

Analyzing Poems from a Semiotic Perspective: Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" as an Example

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Abstract

This article mainly illustrates the term “semiotics” and its role in communication. The article also questions whether semiotics, as a theoretical and analytical framework, can be applied on literary works or not. Like many poets, William Butler Yeats uses powerful words in his works and he reflects those words in his masterpieces. Sailing to Byzantium is one example in which Yeats uses different images to express the idea or the fact of human-animal condition in which we pass through a life cycle from birth to maturity to death. The images which Yeats chose are full of meanings and different connotations. Since Iraqi EFL college students are facing difficulties in understanding and analyzing the literary works, especially the poems that they are studying in their textbooks, this article aims to enhance their critical awareness in literature through applying a semiotic approach.

Keywords: semiotics, signifier, signified, sign, symbols, Saussure, Pierce, Yeats

تحليل القوائد من منظور سيميائي: قصيدة بيتس "الابحار الى بيزنطة" كمثال

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الخلاصة

يوضح هذا المقال أساساً مصطلح "السيميائية" ودوره في التواصل. يسأل المقال أيضاً ما إذا كان يمكن تطبيق علم السيميائية ، كإطار نظري وتحليلي ، على الأعمال الأدبية أم لا. مثل العديد من الشعراء ، يستعمل ويليام بتلر بيتس كلمات قوية في أعماله ويعكس تلك الكلمات في رواثعه. يُعد الإبحار إلى بيزنطة أحد الأمثلة التي يستعمل فيها بيتس صوراً مختلفة للتعبير عن فكرة أو حقيقة حالة الانسان والحيوان التي نمر بها خلال دورة حياة من الولادة وحتى النضج ثم الموت. الصور التي اختارها بيتس مليئة بمعاني ودلالات مختلفة. نظراً لأن الطلاب العراقيين الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون صعوبات في فهم الأعمال الأدبية وتحليلها ، خاصة القوائد التي يدرسونها في منهجهم ، فإن هذا المقال يهدف إلى تعزيز وعيهم النقدي في الأدب من خلال تطبيق منهج سيميائي.

1. Introduction

Semiotics, the study of the sign system, comes from the Greek words "seme" (an interpreter of sign) and "semesion" which means the sign. Semiotics focuses on the interpretation or analysis of signs and how these signs function (Cobley & Jansz, 1997).

Semiotics first appeared as a branch of philosophy during the seventeenth century. John Locke (1632-1704), an English philosopher, was the first who illustrated the basics of empiricism and the formal study of signs from a philosophical perspective. Basically, Locke's ideas remained practically discreet until the studies of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. According to Sebeok (2001), Saussure and Peirce, are the most significant contributors in the field of semiotics and the sign system. Through their theories and ideas, one can clearly understand how the sign is structured, produced, and functioned. Therefore, semiotics attempts to interpret or analyse the signs and make them clear to everyone.

Semiotics substantially became an important field during the twentieth century. As a new and modern field in the study of signs and their functions, the term gained the attention of many scholars in linguistics, philosophy, and culture (Danesi, 2004).

Two famous schools made a major progress in the field of semiotics in the nineteenth century and later: the European school and the American school (Abbas & Kadim, 2019). The first is the European school which is represented by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and his followers. The second one is the American school which is represented by the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839- 1914) and his followers. Both, Saussure and Peirce, are regarded as the main founders of modern semiotic theories and approaches. Specifically, their semiotic theories have set the basic principles for describing and interpreting any sign. They have also attracted the attention of many post-Saussurian and post-Peircean studies on semiotics and the theory of sign (Yakin & Totu, 2014; Abbas & Kadim, 2019).

Saussure's theory of semiotics is unlike Peirce's triadic theory; it is in the dyadic tradition. The sign is formed by the relation between a signifier (sound pattern) and a signified (concept). The signifier is the perceptible form of the sign (for example, the visual appearance of a street sign). The signified is a certain mental idea for which the perceptible form stands. For example, the visual appearance of the wordbook (signifier) stands for the concept of a book (the signified). The sound and the concept are interrelated and they both form the sign. The sign is the unity that results from the relationship between the signifier with the signified. The relation between the signifier and the signified is "arbitrary". In this sense, there is no logical connection between the concept of a book and its visual appearance (Abbas & Kadim, 2019: 189).

