**CHAPTER- III**

1. **The Escape From Banality**

Poetic tradition and poetic originality are contrary forces: we may characterize the creative impulse of the artist, on one dimension, as a flight from the banality of'a worn-out poetical fashion' [Eliot, East Coker], To revitalize the language of poetry, the poet draws directly on the resources of the contemporary language. As Eliot said, ' Every revolution in poetry is apt to be ... a return to common speech'. This description he applied not only to his own revolution, but to that of Wordsworth, and to that of Dryden and his older contemporaries, Waller and Denham.

The effect of the return to ordinary language in the present century has been far-reaching. The feeling that there are intrinsically poetical and un-poetical sectors of the language has been repudiated. Much of the old paraphernalia of poetic expression (e.g. archaism) has been overthrown, and poets have eagerly delved into the most unlikely resources, such as the terminology of aeronautics and finance. Pound, Eliot, and the poets of the thirties showed their determination to be rid of orthodox restrictions of choice by making use of flagrantly prosy and vulgar aspects of everyday usage. In the new poetry of the fifties, this flamboyance has given way to a more sober and easy acceptance of colloquialism, even slang, as a fit medium of poetic expression. A good example is Philip Larkin's Toads, given complete as an example for discussion at the end of the last chapter. Its idiomatic familiarity of tone is in many ways typical of recent British poetry.

On the other hand, [poetic language](https://www.studentwritingcenter.us/poetic-language/redundancy-in-poetry.html) cannot come too close to the ' ordinary language' of the day - if it does, it runs the danger of another kind of banality, an undistinguished style which is perhaps easier to illustrate from one of Wordsworth's well-known experiments, such as Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman, rather than from contemporary poetry. So we may think of the successful poet as avoiding banality on two dimensions: the banality of the poetic convention of the past; and the banality of the everyday usage of the present. These two forces pull in opposite directions, and there is rarely a firm balance between them. It appears that the steady weight of conservatism has to be counteracted, from time to time, with a jerk in the direction of' the language of ordinary men'. The progress of poetic language is something like a canal climbing a hill by a series of locks: the surface of the water, remaining horizontal, cannot help diverging from the land contour it attempts to follow, and a lock (in this simile, a poetic revolution) has to raise it every now and then by brute force towards the level of the land surface.

### [Foregrounding, Deviation and Parallelism](https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjg57C02u_dAhXKbCsKHdS_D8QQFjAEegQICBAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lancaster.ac.uk%2Ffass%2Fprojects%2Fstylistics%2Ftopic3a%2F5dp%26f.htm&usg=AOvVaw2ov9wd4SwHPPPVAustMjyQ)

**Foregrounding** is the practice of making something stand out from the surrounding words or images. It is "the 'throwing into relief' of the linguistic sign against the background of the norms of ordinary language."The term was first associated with Paul Garvin in the 1960s, who used it as a translation of the [Czech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_(language)) *aktualisace* (literally "to actualise"), borrowing the terms from the [Prague school](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prague_school) of the 1930s.

There are two main types of foregrounding: [parallelism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallelism_(grammar)) and deviation. Parallelism can be described as unexpected regularity, while deviation can be seen as unexpected irregularity. As the definition of foregrounding indicates, these are relative concepts. Something can only be unexpectedly regular or irregular within a particular context. This context can be relatively narrow, such as the immediate textual surroundings (referred to as a 'secondary norm') or wider such as an entire genre (referred to as a 'primary norm’).

For example, the last line of a poem with a consistent metre may be foregrounded by changing the number of syllables it contains. This would be an example of a deviation from a secondary norm. In the following poem by [E. E. Cummings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._E._Cummings), there are two types of deviation:

light’s lives lurch

a once world quickly from rises

army the gradual of unbeing fro[[*clarification needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Please_clarify)]

on stiffening greenly air and to ghosts go

drift slippery hands tease slim float twitter faces

Only stand with me, love! against these its

until you are, and until i am dreams...

Firstly, most of the poem deviates from 'normal' language (primary deviation). In addition, there is secondary deviation in that the penultimate line is unexpectedly different from the rest of the poem. [Nursery rhymes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nursery_rhyme), adverts and [slogans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slogan) often exhibit parallelism in the form of repetition and [rhyme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhyme), but parallelism can also occur over longer texts. For example, jokes are often built on a mixture of parallelism and deviation. They often consist of three parts or characters. The first two are very similar (parallelism) and the third one starts out as similar, but our expectations are thwarted when it turns out different in end (deviation).

Foregrounding can occur on all levels of language ([phonology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonology), [graphology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphology), [morphology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morphology_(linguistics)), [lexis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexis_(linguistics)), [syntax](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syntax), [semantics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantics) and [pragmatics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatics)). It is generally used to highlight important parts of a text, to aid memorability and/or to invite interpretation.