



Structural Imagery in Yeats's *The Dreaming of the Bones*

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Abstract

Yeats establishes a symbolic poetic image of a wine-cup at the outset of *The Dreaming of the Bones* and diffuses it throughout. The image is the concoction of Irish influences and of mystical beliefs sustained by Yeats, for the play does not lose its Irish identity despite its incorporation of formal techniques of the Japanese Noh theatre. As the image encompasses the whole play, its analysis in this paper shows that every given detail refers back to it, whether in matters of setting, of actual physical movement on the stage, or of themes, as a result of which the image acquires a binding quality. There is a parallelism between this binding image, and the reflected altitudinal physical and thematic experience of the play in its virtual setting, reaching up to its climax. The paper thus finds that the image articulates everything it evokes and gives it visual presentation. Literally carrying the whole weight, the conclusion is that the image forms the structural basis without which the play cannot stand, and that, being the core of the play, it constitutes a thematic objective correlative. The divisions in the paper are arranged to steer the analysis towards a full appreciation of the structural role of this image in holding the play together.

1. Introduction

Yeats (1865-1939) admired the minimalistic presentation of the Japanese Noh theatre when exposed to it through the Pound (1885-1972)-Fenollosa (1853-1908) translations (1916). *The Dreaming of the Bones* (1919) is admittedly influenced by one such Japanese play, namely, *Nishikigi* (n.d) by Motokiyo (c. 1363 – c. 1443), and yet it maintains a strong Irish feel. This is not arrived at only through telling an Irish historical story, but also through the structural image of the wine-cup which sets the tone for the whole play. Though seemingly a ubiquitous symbol, in Yeats's hands it conveys a highly Irish narrative.

2. Nishikigi

Japanese Noh drama emerged in the twelfth or thirteenth century, and became a distinctive form in the fourteenth. It continued to be refined up to the 1860s. The performers of this genre are simply storytellers; rather than enacting the story, they combine speeches with their appearance and movements to suggest the essence of their tale. Consequently, little happens in a Noh drama ('Noh theatre: Japanese drama,' 2017), contrary to the general Western practice of drama in terms of action. These techniques appealed to Yeats who, as he makes clear in 'Ireland and the arts' (1901: 610), had long been trying to fashion a dramatic style free from traditional European influences. Also in this regard, Wilson (2018: 17) upholds that Noh drama provided Yeats with a model for 'the archetypally symbolic dramas he wanted to write.'

Nishikigi by Motokiyo is a Japanese play of the Noh genre. It tells the story of two lovers, Shite and Tsure, who died long ago without being united in life, and who now appear as ghosts to a priest, Waki.¹ Nightly, for three years, and in accordance with the customs of their time, Shite had offered *nishikigis*, i.e., charmed red sticks, at the girl's window as tokens of love. She, however, had ignored him and had gone on with her



weaving. When the young man died, he was buried in a cave with all his charmed sticks, and soon afterwards the girl died too. They are unmarried in death just as they were unmarried in life. Tusre tells Waki that the cave where the young man is buried is called 'the 'cave of the many charms' (Motokiyo, n.d.) upon which Waki wants to be taken there because that would provide him with an interesting story to take back to his village. Once there, the two ghosts go into the cave and the priest, finding it too cold to sleep, decides to spend his night in prayer that the two lovers may be united. Wondrously, the cave seems to light up, and Waki envisions the bridal room of the two lovers where they are drinking from their bridal cup, denoting that his prayers were answered:

SHITE. It is a good service you have done, sir,
A service that spreads in two worlds,
And binds up an ancient love
That was stretched out between them. (Motokiyo, n.d.)

The ghosts finally being united in marriage, the vision is over with the coming of dawn, as spoken by the Chorus in the very last lines of the play:

[..] all this will wither away.
There is nothing here but this cave in the field's midst.
To-day's wind moves in the pines;
A wild place, unlit, and unfilled. (Motokiyo, n.d.)

3. *The Dreaming of the Bones*

The Dreaming of the Bones was originally published with *The Only Jealousy of Emer* in Yeats's *Two Plays for Dancers* in 1919. Later, both plays were included in his *Four Plays for Dancers* published in 1921, the other two plays being *At The Hawk's Well* and *Calvary*. These plays are dance-plays modelled on Noh theatre, a fact which is very clear in the influence of *Nishikigi* on *The Dreaming of the Bones*.