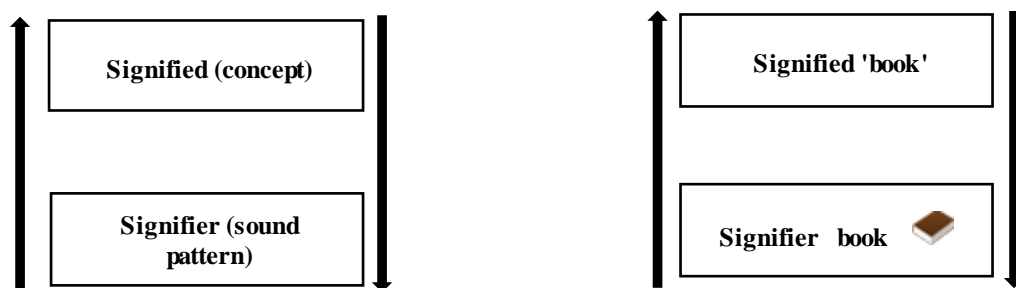


Figure 1: Saussure's dyadic system of the sign

Peirce (1839-1914) was the founder of the modern American school of semiotics and his triadic system of the sign has been and continues to be applied on many semiotic studies (Nöth, 1990). He defined semiotics as "the formal doctrine of signs" (Chandler, 2007).

Peirce's notion of the sign is different from that of Saussure's in the sense that the sign, from a Peircean perspective, consists of three main parts. The triadic system or the three main parts of his theory of sign are the representamen (the physical shape of the sign) which is similar to the

signifier in Saussure's dyadic system, the object (the sign vehicle- it determines the sign). The object is the referent to which the sign refers to, and the interpretant (the meaning or the understanding of the relation between the sign and the object it signifies). In a summary, the three main parts of Peirce's sign theory attempt to answer the following questions: how is the sign represented? (Representamen), what is presented? (Object), and how is it interpreted? (Interpretant) (Siau & Tian, 2009).

Representamen (red light)

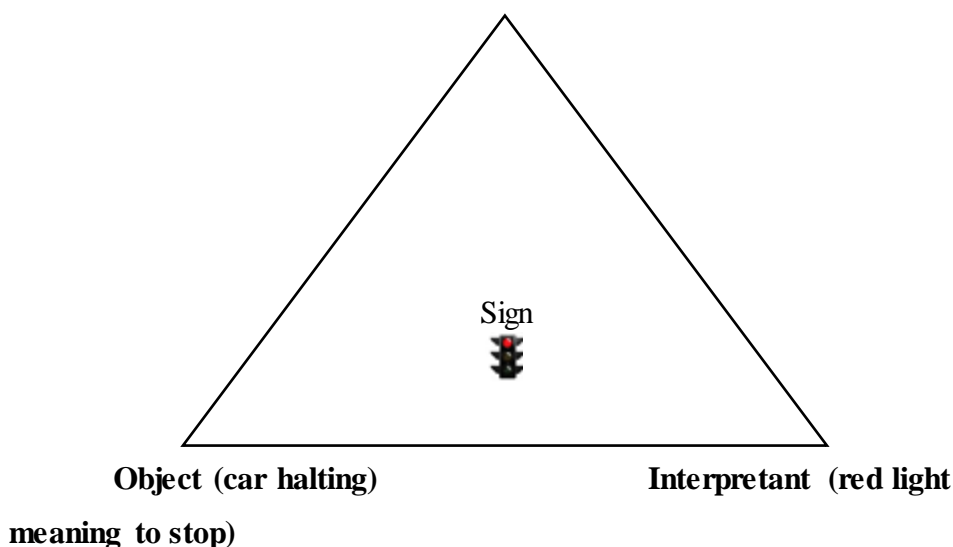


Figure 2: Peirce's triadic system of the sign theory adopted from (Mudaly, 2014: 2)

The American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) demonstrates that the semiotic system consists of three types of signs: icon, index, and symbol. Tyson (2006) states that:

An icon is a sign in which the signifier physically resembles the signified, for example; a painting is an icon to the extent that the picture resembles the subject it represents. An index is a sign in which the signifier has a concrete, casual relationship to the signified, for

example; smoke signifies fire, a knock on the door signifies that someone is on the door. A symbol is a sign in which the relationship between signifier and signified is neither natural nor necessary but arbitrary, that is decided on by the conventions of a community or by the agreement of some group (218).

