

Poetics in “The Marriage of Geraint” of *Idylls of the King*

- *anaphora*. Emphasizing Geraint’s negligence of his duties to his king, Tennyson uses the poetic device anaphora, which is the repetition of beginning words:

*Forgetful of his promise to the King,
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,
Forgetful of his prunedom and its cares.
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.*

- *ploce*. There is ploce, or the repetition of a word or words, not in strict succession but with intervening words, as in the following passage describing Enid’s clothing: “Then she bethought her *of a faded silk, / A faded mantle and a faded veil.*” The device is used in the example to stress the spirit of humility that Enid puts on.
- *anaphora*. Anaphora is the repetition of the beginning words of successive lines in a poem, as in the excerpt below. The poetic device in this particular passage serves to bring out Enid’s tone of expression (though what she expresses is not spoken). She is distraught with the thought of possibly being a shame to her husband.

*Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,
And maybe pierced to death before mine eyes,
And yet not dare to tell him what I think,
And how men slur him, saying all his force
Is melted into mere effeminacy?
O me, I fear that I am no true wife.’*

- *alliteration*. Alliteration, the repeating of initial sounds in words, is used for *euphony* (creating pleasant sounds) and for stress. There are too many instances of alliteration in the poem to list here, but below are a few examples.

- Wherein she kept them folded reverently
With *sprigs* of *summer* laid between the folds
- And all her *foolish fears* about the dress,
And all his journey to *her*, as *himself*
Had told *her*, and their *coming* to the *court*.
- At last they issued from the world of wood,
And climbed upon a fair and even ridge,
And showed themselves against the *sky*, and *sank*.
- I full oft shall dream
I see my princess as I see her now,
Clothed with my *gift*, and *gay* among the *gay*.
- Yniol with that hard message went; it fell
Like flaws in summer *laying* *lusty* corn:
- *polyptoton* and *paregmenon*. Polyptoton, which is almost indistinguishable from paregmenon, is using the same word in different grammatical forms. While polyptoton is the rhetorical device of changing a word *grammatically*, as a present verb to past (*drink, drank*), paregmenon is the changing of a word's *sense* that may accompany the change in form. In describing Enid's attiring herself in humble clothing, Tennyson describes her as "Drest in that dress." The rhetorical device of the first example of polyptoton below (*fairest fair*) serves to stress the mother's notion that a beautiful woman is even better when dressed splendidly. Other examples follow:
 - Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride:
For though ye won the prize of *fairest fair*,
And though I heard him call you *fairest fair*,
Let never maiden think, however fair,
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.
 - He spake: the Prince, as Enid past him, fain
To follow, *strode* a *stride*, but Yniol caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said, 'Forbear!
 - Now, therefore, I do rest,
A *prophet* certain of my *prophecy*,

That never shadow of mistrust can cross
Between us.

- *antanaclasis*. Antanaclasis is a rhetorical device which literally means “a breaking up.” The device, then, involves the “breaking up” of the meaning of the word. Here is an example: The more I *think* of it, the less I *think* of it.” The use of the word *maiden* below may be at first glance thought of as an example of polyptoton (or paregmenon) words appear together as two different parts of speech; however, the grammatical forms are the same. It is perhaps closer to antanaclasis in that the word is used in too different senses, although there is not a big contrast in meanings as there usually is in antanaclasis.
 - Slips into golden cloud, the *maiden* rose,
And left her *maiden* couch, and robed herself,
Helped by the mother’s careful hand and eye.
 - I see my princess as I see her now,
Clothed with my gift, and *gay* among the *gay*.
- *epizeuxis*. Epizeuxis is used in the Queen’s greetings to Geraint: “*Late, late, Sir Prince,*” *she said, “later than we!”* In this instance, the poetic device of epizeuxis, which involves the successive repetition of words in a line of poetry, is used for stress, noting the sins of both the queen Geraint, as both are mere observers in the hunt, not participants with King Arthur. The Queen is late because of her obsession with Lancelot, and Geraint, it is suggested, if late at Arthur’s hunt because of negligence. Note that the passage uses polyptoton, as the word *later* is the comparative form of *late*. Here are other examples of epizeuxis in the poem:
 - peak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,
Where can I get me harbourage for the night?
And *arms, arms, arms* to fight my enemy? Speak!’
(The repetition serves to show the importance of arms in fighting the sparrow hawk—something he cannot avail himself of until he meets up with Yniol who offers his.)
- *epistrophe* and *symploce*. Epistrophe is the repetition of words at the end of successive lines.

And may you light on all things that you love,
And live to wed with her whom first you love

The above two lines also illustrate the poetic device of *symploce*, as the lines also begin with identical words (*And*). In this passage, Queen Guinevere is replying to Garaint regarding his quest to find the dwarf who insulted her. The effect of the device is to highlight the word *love* and perhaps to associate what she is saying to her own situation with Arthur and Lancelot. Below is another example of *epistrophe*:

- Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride:

For though ye won the prize of fairest *fair*,
And though I heard him call you fairest *fair*,
Let never maiden think, however *fair*,
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.

• *simile*. A simile is a comparison using *like* or *as*.

- Then, *as the white and glittering star of morn*
Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose

• *polysyndeton*. Polysyndeton is the use of more conjunctions than needed. In an analogy of the pond with golden carp, Enid muses that there was one among them that was “patched *and* blurred *and* lustreless.”