The Dreaming of the Bones follows the techniques of *Nishikigi*, be it the Chorus – appearing as the Musicians– adding their comments, in what Yeats describes in his Introduction to the Pound-Fenollosa translations (1916) as the 'formal faces' of the actors achieved through the use of masks, in the nearly bare stage and minimal stage props, in the limited number of characters, or in characters recounting their love-sorrows to a traveler with whom they have no previous connection. Amplifying the connectedness of the story with the landscape is another feature of *Nishikigi* which Yeats employs in his play, so is what he describes in the above Introduction as

a playing upon a single metaphor [...]. In the 'Nishikigi' [*sic*] the ghost of the girl-lover carries the cloth she went on weaving out of grass when she should have opened the chamber door to her lover, and woven grass returns again and again in metaphor and incident. The lovers, now that in an aery body they must sorrow for unconsummated love, are 'tangled up as the grass patterns are tangled' [Yeats is quoting from the play here]. Again they are like an unfinished cloth.

The single image in *The Dreaming of the Bones* is that of an overflowing cup, delivered through a simile. Its power, however, surpasses that of *Nishikigi* as it structurally holds up the play in interweaving the actors' speeches and movements with the virtual landscape in terms of shape, colour, and theme.

Yeats's play molds a seminal event in the history of Ireland into the formal genre of *Nishikigi*. The overtly political *The Dreaming of the Bones* tells the story of Dermot and Dervorgilla, referred to in the play as the Stranger and the Girl. Long dead, their spirits appear to a young revolutionary, denominated as the Young Man, escaping the authorities after his participation in the 1916 Easter Rising. In 1152 Dermot (Diarmuid MacMurrough,



1110-1171), king of Leinster, carried off Dervorgilla (1108-1193), wife of Tegernan O'Rourke, King of Breffny (fl. 1124-1172). The latter invaded Leinster in revenge and, consequently, Dermot had to leave Ireland. He appealed for help to Henry II of England (1133-1189), who gave him an army under Strongbow (Richard Fitzgilbert de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, c. 1130-1176), to whom Dermot promised Leinster as reward. This started the long-lasting oppression of Ireland by the English, and, resulting in the Irish people perceiving themselves as the cause of their own subjugation, it initiated in them a sense of self-condemnation.

The ghosts of Dermot and Dervorgilla in the play –who correspond to the ghosts of Shite and Tsure in *Nishikigi*– are acutely conscious of their guilt; hence their seeking the forgiveness of one of their own Irish people, as only then could they be reunited in death. However, their penance will go on as the Young Man –corresponding to the priest in *Nishikigi*– cannot bring himself to grant them the required absolution. Yeats thus alters the ending of the Japanese source play where the ghosts of the two lovers are finally united in answer to the priest's sympathetic prayers.

4. The Structural Imagery Reflecting the Virtual Setting

Describing the evolvement of his art in 'Ireland and the arts' (1901: 608), Yeats observes that the Irish are rich in historical 'imaginative events' and 'legends [surpassing most] in wild beauty.' He maintains that in Ireland 'there is no river or mountain that is not associated in the memory with some event or legend; while political reasons have made love of country' great among the Irish. Yeats goes on to express his wish that the Irish would 'master this history and these legends, and fix upon their memory the appearance of mountains and rivers and make it all visible again in their arts, so that Irishmen, even though they had gone thousands of miles away, would still be in their own country.'

Yeats practices what he posits above in *The Dreaming of the Bones*, the virtual setting of which is a mountain in County Clare. He brings the prominence of this virtual setting to the fore through the image of the cup, entwining it with the Irish historical story and the Irish political blight, creating a vibrant mystical air of expectancy which brings the setting to life.

The virtual setting of the play resonates with the Irish people. Yeats's choice of the vicinity of the Abbey of Corcomroe in County Clare, where 'Close to the altar/ Broken by wind and frost and worn by time/ Donogh O'Brien has a tomb' (Yeats, 1919: 33), is not random. Wilson (2018: 291) maintains that although the ghosts of Dermot and Dervorgilla are traditionally conceived of as wandering spirits who are not associated with any particular spot in Ireland, yet Yeats brings them to this particular locale as befits his play. Wilson explains the logic of this choice as Donogh O'Brien (died 1624) 'shares with [the two spirits] the stigma of having called in a foreign army against the Irish people.'² Wilson moreover explains that the location enabled Yeats to relate his play to contemporary politics as heavy fighting took place in that region during the 1916 rebellion, 'and the play contains a bitter commentary on the vandalism of the English troops.'