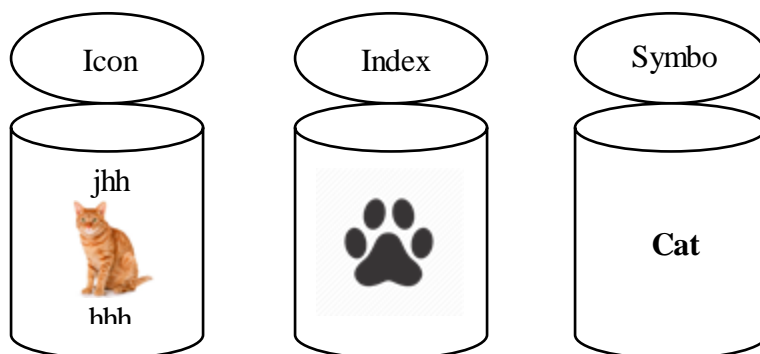


Figure 3: Peirce's three types of the sign

In figure (3) above, an icon is categorized by a resemblance between the signified and the signifier. The image of a cat represents cat. An index is the direct or the inferred connection that links the signifier to the signified. For example, cats often leave paw prints and these paw prints serve as a sign for a cat. A symbol is a sign that refers to its object through interpretive habit or norm of reference. The relationship is arbitrary or conventional. There is no relationship between the word “cat” and the image of a cat.

2. Yeats's Life

An Anglo-Irishman, Yeats is one of the prominent figures of 20th century literature. He was born in Dublin on June 13, 1865. His father's family came from English descent and lived in Ireland for a long period. His mother's family came from a wealthy merchant origin; she was of the Pollex fen family of County Sligo (Holdeman, 2006).

According to Smith (1990), the life of Yeats cannot be separated from the history of Irish nationalism. Yeats's poetic career is characterized by his love for his country. The nationalist period, in which Yeats lived, focused on the ambitiousness and aspirations of Irish people. Although he lived in London for 14 years, Yeats strongly believed in his Irish nationality, focusing on Irish heroes in many of his poems and literary works. Most of his poems and plays contain Irish legends and important figures. He is a symbolist and imagist poet, especially his use of allusive imagery in most of his poetry. He is very skillful in choosing significant words that are full of meaning (Ulanov, 1961; Snodgrass, 2015).

Yeats studied painting and quickly showed his affection and passionate love to that art. His father introduced him to two literary figures: Edward Dowden and John Todhunter. Because of their encouragement, Yeats's poetry was published and the start of his success began with "The Wanderings of Oisín" in 1889. The Countess, Yeats's first play was then published in 1892 (Holdeman, 2006).

Many literary critics argue that Yeats bridged the transition from the nineteenth century to twentieth century by his poetry just like what Pablo Picasso did in the art of painting. Yeats's poetry is characterized by his passionate love of his country, Ireland and also his feelings and love for Maud Gonne. In 1903, Gonne married the hero John MacBride and Yeats was deeply hurt. Poems such as "Words, A Woman Homer Sung, No Second Troy, and The Green Helmet" show his passionate love to his most beloved woman. In imagery, Yeats was one of the powerful imagists in the twentieth century. The Tower (1928) and The Winding Stair (1933) are the best

examples that show his skilful choice of poetic and evocative images (Spanos, 1962; Holdeman, 2006).

Yeats's Easter 1916, A Prayer for my Daughter and In Memory of Major Robert Gregory are the best poems that can illustrate Yeats's ability to write with authority and power. He was able to mix his respect of beauty with the tragic elements of life. In 1923, he was given the Noble Prize in Literature. He died on January 28, 1939.

Since the poem is full of poetic images and evocative language, semiotics is crucial as a theoretical and analytical framework for this study. The study aims to show how Yeats's skilful use of language and poetic images help make the reader understand the poem and the poet's intention.

3. Semiotic Analysis of the Poem

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
---Those dying generations---at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unaging intellect.

