

THE HEART OF THE TREE : POEM

FIGURE OF SPEECH

The poem *The Heart of the Tree* is full of poetic devices.

1. Alliteration

The poet has deployed alliteration in many places to add to the rhythm of the poem. Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning or stressed syllables of words.

eg: What does he plant who plants a tree?

He plants a friend of Sun and Sky;

He plants a home to heaven enigh

In hushed and happy twilight heard

The treble of heaven's harmony

2. Personification

The poet personifies the tree when he calls it

eg: 'a friend of sun and sky'

3. Metaphor

Metaphor is an implied comparison between two different things where there is a point of similarity.

eg: "the flag of breezes free"

"the shaft of beauty lowering high"

Here the leafy branches of a tree are compared to a flag and the stem is compared to a beautiful shaft standing high.

4. Circumlocution

In a Circumlocution something is referred to in a roundabout way, using different words rather than stating it directly.

eg: Using 'days to be' for 'future'

'Unborn eyes' for 'next-generations'

5. Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech where one word or phrase is substituted by another one closely associated with it.

① Eg: He plants a home to heaven anigh;
(near the heaven)

Here, 'heaven' represents the sky, as we normally think that the heaven is situated somewhere up in the sky. The poet actually means that the man who plants a tree also plants a home for birds high in the sky.

② Eg: The treble of heaven's harmony.

Here, 'treble' (the pitch range of highest female voice) is used to mean the song or simply the sound which birds make.

③ Eg: The joy that unborn eyes shall see.

Unborn eyes here means the child, a part of body representing the whole. Thus it can also be classified as a synecdoche, a class of metonymy.

④ He plants in sap and leaf and wood,
This is another instance of metonymy (and Synecdoche) where 'sap and leaf and wood' refers to a tree. Parts refers to the whole once again.

6. Hypallage / Transferred Epithet.

Transferred epithet (adjective) is a figure of speech where an adjective grammatically qualifies a noun other than the person or thing it is actually describing.

eg: To hushed and happy twilight heard.

Here, the adjective 'happy' is used with twilight, though it means people's happiness in that hour.

7. Polysyndeton : close repetition of conjunctions.

eg: He plants in Sap and leaf and wood.

④