Another proof of the deliberate choice of the locales mentioned in the play is the Young Man's planned route of escape from County Clare, where he 'should not be afraid' (Yeats, 1919: 11), to the Aran Islands. This way he could ensure fleeing the pursuing authorities. Ross (2009: 437) maintains that Yeats's formed mythology of the Aran Islanders is that they stand for 'ancient instinct and ancient pattern uncorrupted by the baleful influence of modernity.' To support this argument, he recounts Yeats's recollection of meeting an old man on Inishmaan, (one of the three Aran Islands), who avowed that the Islanders would readily hide fugitives from the authorities. Ross concludes that this incident could not but have influenced Yeats in the choice of those Islands as the planned destination of the young rebel.



Yeats's directions for the staging of *The Dreaming of the Bones* clearly state that the 'stage is any bare place in a room close to the wall. A screen with a pattern of mountain and sky can stand against the wall, or a curtain with a like pattern hang upon it, but the pattern must only symbolize or suggest' (Yeats, 1919: 2). These directions for the setting are in line with his being one of the turn-of-the century dramatists who reacted against realism in presentation. Still, his poetic language in reference to the area calls forth a highly realistic, though thematically evocative, abstract image of the scene. In Schmitt's (1997: 357) words, 'as in symbolist theatre, Yeats sought to create stage décor with his language.'

Emphasizing the centrality of the Irish setting in the play, Schmitt (1997: 337, 350, 351) counts *The Dreaming of the Bones* as one of Yeats's best three plays which are set outdoors, and which are wedded to the landscapes they portray – the other two being *At the Hawk's Well* (1916) and *The Cat and the Moon* (1924). Discussing the relationship between the realistic virtual settings and the supernatural they represent, she finds that the landscape in each of these plays (which she had visited in person) is so tightly interwoven with their aims that it gains further significance. In her discussion of *The Dreaming of the Bones*, she notes that the play's site, be it landscape, the Abbey and its tombs, or the circling birds of the area, all of which are faithfully depicted in the play, is itself so haunting that it intensifies the ghostly atmosphere. She also notes that there the limestone hills of the Burren (literally meaning 'great rock') which encircle the Abbey, look, if not like a cup, then like a bowl. She finds this conflicting with the predominant critical consensus that Yeats takes the image of the cup from his Japanese source, when in fact it is inspired by the Irish landscape.

The contended image of the cup thus furthers Yeats's assertion that Ireland's writers should boost everything Irish in their work. In *Nishikigi* the cup does not reflect the formation of the landscape, nor does it encircle the whole play as it does in *The Dreaming of the Bones*, where it is established at the very beginning of the play in the Musicians' first song:

Have not old writers said
That dizzy dreams can spring
From the dry bones of the dead?
And many a night it seems
That all the valley fills
With those fantastic dreams.
They overflow the hills,
So passionate is a shade,
Like wine that fills to the top
A grey-green cup of jade,
Or maybe an agate cup.
[...]
[...] and all about the hills
Are like a circle of Agate or of Jade. (Yeats, 1919: 7-8)

The similes in the above lines start the image of the cup, the shape and colour of which are shown to be reflected in the formation and the colour of the hills. The grey-green colours of the cup also have their links with the coming dawn, which is the time at which the play comes to its end. The association is that the green colour of the landscape could only begin to be discerned in the grey light of dawn. Furthering the reflection of the landscape colour, the Young Man later says:

And if what seems is true
And there are more upon the other side
Than on this side of death, many a ghost



Must meet them face to face and pass the word
Even upon this grey and desolate hill. (Yeats, 1919: 36)

And yet again both shape and colour are mentioned in the Musicians' last song with which the play ends, and which thus brings the image of the grey-green cup full circle:

At the grey round of the hill
Music of a lost kingdom
Runs, runs and is suddenly still. (Yeats, 1919: 60)

In *Nishikigi* the cup is only mentioned towards the end of the play. Its colour is not specified but it is indicated to be reflective of dawn, though, notably, not of landscape:

Chorus: For the tokens between lover and lover:
It is a reflecting in the wine-cup.
The dawn!
Come, we are out of place;
Let us go ere the light comes. (Motokiyo, n.d.)

The positioning of the cup image in the two plays is telling. In *The Dreaming of the Bones*, as shown above, it runs throughout the whole play. In *Nishikigi*, on the other hand, the cup is mentioned at the ending part of the play as a celebratory item in the long-awaited union of the two ghosts. The whole of the virtual setting of *Nishikigi* is not based on it as is the virtual setting of *The Dreaming of the Bones*.

5. The Structural Imagery Reflecting the Actors' Movement on the Stage

It is not only the landscape that is portrayed in the all-encircling image of Yeats's play, for it also reflects the physical movement of the actors on the stage. In 'The reform of the theatre' (1903: 616) Yeats advocates simplifying formal presentation in, among other things, action and scenery. He wants the backdrop to be unobtrusive to achieve harmony between it and the actors so they, i.e., the actors, would be foremost in the audience's attention. He also finds it 'necessary to simplify gesture that it may accompany speech without being its rival.'