According to Choi (2014), Yeats chose "Byzantium" because it largely and undoubtedly serves as a symbol of an artistic and endless world that is free from conflicts, contradictions, and changing situations. These contradictions, conflicts, and the changing situations are definitely found in the natural world in which Yeats wants to sail far away from. Yeats wrote the poem when he was over sixty. He had evidently started to feel being old and in bad condition or poor health. In addition to this, Yeats was dissatisfied with the material world which is full of disillusionments that he could not trust or believe in. Consequently, Yeats decided to leave this materialistic

world which gives too much importance to material possessions rather than to spiritual or intellectual things, to the eternal and spiritual world that can be found in the most idealistic city, i.e., Byzantium.

In the first line, the word "that" is a signifier for two worlds that are no longer suitable for the old. Denotatively, the first world is the real one in which the poet lives in. Here, the words "That country" refer to Ireland. Connotatively, the second world is the materialistic one that is associated with everything senseless and the desire of wanting more. The word "that" is a demonstrative pronoun used to refer to someone or something that is very distant. This indicates that Yeats is not literally sailing to Byzantium but he is sailing metaphorically away from this unsuitable world to a better one. One can notice that all the words in the first line "that is no country for old men" are short and they consist of one syllable except for "country". They are all stressed and can be read in this way "THAT IS NO COUN-try for OLD MEN". The stressed syllables illustrate that the speaker is very angry, dissatisfied with everyone and everything in that country that he is now leaving. The first two lines have a sense of division and contrast or the good image of US (the old and the intellectual-spiritual world) and the bad image of THEM (he young with their temporal happiness in the materialistic world).

Denotation → that country → Ireland

Connotation → that country → Materialistic world

Most of Yeats's poetry is full of symbols. Symbols are not only words that are connotative and suggestive but they are also emotive and evocative. The symbols or images of "birds" are used plentifully in Yeats's poetry. The "birds in the trees" have positive connotation. They are associated with

freedom, peace, happiness, and independence. The poet compares young people to birds living freely. The young live their physical and natural lives actively. They happily sing the sensual song of life in one another's arms all summer. The word "summer" denotatively is one of the four seasons of the year that is after spring and before autumn. Summer connotes or is associated with romance and infinite potential. Since spring is the season of birth and regeneration, then summer is the season of youth and comfort, the season of holidays and vacations in which the young escape from the crowded cities back to nature. The poet thinks of the song as the song of death which is sung by a dying generation and that will eventually die naturally as all elements in nature such as 'fish', 'flesh', and 'foul' to express the fact that all creatures which live in water, on land, or fly in the sky will die. He tries to convey his idea that the process of living is the same as that of dying. The young who caught in a net, as if they are caught in the net of life because they are busy living their physical life and neglecting intellect which produces monument that symbolises spiritual life and immortality. Being in a net, young people are like the fishes which do not know that they are going to die.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

An aged man is metaphorically compared to a 'tattered coat upon a stick' or to a scarecrow which is worthless thing used to fear birds. Denotatively, a scarecrow is an anthropomorphic-object that looks like a person and that is placed in a field to scare birds away from crops. A

scarecrow signifies a skinny and ragged person. It is a spiritual symbol that is used to provoke a sense of fearfulness and dreadfulness. It refers to Yeats's aging and deepest fears just like the scarecrow that is used to fear birds. The scarecrow is used to signify fall rather than spring since in this season, the leaves fall from trees and the seeds are harvested. It is also used to signify the later part of someone's life or of something's existence. There is a sense or feelings of being uninvited or unwelcomed by these coming generations. Yeats is old fashioned just like the tattered clothes of the scarecrow. Yeats, as an old and skinny man, should not pay attention to the dilapidation or deterioration of the body; instead he should focus on the spiritual world that is completely different from the body. The body symbolises the apparent (the surface) and everything temporal relating to earthly life as opposed to eternity, while the soul is associated with morality (the interior substance), everything pure, permanent, eternal, and immortal. The word "mortal" in line four signifies a human being, often in contrast to a divine being, subject to death. The word "dress" is used to refer to the old skin of the mortal man. The word "tatter" means 'old and torn; in poor condition'. The phrase "every tatter" refers to the badly torn or completely spoiled clothes of the scarecrow on one hand, and it is used to refer to the old and ragged parts of the human body on the other. The poet is now sailing in the deep sea. The word "sea" signifies a new life or the start of a new life that is different from a previous one. The poet inevitably left the mortal world and now is sailing to the immortal and eternal world. The sea is associated with powerful, dangerous, wild, and hostile environment. The poet's choice of the dangerous sea illustrates his insistence of and longing for leaving the temporal and material world to the permanent and persistent world. One way an old man can be

