected; there may be other interpretations that vary from this example; if they are well substantiated they will be credited. On careful inspection you may notice how the bulleted points of focus from the question are brought into the discussion with examples that do not extend beyond the extract given, since this is part of a short story. [Other events in the short story have not been used as examples.]

Charles Bosman has creatively used irony and juxtaposition to make a comment about people’s attitude to death, with a good blend of diction that carries the theme, reveals character and conveys tone.

(There are multiple variations of a possible conclusion expected; the bottom line is that the conclusion must serve as a summing up of the body. NO NEW IDEAS MUST BE BROUGHT IN AT THIS POINT. You must also avoid preaching or giving a lesson in your conclusion of a discursive/analytical essay.)

TOTAL: 50

Wishing you well in your studies.

Lungelwa Phakathi

QUESTION 3: DRAMA

The assignment consisted of **THREE** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1, Question 2 or Question 3. If you had chosen Question 3, you would have been required to answer a question on Drama.

Study the excerpt from Ashraf Johardien's play *Salaam* carefully and write an essay in which you address the following questions. These questions should, however, not be formulated as subtitles in your essay and should be answered within the logical development of your ideas.

1. Does the scene fit into the category of comedy or tragedy? Why do you say so?
2. The way in which character speaks is important. What does the way in which Boo speaks tell you about him?
3. Does the author make use of a soliloquy/monologue in the above extract? Motivate your answer.
4. Which rhetorical device(s) does the author use in this passage?
5. There are no stage directions provided by the author in the extract below. You should, however, keep in mind that a play is meant to be performed and that a director would have to use the information provided in the text itself to guide the actor in how to perform the scene. How does the possibility of performance influence the text in this case?

To answer this question, you could have approached it in the manner outlined below. Please note that there is not one, correct way to write a literature essay and that you could have approached the question differently, as long as you address the question and demonstrate that you have reached the outcomes of the module (you can find these on p.4-5 of Tutorial Letter 101).

The assignment asks you to do an analysis of the text and provides five questions to guide your analysis. Your first step would be to read through the text a few times and then to answer the questions in paragraph form. Please note that this is only the first step in answering the question.

This is the way in which I answered the four questions:

- Does the scene fit into the category of comedy or tragedy? Why do you say so?

A comedy is a play with a happy ending and, according to Levey *et al.* (2013:62), it is closer to a representation of everyday life than tragedy. It explores common human failings and errors rather than the sometimes disastrous crimes of tragedy. This scene leads to laughter since something happens (the buttons on the costumes cause tiny explosions) which is unexpected. It is an example of an everyday life situation that does not have disastrous consequences.

- The way in which character speaks is important. What does the way in which Boo speaks tell you about him?

The characters in this play speak in an informal manner and use very iconic language which places them in the Cape Malay community of Cape Town.

- Does the author make use of a soliloquy/monologue in the above extract? Motivate your answer.

According to Levey *et al.* (2013:67), a soliloquy is an extended speech directed at the audience and heard only by them, revealing the character's innermost thoughts and sharing them with the audience. Boo makes no reference to any specific character that he is addressing. It can therefore be assumed that he is addressing the audience in this soliloquy.

- Which rhetorical device(s) does the author use in this passage?

A sound effect is used to indicate the explosion of the buttons: "*kaba!*" This is especially significant in performance, since the actor would be able to mimic the sound that the buttons make, adding to the spectacle of the event. Metonymy is used in the in the description of the hall's smell: "Willards chips and samoosas." Of all the refreshments that the crowd is consuming, the speaker chooses two to describe the smell of the hall. Johaardien uses a hyperbole when stating that the Break-aways were late. Presumably, the group was not "five hours" late. The hyperbole, linked with the tongue-in-cheek stereotyping of the community, "*daai's mos nou die Kaap se Slamse vir jou, laat vir alles,*" adds to the comedy of the passage. A metaphor is used to describe the performance of the Break-aways in the phrase "*Hulle is warm.*" The Afrikaans word, "warm" means hot and is commonly used in the Cape Malay context that the play is set. This metaphor emphasizes Boo's glee in recounting a memorable performance which he remembers as quite entertaining.

- There are no stage directions provided by the author in the extract below. You should, however, keep in mind that a play is meant to be performed and that a director would have to use the information provided in the text itself to guide the actor in how to perform the scene. How does the possibility of performance influence the text in this case?

This is an open-ended question which you should have approached from your own unique interpretation of the text.

References:

Levey, David, Ndlangamandla, Clifford, Donaldson, Eileen, Makoe, Pinky, Van Niekerk, Marinus, Dambe, Sira, Kreuter, Allyson, Zinda, Nomsa. 2013. *Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style, Poetics*. Pretoria: University of South Africa. (Only study guide for ENG2602.)

You should know that this analysis is by no means exhaustive – there are more observations that you could have made about the excerpt. It is also very important to note that these notes of mine are only the result of the first step of answering the question. Now that I have an idea what the excerpt is about and have answered the guiding questions, it is time to plan my essay.

Please follow the steps in Tutorial Letter 301 for more guidance in planning your essay.

TOTAL: 50

Best wishes for the exam!

Mariëtta Bettman