In his plan of escape, the Young Man must reach the summit of the mountain by dawn:

I am to lie
At daybreak on the mountain and keep watch
Until an Aran coracle puts in
At Muckanish or at the rocky shore
Under Finvarra, but would break my neck
If I went stumbling there alone in the dark. (Yeats, 1919: 15)

This gives the two ghosts the pretext of helping him reach the summit, and it also gives them the opportunity of gradually revealing their identity to him as they accompany him in his upward journey.

Showcasing the simple formal presentation for which he argues, which is highly influenced by the formal presentation in Noh plays, Yeats punctuates the lines of the actors as they go up the virtual mountain, with four laps which they make around the stage to create the impression of the climb. It needs to be noted that the actors in *Nishikigi* do not move in circles as they are going to their destination of the cave where Shite is buried. On the other hand, the visual laps in Yeats's play, symbolizing the actors' imagined ascent, are analogous to the poetic image of wine filling up the cup from its stem to its rim: 'Like wine that fills to the top/ A grey-green cup of jade' (Yeats, 1919: 8). Moreover, Yeats pairs this circular movement on the stage with the accompanying words without allowing them to detract from each other, something which he also advocates in 'The reform of the theatre,' (1903: 616) stating that 'modern acting may be great when it does everything with voice and movement.'



6. The Structural Imagery Reflecting Themes

In addition to the physical activity on the stage, the potent spirituality is another activity reflected in the image of the cup, which means that it also supports the play thematically. The lines of the Musicians' opening song quoted above signal the coming of the ascending spirits that will fill up the place in an upward dynamism, which will last till the break of dawn. The image is of something starting from the low ground going up the hills and mountains, just as wine fills up a grey-green cup. Indeed, the two spirits of Dermot and Dervorgilla meeting the Young Man at the bottom and guiding him upwards proves that in the play. Their ascent finally delivers them at the top of the mountain with the break of dawn:

YOUNG MAN. The horizon to the east is growing bright.
So here we're on the summit. I can see
The Aran Islands, Connemara Hills,
And Galway in the breaking light. (Yeats, 1919: 54)

The Young Man and the two spirits have now reached the highest that they could go, similar to the wine that overflows the rim of the cup which is at this point too small to contain it; likewise, this is all of the spirituality that the locale could contain. The virtual physical climb to the summit also constitutes the spiritual thematic climax of the play. It is the utmost of the experience in both cases.

The overflowing wine cup also introduces the idea of intoxication, which contends Clark's (1965: 52) perception of it as 'a rather arbitrary sign of the coming of the spirits.' The aura of intoxication is suggested early on in the play in the 'dizzy dreams' which 'can spring/ From the dry bones of the dead' (Yeats, 1919: 8); it is furthered by the poetic lines between the living and the dead, and it is strongly felt at the tantalizing moment of the hoped for forgiveness of the ghosts by the Young Man. Now at the summit, the Young Man has finally realized who the two spirits are and what they are asking of him. In the overflow of the intoxication of their strong emotions, the two spirits cease to speak, and only dance and gaze at each other longingly:

YOUNG MAN. Why do you look so strangely at one another,
So strangely and so sweetly?
[...]
All the ruin,
All, all their handiwork is blown away
As though the mountain air had blown it away
Because their eyes have met. They cannot hear,
Being folded up and hidden in their dance.
The dance is changing now. They have dropped their eyes,
They have covered up their eyes as though their hearts
Had suddenly been broken— (Yeats, 1919: 56-8)

The beauty and intensity of their passion so affects the Young Man when he sees it blowing away the destruction which they brought on their country, that he almost grants them the forgiveness they had asked:

THE GIRL. If someone of their race forgave at last
Lip would be pressed on lip. (Yeats, 1919: 53)

Keane, writer/presenter of the BBC documentary series *The story of Ireland* (BBC/RTE Co-Production, 2011), professes the commonplace perception of the Irish to be 'turned in upon themselves, victims of their own ancient hatreds and of a powerful neighbor.' Forgiving the ghosts of Dermot and Dervorgilla therefore would be a step forward for Ireland, as it would free the country from its inherent self-hatred and negative criticism. This moment of spiritual intoxication in the play conquers the constant Irish awareness that the destruction of the country, portrayed in the description of the ruins in



