

ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL
Available Online: https://assajournal.com
Vol. 05 No. 01. Jan-March 2026.Page#. 4067-4087
Print ISSN: 3006-2497 Online ISSN: 3006-2500
Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21324631

Formal Unity in New Criticism: A Close Reading of Selected Balochi Poetry

Hassan
University of Gwadar
hassanhameedbaluch@gmail.com

Naeema Karim
University of Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences
naeema.karim@ug.edu.pk

Mubarak Ali
University of Gwadar
mubarak.ali@ug.edu.pk

Abstract

This study examines formal unity in selected Balochi poetry through the theoretical lens of New Criticism, employing close reading as the primary analytical methodology. New Criticism advocates for the analysis of literary works as autonomous artistic structures, emphasizing intrinsic elements such as imagery, symbolism, irony, paradox, diction, and structural organization. While existing scholarship on Balochi literature has predominantly focused on historical, cultural, and political perspectives, limited attention has been paid to the formal dimensions of Balochi poetry. The research analyzes three contemporary Balochi poems: Mubarak Qazi's "Cast Away the Gun," Munir Momin's "Streets of Melody," and Qasum Faraz's "The Desolate Shadow of Old Acacia." Through systematic close reading, the study investigates how these poems achieve formal unity—the harmonious integration of all literary elements into a coherent artistic whole. Findings reveal that all selected poems exhibit remarkable formal unity through interconnected networks of images and symbols that reinforce central themes. Qazi's poem achieves coherence through symbolic opposition between violence and peace, Momin's poem through interwoven symbols of interconnectedness and transformation, and Faraz's poem through sustained imagery of abandonment and waiting. The study contributes to Balochi literary criticism by demonstrating the applicability of New Critical principles to modern Balochi poetry and highlights the value of close reading as an analytical technique for understanding poetic artistry beyond sociopolitical interpretations.

Keywords: *New Criticism, Formal Unity, Close Reading, Balochi Poetry, Imagery, Symbolism*

Introduction and Background

Literature reflects societal reality, cultural ideals, and human experiences. Poetry holds a prominent place among other literary genres because of its creative expression, linguistic depth, and capacity to communicate intricate ideas using succinct language. Poetry interpretation has changed as a result of several critical perspectives, each focusing on distinct elements of literary works.

In reaction to historical, biographical, and moral approaches to literary study, New Criticism became a significant literary trend in the early 20th century. Literary works should be analysed as autonomous word structures regardless of the author's objectives, the historical setting, or the readers' emotional reactions, according to New Critics. With an emphasis on intrinsic components including imagery, symbolism, irony, paradox, ambiguity, diction, and structure, the movement established close reading as a methodical approach to literary analysis.

Formal unity, sometimes referred to as organic unity, is a key idea in New Criticism. It describes how all the components of a literary work are harmoniously integrated. New Critics contend that a poem's meaning results from the interaction of its internal elements rather than from outside influences. Thus, it is crucial to comprehend how these components operate together in order to analyse literary works.

The rich and colourful literary legacy of Balochi poetry is deeply ingrained in the Baloch people's cultural history. Balochi poetry, which has its roots mostly in oral traditions, has passed down societal values, historical accounts, and shared experiences down the years. The thematic breadth and stylistic complexity of contemporary Balochi poetry have grown, utilising a variety of literary techniques that lend themselves to formal study.

Even if the corpus of research on Balochi literature is expanding, the majority of these studies concentrate on topics like nationalism, identity, resistance, and sociopolitical concerns. The formal and structural aspects of Balochi poetry have received relatively little study. As a result, applying New Critical ideas to a few chosen Balochi poems can offer new perspectives on their creative process and advance Balochi literary criticism.
Therefore, using close reading as the main analytical technique, this study examines formal unity in a few Balochi poetry via the prism of New Criticism.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Studies that have already been done on Balochi poetry mostly focus on historical, cultural, political, and sociological viewpoints. Although these methods have improved our comprehension of Balochi literature's social significance, they frequently ignore the inherent characteristics of poetry writings, such as its structure, imagery, symbolism, irony, contradiction, and general formal coherence.
Additionally, the idea of formal unity has not received much attention in Balochi literary studies, and only a small amount of research has applied New Critical theory to Balochi poetry. Because of this, there is a lack of scholarly knowledge regarding the ways in which the intrinsic

components of Balochi poetry interact to produce meaning.
In order to fill this gap, this study closely examines a few Balochi poems to see how their inherent literary qualities support formal coherence.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how certain Balochi poems use the idea of formal unity.
2. To investigate the ways in which these literary components work together to create meaning.
3. To apply New Critical close-reading methods to these poems.
4. To find out diction, structure, irony, paradox, symbolism, and imagery interact to produce meaning

