**Parallelism and Opposition (Antonymy)**

Another method to achieve foregrounding: repetition

Blow, blow, thou winter wind

(Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II, ii, 174)

Repetition of whole structures:

Come hither, come hither, come hither

Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II, v, 5

Parallelism = where some features are held constant (usually structural features) while others (usually lexical items e.g. words, idioms) are varied:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities

(Isaiah 53. v)

What is interesting about parallel structures is that they invited the reader to search for meaning connections between the parallel structures, in particular in terms of the parts being varied

Read and analyse the following example of parallelism: “He was kicked, beaten and lupped”.

Parallelism has the power not just to foreground parts of a text for us, but also to make us look for parallel or contrastive meaning links between those parallel parts.

**Antonyms in everyday life**

Scope of antonymy is greater than that of other sense relations!

‘Opposites’ surround us and we encounter them on a daily basis: we answer true/false quizzes, flick on/off switches, vote for left or right, use computer hardware and software, go to stores where you buy more/pay less…

Different types of antonymy:

* With opposites which are *gradable*, e.g. (very) cold/hot; conjoined antonyms suggest inclusiveness: young and old, high and low, streets wide and narrow
* *Ungraded* antonyms (*complementary*), ‘either/or’, e.g. alive/dead [to be dead is not to be alive (ungradable) whilst not to be hot (gradable) can be as much warm as cold]
* *Converse pairs*/*relational opposites*, e.g. to buy implies the converse to sell, to be a parent means implicitly to have a child

**Antonyms in language acquisition:**

Children grasp the concept of oppositeness at early age, and tend to learn antonyms in pairs rather than as single words (up/down, high/low, good/bad). Adults also favour antonymy in second language acquisition.

**Parallelism in language/lexicalised expressions**:

bits and pieces, part and parcel …

**Antonymy and parallelism in literature:**

“It was the best of times,

it was the worst of times,

it was the age of wisdom,

it was the age of foolishness,

it was the epoch of belief,

it was the epoch of incredulity,

it was the season of Light,

it was the season of Darkness,

it was the spring of hope,

it was the winter of despair”

(beginning of Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859)

“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”.

(Lev Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, 1877)

*Le rouge et le noir* (Stendhal, 1830)

“Per me si va ne la città dolente,

per me si va ne l'etterno dolore,  
per me si va tra la perduta gente”.

(Dante, *Inferno*, III canto)

You're hot then you're cold

You're yes then you're no

You're in then you're out

You're up then you're down

(Katy Perry, *Hot N Cold*)

**☞** “Opposites are one of the most important linguistic-cognitive structures by which we categorize and organize our world, and thus also our world-view” (Jeffries, *Opposition in Discourse*, 2010: 26-7)

Task: can you find other textual examples of opposition and antonymy and/or parallelism in texts and discourses?

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**Defamiliarisation** in the title of novels:

*A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for* *Lovers* (Xiaolu Guo, 2007)

Foregrounding in the title of novels via linguistic deviation:

*The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (K. Sello Duiker, 2001)

Foregrounding in the title of novels via parallelism

*The Sense of an Ending* (J. Barnes, 2012)

*England, England* (J. Barnes, 1998)

*The Ground beneath her Feet* (Salman Rushdie, 1999)

*No Onions, Nor Garlic* (S. Natarajan, 2006)

*This Side, That Side* (collection of graphic stories curated by V. Ghosh, 2013)

Foregrounding in the title of novels via linguistic deviation & intertextuality:

*The Heart of Redness* (Z. Mda, 2000)

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**‘London’**

(William Blake, 1794)

1. I wander thro' each charter'd street,
2. Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
3. And mark in every face I meet
4. Marks of weakness, marks of woe.
5. In every cry of every Man,
6. In every Infants cry of fear,
7. In every voice: in every ban,
8. The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

9) How the Chimney-sweepers cry

10) Every blackning Church appalls,

11) And the hapless Soldiers sigh

12) Runs in blood down Palace walls

13) But most thro' midnight streets I hear

14) How the youthful Harlots curse

15) Blasts the new-born Infants tear

16) And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

(PS: lines have been numbered for purpose of analysis)