valuable is to sail away from *that temporal country* and sing the song of soul loudly that is completely different from that of the young's, because it gives us something valuable like life. Man can simply be immortalized in the school of arts and permanent life that is not found in *that country* that Yeats is sailing from but the country that Yeats is sailing to or in other words, *Byzantium*. Byzantium is the Greek name for "Istanbul" that is Constantinople which was the Capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. So he is sure that it is better for him to sail to a country where art is respected.

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

In Byzantium, the poet calls upon the sages, the sages of unaging art and intellect. The word "sages" signifies intelligence, education, knowledge, reason, understanding, thoughtfulness, foresightedness, judiciousness. The word is characterised by wisdom, prudence, and good judgment-very wise through reflection and experience. Sages are great figures, poets, philosophers, and men having great achievements who are physically dead but spiritually immortalized. The word "holy" means 'having a divine quality'; exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness'. The "holy fire" has positive connotations. In other words, the fire does not burn or used for punishing or torturing purposes, instead the "holy fire" is used for purification and sanctification. The sages stand in God's holy fire which is an imaginary place between hell and paradise to

purify their soul. After being purified, they will be immortalized in heaven. He asks them to teach him the song of soul to be immortalized by singing it.

Gordon & Fletcher (1963: 136) define the "mosaic" in Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" as follows:

The conventional forms of Byzantium mosaic seem to deny the nature from which they derive. Those images, in fact, were designed to express the Divine, the supernatural, the transcendent realm which opposes the flux of time and nature. The personal application of the symbol is intensified by Yeats's obsession with old age, change, decay, and death, and with the wisdom that outlets them. The symbol, then expresses the permanence of the artist in the perfection of his artifices; but it contains more than this, for Byzantium, at its highest point, represented for Yeats a civilization in which all forms of thought, art, and life interpenetrated one another, and where the artist "spoke to the multitude and the few alike."



If the country that our speaker is sailing from (that country) is full of foolish young people listening to songs which last for minutes and enjoying their mortal life, then the country that he is sailing to (Byzantium) is full of immortalized *monuments of intellects and sages standing in God's holy fire as in the gold mosaic of a wall*. The whole poem has changed and shifted from everything mortal and temporal such as nature, young's songs, and body

to everything immortal and permanent such as soul, art, artifices, monuments, gold mosaic, and sages. Yeats likens the sages to a gold mosaic. Gold is a precious metal and generally has positive connotations: a soft yellow metal that is very valuable and priceless. Gold is associated with its resistance to water, heat, and acid; therefore, it is a symbol of immortality, eternity, and immutability. It symbolises people's quest to perfection, illumination, wisdom, and self-purification. Mosaic is a surface decoration made by inlaying small pieces of variously coloured material to form pictures or patterns. The sages resemble the gold mosaic. Yeats creates a complex picture through combining small pieces of an ultra-expensive metal to allude to the beautiful, valuable, precious, immortal, and hardness nature of Byzantium in general and the precious and valuable nature of the sages in particular that is completely different from the lifeless, cheap, and mortal life of the young in *that country*.

He wishes to be in a gyre with those sages to ask them to burn his heart. The verb "perne" means to spin or gyrate as the pern of a spinning wheel. The word "gyre" means to move in a circle or spiral. As seen in Figure 3 below, a gyre is a geometrical shape. Each gyre moves in a circle or spiral to a point of maximum expansion. Then, the other gyre starts in the centre of the previous one, and, thus, it keeps on spiraling in a never ending line. The idea of the gyre refers to Yeats's enchantment with mysticism and his participation in the mystical society or movement called "The Golden Dawn". The gyre, here, is used to refer to the start of a new life, a spiritual rebirth (reincarnation) of the soul, the passage of time, the cycling nature of human evolution, and the destiny or the inevitable outcome that befalls someone or

something. Mysticism is explicit in Yeats's poems such as "The Second Coming", "Sailing to Byzantium", and "The Magi".

