

1.1 Simile

A simile is a comparison between two unlike things for clearness and ease of expression. The similarity is indicated by a connective such as “ like” or “ as”. Using simile, however, helps in establishing relationships between the two things compared. An outstanding example is provided by Robert Burns in his poem “ A Red, Red Rose” :

1. O my Love is like a red, red rose,

That’s newly sprung in June:

O my Love is like the melodies,

That’s sweetly played in tune.

The speaker uses two similes, the first comparing his love to a rose and the second comparing his love to a melody.

2. It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,

The holy time is quiet as a Nun

Breathless with adoration.... (William Wordsworth)

Comparing the evening with the praying nun, wordsworth, makes a similarity between evening and nun. The nun and the evening are both calm; the nun’s dark habit resembles the darkness of the evening. “beauteous evening”, conveying a sense of sacred mystery the poet feels in it.

3. As clerks in whited banks

With bird-claw pens column virgin paper.

To snow we added foot-prints.

(Stephen Spender)

The resemblance between the appearance of the footprints in the snow and the figures the bank-clerks are writing on the clean papers.

The poet wants to suggest the polar explorers have been travelling for a long time are too tired to think of anything but their journey, their steps have become unthinking and automatic like the monotonous task being performed by the clerks.

1. 2 Metaphor

Metaphor implies comparing two things, which are basically unlike. The poet can apply metaphor to evoke our emotions and imagination or to intensify effects, for it may widen the range intellectual implications and suggest depth of emotion. Metaphor helps also in the concentration of poetic language and the condensation of many bits of details into single comparison. Here is an example from W.B. Yeats' poem "Sailing to Byzantium" .

1. An aged man is a paltry thing,

A tattered coat upon a stick...

Here, the metaphor helps to establish so many relationships between the two things that are being compared. In this example, no particular reasons are given for comparing the old man to a worthless thing or to egged cloth upon a stick; instead the reader is left to find the similarities himself. Using his/her

imagination, he or she may formulate some common features among the thing compared. Thinness, emptiness, and worthlessness are some common qualities.

In short, An aged man is a paltry thing, a tattered coat upon a stick . It's a vivid picture. An old man is no better than a scarecrow. A stick in the ground with some rags thrown over it. Unless soul clap its hands and sing and louder sing for every tatter in its mortal dress . An aged man is nothing unless, says Yeats, we are able to rejoice as we get old and rejoice even more with every step of ageing.

2. I an old man

A dull head among windy spaces

T.S. Eliot

The speaker wants to suggest that the old man is like a cliff tells us that he is lonely, beset by troubles as the cliff is by the winds.