the landscape, is the outcome of the actions of their own Dermot and Dervorgilla which led to the Anglo/Norman invasion. But the Young Man, standing for all Irish people, as reflected in his use of the passive voice, fails to take advantage of this moment, saying, 'never, never/ Will Dermot and Dervorgilla be forgiven' (Yeats, 1919: 52). Later he even congratulates himself on what he deems a sober decision: 'I had almost yielded and forgiven it all—/ This is indeed a place of terrible temptation' (Yeats, 1919: 58). Now, the grey colour in the imagery acquires the further association of the grey gloom of unrelenting censure plaguing Ireland which Yeats is speaking against in this play. According to Childs (2004:166-7), the combination of Anglo blood and Irish blood is perceived by Yeats to have had the positive outcome of a new political intelligence and a modern literature in Ireland. He maintains that Yeats expects this lineage to prevail and succeed in transforming the nation.³ Himself a descendent of the Anglo-Irish stock which he favors, this is all the more reason for Yeats to want the forgiveness by the Young Man.

The intoxication having reached its climax, as the climb has reached its climax, it can only end as mystically as it began:

YOUNG MAN. They have drifted in the dance from rock to
rock.
They have raised their hands as though to snatch the sleep
That lingers always in the abyss of the sky
Though they can never reach it. A cloud floats up
And covers all the mountain head in a moment.
And now it lifts and they are swept away. (Yeats, 1919: 58)

At this point in the play, with the break of dawn, the Musicians tantalizingly unfold and fold a black cloth. When unfolded, it symbolizes the revelation of the truth of the spirits to the Young Man, as well as the revelation of the necessity of letting go of the ancient Irish self-condemnation. They fold it again as he leaves the stage, having denied Dermot and Dervorgilla his forgiveness to which they were tantalizingly close, thus perpetuating the deep-rooted Irish sense of shame. This, in turn, means that the ghosts will continue to show when it is night time -reflected in the blackness of the cloth- and will continue to be folded in by night at the break of dawn. As long as the spirits are denied forgiveness by their own people, the dreaming of the bones continues, as the Stranger (the ghost of Dermot) says:

For certain days the stones where you must lie
Have in the hour before the break of day
Been haunted. (Yeats, 1919: 22)

Showing that this is a traditional Irish belief, the Young Man says:

My Grandam
Would have it they did penance everywhere
Or lived through their old lives again. (Yeats, 1919: 25)

And, of course, the opening song of the Musicians has already established this idea:

And many a night it seems
That all the valley fills
With those fantastic dreams. (Yeats, 1919: 8)

The black cloth symbolizing night brings us back to the idea of dawn denoted in the grey/green colour of the cup in the imagery. Yeats's emblematic deployment of the sun and moon is much discussed by critics. Holdman (2006: 42-3), for one, deliberates over Yeats's association of the sun with 'an elemental masculine principle connected with discipline and pattern,' whereas the moon 'evoked [for Yeats] an opposing feminine force linked to passion and infinitude.' Thus the moon is linked with subjectivity whose feminine force is furthered in the play by it being the Girl who blows out the lantern held by the Young Man to make sure of the darkness (Yeats, 1919: 11), and by allocating all the



lines telling their past story and asking for forgiveness to her. She reminds the Young Man that 'Helen herself had opened wide the door/ Where night by night she dreams herself awake/ And gathers to her breast a dreaming man' (Yeats, 1919: 47). Associating herself with Helen of Troy, according to Jeffares and Knowland (1975: 163), denotes that she regards the crime of Dermot and Dervorgilla 'primarily, though not exclusively, in terms of private passion; the Young Man in terms of political betrayal, the consequences of which include Easter 1916 and his own situation.' Hence, through the Young Man, the objectivity of the sun, heralded by the break of dawn, reestablishes its unforgiving pattern. Unawares, in withholding his forgiveness from the two ghosts, the Young Man actually denies himself absolution. As a rebel, he is, in a sense, their issue, the end result of their union.

Yeats's engrossment in the postulation of the interconnectedness between the living and the dead further clarifies his belief in the necessity and urgency of the forgiveness. In 'The soul in judgement' (1937: 222, 228), he upholds that the actions of the living affect the dead, similar to dreams finishing people's wakeful activities, or to dreams being permeated by what the waking suggest. Poulain's (2015: para. 1) argument that playwrights who challenged the prevalent realism on the stage at the turn of the twentieth century often resorted to the portrayal of ghosts to visualize the invisible, is relevant to this context, for Yeats is no exception when he peoples his play with both the dead and the living. But the shadows which are made visible in this play are not confined to the dead, for, in the acting out of the imagery of the wine-cup on the stage, they go beyond to also voice and visualize the Irish inherited self-hatred and obstinacy. Yeats thus stresses the authority of ideas in dramatic presentation, which is in line with his advice in 'The reform of the theatre' (1903: 616) that writers 'substitute for the movements that the eye sees the nobler movements that the heart sees, the rhythmical movements that seem to flow up into the imagination from some deeper life than that of the individual soul.'