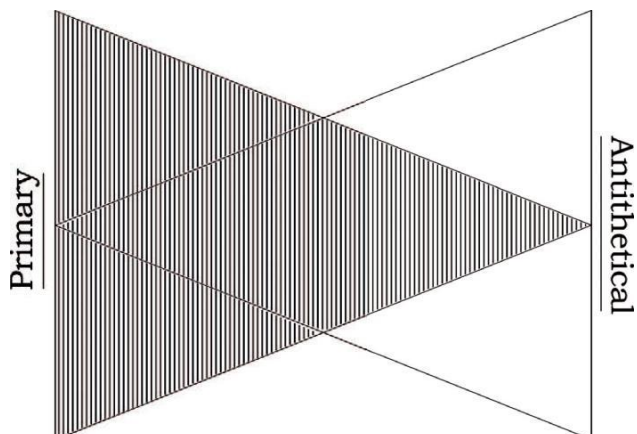


Figure 3: William Butler Yeats's notion of the "gyre" adopted from (Mann, 2012: 6)

According to Yeats, life is mortal but it can be immortal. One can get immortality by infusing art in his/her life. There is a sense of bondage in Yeats's mind. He wants to get rid of this animal instinct and become immortal through the power of art. He wants to get rid of his heart that is sick with desire. He thinks that he can be immortalized if he gets rid of the body that contains the heart that is the centre of feelings and emotions. The body does not know the worth of what it contains as he says 'it knows not what it is'. The minds and soul are acknowledgeable, but the heart and body are not and they can be decayed. Furthermore, Yeats says "gather me into the artifice of eternity". In this saying, an artifice is a skilfully contrived device or expedient; it is associated with skill, cleverness, and ingenuity. A precious diamond might be called an artifice. That is the point: our speaker does not want to be a part of the natural world again. In other words, he does not want

to return to the same mortal cycles or spirals of human condition of birth and death. He wants to live forever into the *artifice of eternity*.

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enameling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

When Yeats dies, he does not want to be reincarnated into another living or natural thing, because he will just face the same quandary as before. He wants the Grecian (the Greeks are the one who originally founded Byzantium) goldsmiths to transform him into something that is made out of gold. It is noticed that, the image of "gold" is also repeated in stanza four. Gold is a very strong and glamorous metal and it is never corroding. According to Ellmann & O'Clair (1973), Yeats wrote that he had read somewhere that in the emperor's palace at Byzantium, there was a tree made out of gold and silver, and artificial birds that sang which would be used to keep the emperor awake. Yeats wants to be one of these golden birds because they cannot die. There is a sense of transmutation in Yeats's mind. He is no longer interested in the temporal songs of the young, and carnal and sexual desires of the heart. Now, the Greek goldsmiths are transforming him into an immortal golden bird that is full of eternal and spiritual passions. It should be noted that the golden bird does not exist in that country and cannot sing to those dying generations with their empty desires. The immortal bird only sings for those who have let the sages to consume their heart sick with desire, who have purified their souls, and who have sailed to the immortal city of

Byzantium to sing for lords and ladies of Byzantium of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Sailing to Byzantium is one of the poems that feature birds as symbols. The image of the golden bird in the poem is similar to or echoes the nightingale in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale". The speaker in "Ode to a Nightingale" is also afraid of death and aging. In the poem, Keats writes:

Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown



Keats is sure that the Nightingale is immortal on account of its beautiful and haunting voice. A key problem in Keats's poetry is that of human mortality in which the old die and the young come to take the place of their parents and then become old and die. This process of birth and death continues to cycle or spiral in the "gyre" of life. Both of the speakers in "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Ode to a Nightingale" seek an escape from this mortal cycle of life. They want to become a golden bird and a Nightingale respectively since these birds with their beautiful voices cannot die and their songs will last forever and has always been heard by kings and clowns of the past, through the present, and the future.

In the last line of the poem, the narrator defeats the human conditions. There is no end for him; he will sing of the past, present, and future.

