

## Written Response 02

### List

	Where	When	Who	Character Image 1	Character Image 2	Character Image 3
Notation	In the S bus	in the rush hour	A chap of about 26	neck too long, as if someone's been having a tug-of-war with it	felt hat with a cord instead of a ribbon	
Double Entry	on to the platform and the balcony at the back of an S-line and of a Contrescarpe-Champerret bus and passenger transport vehicle	Towards the middle of the day and at midday...which was packed and to all intents and purposes full.	a young man and an old adolescent	thin neck and skinny windpipe	string and cord round his hat and tile	was rather ridiculous and pretty grotesque
Litotes			A young man			didn't look very intelligent
Metaphorically	in a coleopter with a big white carapace	In the centre of the day, tossed among the shoal of travelling sardines	a chicken	a long, featherless neck		
Retrograde	on the platform of an S bus	...an S bus which was full that particular midday.	young man	scraggy	a ridiculous hat	
Surprises	on that bus platform	How tightly packed in we were	young man			how stupid and ridiculous that young man looked

By selecting sections from Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style* (1998), specifically from the chapters titled 'Notation' to 'Surprises', I extracted the parts that set the scene for the story, describing the place, time, and characters before the narrative unfolds.

Firstly, when the author states in the 'Notation' chapter that the story took place on the S bus, but in the following chapter refers to it as the S-line, I found this subtle shift in word choice intriguing as an English learner. This is exactly the kind of variation we aim for in our efforts to enrich our use of language. Also, I don't often see people in the UK using 'line' for a bus; in my culture we tend to say 'S route' for a bus and 'a number + line' for the tube.

I made a list to compare and analyse the various experimental and stylistic interventions the author used to describe the same scene. For example, in terms of time and place, the rush hour could be conveyed as 'in the rush hour', or 'was full that particular midday'. Or, it may be unnecessary to mention the time; simply conveying the feeling is sufficient - such as with 'how tightly packed in we were', or to use a metaphor and describe the crowded bus as 'the shoal of traveling sardines'. As far as I know, sardines are commonly used in English to describe a situation where people are crowded together with no room to move. However, since this is exercises in style, would the readers expect to see a different metaphor instead of this cliché?

## **Written Response 02**

At the same time, each writing style stands out. 'Metaphorically' conveys the author's attitude vividly and effectively. For instance, by describing the main character as 'a chicken with a long, featherless neck', the author's attitude comes across without using words like 'scraggy' or 'ridiculous' in other sections. Chickens are often associated with negative qualities due to their natural characteristics of being highly alert and easily frightened, as well as their low status due to domestication and lack of freedom. This has led to negative expressions, such as 'be a chicken.' Over time, this linguistic tendency has become embedded in cultural habits. The use of retrograde arouses curiosity and draws readers deeper into the story. In 'Surprises', the tone is distinctly different from the other styles—elevated and engaging, designed to captivate the reader's interest.

As mentioned in the preface, 'I came to realise that modern written French must free itself from the conventions which still hem it in, (conventions of style, spelling and vocabulary) and then it will soar like a butterfly away from the silk cocoon spun by the grammarians of the 16th century and the poets of the 17th century' (Queneau, 1998), I believe that whether cataloguing, writing, or designing, none of these should be constrained by convention. We can experiment with different approaches to accomplish the same task, and each attempt brings unique discoveries.

## **Reference**

Queneau, R. (1998) *Exercises in Style*. Richmond: John Calder. Extract pp.9-16, 19-26.