The enactment of the wine cup image on the stage articulates the deeper ideas and concepts of the play and makes them visible in its distinct altitudinal movement. When at the highest point, Yeats allows for an elated visionary perception that the redemption of the dead requires the generosity of forgiveness by the living, and that the national well-being of Ireland depends on its forgiveness of its past figures. The sense of shame should be long dead rather than being kept alive by the living. He also shows that the separation of the lovers is reflected in the destruction in Ireland as seen in the landscape of the play, so perpetuating the separation by withholding forgiveness perpetuates that destruction. This, in turn, entwines the past with the present, and the personal, for the Young Man and for the two ghostly lovers, with the national. Yeats further shows the top of the mountain to be where the two lovers could finally be free of their guilt and be united in death, just as it is where the young rebel is to embark on his journey to freedom. In addition, through the visionary moment at the summit, reached just before dawn, Yeats distinguishes the subjectivity of night from the objectivity of day, seen in the nature of the feelings which each arouses. This is relevant to what Yeats describes in '*Anima mundi*' (1917: 365) as his 'brief intense visions of sleep' when he feels that he has 'something about [him] that, though it makes [him] love, is more like innocence.' Such feelings of love and innocence are felt by the Young Man when very close to granting his forgiveness; they are however defeated by the rising sun of the new day.

In 'The reform of the theatre' (1903: 614) Yeats calls for making a character speak 'with so much of emotional subtlety that the hearer may find it hard to know whether it is the thought or the word that has moved him, or whether these could be separated at all.' This is seen in the oral evocative imagery giving life to the word and to the thought and making them vibrate together, as every detail in the play mirrors the imagery. This means that everything in the play is in fact thought, articulated on an almost bare stage, which is



in conformity with Yeats's aim of portraying in a play what he refers to as 'some deeper life,' as quoted above. The verbal imagery evokes a clairvoyance which brings to life ghosts, hills and valleys, ideas and feelings, night and day, along with the cup itself and its wine. True to his fundamental belief in the metaphysical concept of *anima mundi*, Yeats shows an intrinsic spiritual connection between these units, and allows his imagery to access the soul that each of them is shown to have. Brimming over with feeling, they all have something to say, and are all part of the emotional experience.

7. The Structural Imagery as Objective Correlative

Loading the image of the wine cup with so much belief, thought, and emotion, qualifies it as the 'objective correlative' forwarded by Eliot in his 'Hamlet and his problems' (1920: 92) as the 'only way of expressing emotion in the form of art.' Eliot's explanation of the 'objective correlative' as 'a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of [a] particular emotion,' is applicable to Yeats's use of Irish history, mythological figures, landscapes, and situations in his plays which, again in Eliot's terms, 'terminate in sensory experience,' evoking the desired Irish feel and emotion. Indeed, any play by Yeats is identifiable as his and as reflective of his depiction of Ireland. In *The Dreaming of the Bones* this feel is very acute, more so than in his other plays, in the 'sensory experience' being created in the imagery and in all the other details of the play corresponding to it. The 'objective correlative' here is not only evocative of Ireland as such, but also of the whole experience of the play.

The objective correlative of the imagery in *The Dreaming of the Bones* being evocative of Irish concerns is in despite of Yeats's incorporation of the Japanese Noh theatre into which he molds his Irish content, and of the obvious influence of French Symbolism on him. Regarding the latter, Albright (2006: 68) points out Yeats's preference of traditional symbols to modern ones, which does much to explain his accessing stories that are part of the cultural Irish conscience. On the other hand, Yeats's use of the objective correlative in *The Dreaming of the Bones* is in line with the 'opacity,' as mentioned by Wilson (2018: 19), which Yeats's plays strive for, exemplifying his need to mystify his readers, an 'opacity' which would be destroyed by 'plain statement.' Plain statement would also go counter to Yeats's call, in 'The reform of the theatre' (1903: 614) for 'plays that will make the theatre a place of intellectual excitement,' which would be disabled by straightforward realistic presentation. As part of his desire for theatre as a venue for intellectual excitement, the objective correlative of the imagery is so forceful that it contradicts the conventional symbolic associations of agate and of the colour green with tranquility and serenity. Yeats challenges his audience by twisting their exorcising and soothing properties as the effect of the imagery of which they are part is exciting in its arousal of feelings up to the tantalizing climax which denies the hoped for forgiveness by the Young Man. Perversely, they fail to exorcise the Young Man of his inherent anger. The objective correlative of the image is also so compact and dense that it goes farther than being solely the formula of a particular emotion, as specified by Eliot, for it encompasses all the evoked emotions and ideas, as well as the actors' physical movement and the play's general presentation. They all reflect the core of the play, which is its structural imagery.