Table (1): Connotations of some important words and phrases in the poem

Words	Connotations
That country	Material and temporal world free from spiritual or intellectual things
Byzantium	Permanent, immortal, and spiritual world free from temporal-carnal and sexual desires
Young's songs	Temporal songs last for minutes
Gold bird songs	Permanent songs last forever
Scarecrow	A skinny and ragged person
The Body	Decay, death, and decomposition
The soul	Immortality, spirituality, eternity
Art, gold, holy fire, mosaic, sages	Self-purification, immortality, wisdom, reason, knowledge, perfection, illumination, thoughtfulness, knowledge, foresightedness, and judiciousness
Gyre	The cycle of the mortal human life
Salmon, flesh, foul	Mortal organisms which born, live, and die in the mortal cycle of life

Although Yeats lived in a world full of modernism and changing situations, he remained attached to traditional forms and his poems illustrate this fact. Yeats's fascination with the old-traditional forms such as the Irish folk tales, the ballades, and ottava rima show his dissatisfaction with the coming new and modern age of the 20th century. Sailing to Byzantium is written in ottava rima, an old poetic form widely used in epic poems. Even its title suggests the start of telling a story about a hero or about exciting events or adventures. His choice of words such as Byzantium, monuments, artifices, gold, sages, gold bird and mosaic illustrate a sense of heartbreak or disappointment in Yeats's mind. People no longer respect art like traditional times and no longer interested in asking for reason, knowledge, and wisdom like the sages and people of Byzantium. The dying generations, as Yeats called them, are busy with their material and lustful desires. Sailing to Byzantium is a poem about nature, arts, age, travel, mortality, and immortality. The mortality or immortality of someone can be seen through his/her deeds, works, and in the case of our speaker in this poem, such a thing appears through his poetry.

Yeats wants to immortalize himself. He wants to live forever and defeat the human cycle of life: that we are born, live, and then undoubtedly die. Therefore, he seeks an escape from this mortal life and tries to find a way or path to and a place where he can get immortality. He sailed the seas leaving that mortal country which is full of mortal people, mortal things, mortal songs, and mortal desires and emotions behind to the immortal city of Byzantium. There, in the city of Byzantium, Yeats did not find mortal young people listening to mortal songs, and enjoying their mortal carnal and sexual desires; instead Yeats found the sages, the sages of unaging intellect who

have been immortalized through their great achievements, good deeds, and powerful works. He asks them to consume his mortal (decayed) body and heart that is sick with desires to purify his soul. After being purified, he asks the goldsmiths to transmute him into a mechanical or golden bird that sings forever. The point is not in the bird or whether the bird is gold or silver but it is in the immortal-beautiful song of the bird. This is similar to the song or voice of the Nightingale in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale". In actual fact, the Nightingale is just like any other organisms that cannot escape from the cycle of life, but its beautiful voice can. Nobody can forget the beautiful voice of the Nightingale and its voice echoes through generations, from ancient Greeks to modern times, to the present and future.

The poem is also similar to the Shakespearean's sonnet 55. Shakespeare in this sonnet writes:

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme

In these two lines, Shakespeare wants to say that he can immortalize himself through his powerful rhyme. Using part for whole relation or synecdoche, the word "rhyme" signifies his poetry. Unquestionably, Shakespeare will die just like any other creatures, but at the same time he will live forever and be remembered until the doomsday through the might of his poetry that can defeat the passage of time, monuments and statues, wasteful wars, fire, and sword *till the judgment that yourself arise, you live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.*

Similar to the beautiful voice of the Nightingale which lasts forever, and similar to the immortalized Shakespeare through his powerful rhyme, Yeats, in the form of a golden bird, will sing forever of what is past, or

passing, or to come. In other words, Yeats's songs (poems) were heard and sung by the past generations, the present generations, and will be heard and sung by the next coming generations.

٤. Conclusions

According to Tyson (2006), the term 'semiotics' not only studies signs and how they work but also it deals with emotions, feelings, objects, attitudes, gestures, sounds, and images. When we read a poem, we will definitely read words and these words form a group of lines and these lines create a work of art (pictures) in our minds. These pictures are full of signs that refer to different objects, feelings, attitudes, gestures, and sounds. Everyone knows that literary texts are full of emotions and images. The poem "Sailing to Byzantium" is a clear example. Art, Byzantium, gyre, flesh, foul, gold, holy fire, mosaic, salmon, sages, and scarecrow are signs that clearly show the life cycle of human beings and how people can immortalize themselves through their achievements, inventions, and literary, technical, and scientific works. Semiotics serves as a useful and powerful theoretical and analytical approach that can critically analyze literary texts. In this case, students' understanding of and critical awareness in literature will be enhanced and improved.

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