My mistress' eyes

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun
Coral is far more red than her lips' red,
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun,
If hair be wires, black wires grow upon her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
And in some perfumes is there more delight,
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak: yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound,
I grant I never saw a goddess go,
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground,
And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare,
As any she belied with false compare.

William Shakespeare
Roots of stylistics

• The term ‘style’ goes back to classical rhetoric and poetics

• Stylistics as an academic pursuit originated in the formalist school of literary criticism which emerged in Russia in the early years of the 20th century

• The prime exponents of Russian formalism were Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovskii, and Boris Tomashevskii

• The aims of their movement were:
  – To isolate the properties and characteristics of literary language
  – To explore how ‘defamiliarization’ in art and literature was at the root of intrinsic aesthetic value of works in question.

• At the heart of Russian formalism was the belief that the purpose of art was to defamiliarize the familiar in order to generate for the viewer or reader a new perspective on the topic of the piece of work.

• Alternative names for stylistics (concerned with literary texts) include: literary linguistics, critical linguistics, literary semantics, literary pragmatics, and poetics.
What is stylistics?

• It is a sub-discipline of linguistics

• It is concerned with the systematic analysis of style in language

• It is concerned with how style can vary according to factors like genre, context, historical period, author, etc.
  – Genre: E.g., ‘newspaper language’ or gothic novel.
  – Author: Style distinguishes one writer from another.

• It systematically looks at the formal features of a text and determines their functional significance for the interpretation of the text in question.
What is the connection between stylistics and linguistics?

• Stylistics uses models of language, analytical techniques and methodologies from linguistics to facilitate the study of style.

• Stylistics has tended to concentrate on the analysis of literary texts.
Conventional definition of a stylistician

• Halliday defines a stylistician as someone who can comprehend literary texts through a comprehension of their language structures.

• Basically, this means that Halliday defines stylistics as “the linguistic analysis of literary texts.”
Doing stylistics

In doing *stylistics*
- A literary text is looked at as made of language
- A literary text is seen to consist of patterns and properties which are part of language

Those *patterns* of language can be at the level of

A. The arrangement of graphic and phonic symbols
B. The lexico-grammatical patterns
C. The semantic and pragmatic patterns
Phases of Stylistic Analysis

What is involved in stylistic analysis?
Two phases

A. The analytic phase
B. The interpretive phase
The Analytic phase

- The task of stylistician is to select from the thousands of linguistic features in the literary text those which are worthy of studying in a particular literary text.

The Interpretive phase

The stylistician

1. brings together various features to show how they form coherent, integrated patterns
2. makes judgments about the significance of such patterns in relation to the context of the work as a whole.
Goals of stylistic analysis

• To show *why* and *how* the text means what it means (*linguistically*). (*This is shared between D.A. and stylistics*)

• To show why the literary text is *valued* as it is. In other words, it is interested in showing how the text is *unique* in itself. (*Only stylistics*)
D. A. & Stylistics

Stylistics

• In stylistics, we are interested in showing the *uniqueness of the text* we are analyzing.

• The text is the center of concern

Discourse Analysis

• Is mostly concerned with showing how the text analyzed is not unique: It is typical of its kind.

E.g. Studies of class-room interaction, patient-doctor interaction which aim to arrive at *generalizations* that characterize such discourses.

• Spoken language is the center of concern