Conclusion

All the technical features in *The Dreaming of the Bones* are from the source Japanese Noh play, *Nishikigi*. The technique that stands out in Yeats's play is that of the single metaphor which he tasks with a much more fundamental role than that of *Nishikigi*. In *Nishikigi* the single metaphor is the visual local cloth patterned with green grass, whose only significance, thematic in nature, is its reflection of the entangled situation of the two spectral lovers before their final union. In *The Dreaming of the Bones* it is that of the grey-



green agate cup overflowing with wine, which is conveyed purely orally. Its thematic role exceeds that of *Nishikigi* for it does not only evoke one idea, but acts as an objective correlative for the conflated national and mystical emotions of the play. Its poetic oral conveyance endows it with an abstraction allowing for wider connotations and implications than that of the visual image of *Nishikigi*, thus widening the scope of the play. As the image of wine pouring into an overflowing wine-cup is an ongoing dynamic itself, it reflects the ongoing dynamic of the rising of spirits as a result of their wasted appeal for the sympathy of the living, which keeps alive the Irish sense of self-condemnation. Rather than the tragedy of the ghostly lovers being ended by the end of the play as it is in *Nishikigi*, in *The Dreaming of the Bones* it goes on because the nature of the ghosts' past actions goes beyond the personal to have continuous national ramifications. Thus the dynamic links past, present, and future for the characters in the play and for all of Ireland. The wide scope of national Irish concerns is not only created through the portrayal of a seminal event in the history of the country, but also through the recognizably virtual Irish setting. The oral image is always in the mind's eye in its reflection of the formation and colours of the landscape. Moreover, the landscape too is actively involved in the spiritual and political dynamics, seen in its accommodation of spiritual activity and of the young rebellious Irish fugitive. This *anima mundi* feel is indicated to end with the coming of dawn, thus also involving night and day in the dynamic. The coming of dawn, the colour of which is also there in the image, heralds mundanity which ends the spiritual *anima mundi* for that night, only for it to recur again like the continuous overflowing of the wine. The dynamic of the image is also brought to mind by the physical round movement on the stage in the ascent of the virtual mountain. As the poetic suggestion in Yeats's imagery enlivens the play's components in bringing about this physical and spiritual dynamism, it also enlivens expectation and creates a sense of mystery and mysticism. This is in line with the excitement that Yeats seeks in his attempts to make his theatrical presentations challenging intellectual experiences, putting to practice his stance against strict realism on the stage prevalent then. Poetic lines beginning and ending the play in reference to the imagery bring it full circle, like the round symbolic movements of the actors and like the round hills, reflective of the roundness of the cup. Being at the core of all the emotions roused in the play, as well as dictating the setting and physical movement on the stage, the image brings about a sense of oneness and constitutes a binding symbolic structure. Without it, and acting individually, the components of the play would fail to convey their separate messages. The imagery is thus tasked with the structural role of holding the play together.

Notes

1. The Waki is the subordinate actor, one of the major Noh roles. Another major Noh role is that of the Shite, i.e., the principle actor ('Noh theatre: Japanese drama,' 2017), here appearing as the ghost of the male lover.
2. Donogh O'Brien fought for Queen Elizabeth against the Irish alliance in the Nine Years' War (1593-1603). The war was in response to the Tudor conquest of Ireland.
3. Childs's (2004) discussion of *Purgatory* (1938) further clarifies this idea. In this play by Yeats, The Old Man recounts to his son how his mother, the son's grandmother, got married. She had been the lady of an ancient household, now in ruins, (which could easily stand for Ireland), but she chose a commoner, much below her in status and character, for a husband. The play argues, in the person of the Old Man, that the lady's choice of a husband caused her bloodline to degenerate, as implied by the current pitiable state of the house, of the father and of his son. Childs (2004: 151) argues that the mother's 'dysgenic misalliance' is



shown in this paly to be a ‘sin against eugenics [...] visited on the generations that follow.’

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وينه سازى بونىادى له (خهونى ئيسكه كان) اى ييتس

تارا تاهير سوله يمان دهباغ

كۆلتىزى زمان- به شى زمانى ئىنگلىزى/ زانكۆى سه لاهه ددين- ههولتير

پوخته

ييتس هه لده ستيت به دامه زراندى وئيه به كى سيمبۆلىكى شيعرى كه بريتيه له جاميكي شهاب له ده سپيكي شانۆى (خهونى ئيسكه كان) وه بۆلۆى ده كاته وه به دريژايى شانۆكه. ئەم وئيه به پىك هانۆوه له تيكه له يهك له ههر يهك له كاريگه رى ئيرلەندى و بير و باوه رى سۆفيگه رى كه هه لگيراون له لايهن ييتس له بهر ئەوهى كه شانۆيه كه پيناسه ئيرلەندى خۆى له ده ست نادات سه ره پاي له خۆ گرتى بۆ ته كنيكى فه رمى شانۆى يابانى نۆه. له كاتيک دا كه ئەم وئيه به هه موو شانۆيه كه داده گرت، شه كردنه وه كهى له م بۆلۆ كراوه يه دا ئەوه نيشان ده دات كه وا ههر وورده كاريه كى پيشكه شكراو له پووى شوين و كات، جوولەى راسته قينهى جه ستەيى له سه ر شانۆ، ياخود له لايهنى بابەتى، ده گه رپته وه بۆ ئەم وينه به كه له ئەنجامدا وئيه كه تايه تمه ندييه كى به يه كه وه چه سپاو به خۆوه ده گرت. هاوته ريبه يه ك و هاوشپوه يه ك هه به له تىوان ئەم وئيه به يه كه وه چه سپاو له گه ل ئەو په نگدانه وه به رزيه جه ستەييه و ئەو ئەزمونه باس ريشه يه كى له له شانۆكه دا هه به له كات و شوئنه گريمانه يه كى دا كه ده گاته لوتكه. به و شپوه يه ئەم بۆلۆ كراوه يه ده گاته ئەو ئەنجامه كى كه وا وئيه كه زۆر به ووردى و به پووى هه موو ئەو شتانه نيشان ده دات كه ده يانور ووژيئيت وه هه روه ها به رجه سته كردنيكى بينراويان پڻ ده به خشيت. كۆتايه كه ش كه وا ريك هه موو كيشه كهى هه لگرتوه، ئەوه نيشان ده دات كه وا وئيه كه ئەو بناغه پيکهاته يى و بنه مايه پيک ديئيت كه وا پڻ ئەو شانۆيه كه ناتوايت بوه ستيت، وه هه روه ها ئەم وئيه به كه ناواخنى شانۆيه كه يه هه لده ستيت به پيک هينانى به يه ك به ستنه وه يه كى بابە تيبانه كه وا خوئنه ريش به خۆيه وه ده به ستته وه. به شه كانى ئەم بۆلۆ كراوه يه كه وا شيكرده نه وه كان به ئاراسته ي به رزرخانديكى ته واوى پۆلى بونىادى ئەو وئيه شيعريه بگرن كه وا چۆن هه ستاوه به يه ك خستنى هه موو شانۆكه.

التصوير البلاغي البنيوي في (أحلام العظام) لييتس

تارا تاهير سليمان الدباغ

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ملخص

يرسخ ييتس صورة بلاغية شعرية لفتح نبذ في مستهل مسرحيته (أحلام العظام) ويقوم بنشرها في المسرحية كلها. صورته البلاغية هي مزيج من تأثيرات إيرلندية ومن معتقدات صوفية له، حيث أن المسرحية لاتفقد هويتها الأيرلندية بالرغم من دمجها للتقنيات الشكلية لمسرح النوه الياباني. وبما أن الصورة البلاغية هذه تشمل وتطوق المسرحية كلها، فان تحليلها في هذا البحث يبين أن كل تفاصيل المسرحية ترجع لها، سواء في موقع وزمان المشهد، أو في الحركة البدنية على المسرح، أو في أفكار المسرحية الرئيسية، مما ينتج عن اكتسابها لخاصية تماسكية رابطة. كذلك فان هناك تواز بين هذه الصورة البلاغية الرابطة وبين ماتعكسه من تجربة موضوعية وحركية تصاعدية في المكان والزمان التقديرين للمسرحية وصولا الى ذروتها. لهذا فان هذا البحث يجد أن هذه الصورة البلاغية للمسرحية تعبر بوضوح عن كل ماتستدعيه وتعطيه مظهرا مرثيا. ولكونها تحمل واقعا كامل ثقل المسرحية، فان الاستنتاج الختامي هو أنها تكون الاساس البنيوي الذي بدونه لايمكن للمسرحية ان تظل قائمة، وأن كونها جوهر المسرحية يشكل منها معادلا موضوعيا. تقسيمات هذا البحث منسقة لتوجيه التحليل نحو تقدير وادراك تامين للدور البنيوي لهذه الصورة البلاغية في تماسك المسرحية.