SIGNIFICANCES OF THE STUDY

There are various reasons why this study is important. In the first place, it adds to the small corpus of studies that use New Critical theory to analyse Balochi literature. Second, by focusing on Balochi poetry's formal and creative aspects rather than only its sociopolitical setting, it broadens academic knowledge of the genre.
The study also emphasises the value of close reading as a useful technique for literary text analysis. Students, researchers, and academics interested in Balochi literature, literary theory, and comparative criticism may find it to be a helpful resource.
Lastly, the study invites future scholars to investigate different literary traditions and theoretical frameworks in Balochi studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Literature review is a key element of academic research, which serves as a theoretical and scholarly basis for developing a study. It helps researchers investigate prior scholarship, explore various theories, assess existing debates, and even determine where there are gaps in the literature that should be explored (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A literature review is not only a summary of previous research but also analyzes the previous research to show how the current research builds on what was previously known. Literary studies are academic when they involve the existing theories and academic conversations rather than just literary texts in isolation (Culler 2011). Likewise, Barry (2020) emphasises that all literary research must have a sound theory and that the same must inform both interpretation and analysis of the text.

In the present chapter, the major scholarship on New Criticism and formal unity as well as that of Balochi poetry is reviewed to lay the foundation for the present study. To examine Formal Unity in New Criticism: A Close Reading of Selected Balochi Poetry, the research needs to be grounded in the history of New Criticism, the most prominent theorists and theoretical concepts of the New Criticism. The ideas of John Crowe Ransom, I. A. Richards, T. S. Eliot, Cleanth Brooks, W. K. Wimsatt, Monroe C. Beardsley, and Allen Tate are analyzed in the chapter, for their critical

writing as a whole formed the basis for twentieth-century formalist literary criticism (Ransom, 1941; Richards, 1929; Eliot, 1939; 1949; 1954; 1954; 1954; 1954; 1960). Their writing of literary studies revolutionized the discipline by asserting that the meaning of a literary work is not given by outside historical or biographical information but rather is generated by its own internal structure (Wellek & Warren, 1949; Abrams & Harpham, 2015).

This historical evolution of New Criticism illustrates an important change in literary studies from the author-centred and historical towards the text-centred interpretation. The movement began in the early twentieth century, creating an alternative to impressionistic criticism that focused on close reading and the consideration of diction, imagery, symbolism, irony, paradox, ambiguity, and structural organization as interconnections that create artistry (Richards, 1929; Brooks, 1947). New Critical theory saw the close reading become one of the most prominent approaches to literary analysis in modern literary criticism (Barry 2020) and Tyson (2015) states that the focus on textual autonomy had a significant impact on the teaching and interpretation of literature in universities throughout Britain and the United States. While some of its ideas were challenged by later theoretical developments, New Criticism has had a lasting impact on the study of literature today due to its focus on language and form (Eagleton, 2008; Selden, Widdowson, & Brooker, 2013).

But of the thinkers involved in the movement, T. S. Eliot has a special place. Eliot was not considered a member of the New Critical school but his essays, particularly Tradition and the Individual Talent and Hamlet and His Problems, were full of the theoretical principles that were to govern the New Critical practice. His ideas of impersonality, objective correlative, artistic tradition and poetic structure encouraged critics to look at the literary work, rather than at the personal feelings and intentions of its author (Eliot, 1932). Abrams and Harpham (2015) consider Eliot's critical essays to have laid the groundwork for formalism in the twentieth century, Barry (2020) and Tyson (2015) see Eliot's ideas as fundamental to the close textual analysis of the twentieth century. Thus no adequate discussion of New Criticism could be complete without some mention of Eliot's important contributions to New Criticism theory.

This chapter not only explores the theoretical background of New Criticism, but also an overview of the existing research on Balochi poetry. Despite the recent scholarly interest in Balochi literature, a lot of the research done on Balochi has focused on Balochi history, Balochi culture, socio-political issues and themes, and linguistic aspects of Balochi without much emphasis on the literary forms. There have been very few studies that have analysed the formal unity in Balochi poems using New Critical principles through a consideration of the interplay of imagery, symbolism, diction, irony, paradox, and structure. According to Selden et al. (2013), the most fruitful use of literary theories is when they are applied to a range of literary traditions other than those in which they were developed. In view of this, the use of New Critical theory on the modern Balochi poetry provides an opportunity to broaden the study of Balochi literature and formalist literary criticism in its practice.

The present literature review therefore has two important functions. First, it critically reviews the theoretical evolution of New Criticism from the historical origins, key theorists, and key

concepts. Second, it analyzes the previous research on the poetry of Baloch to seek out the gap in the literature that the current study tries to fill. This chapter draws upon the classic and modern critical literature to form the conceptual basis for the close reading that follows in later chapters, and illustrates the continued viability of New Critical theory in the analysis of poetic form and formal unity (Brooks, 1947; Abrams & Harpham, 2015; Barry, 2020; Tyson, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Qualitative methods help scholars investigate how literary devices and textual elements contribute to meaning. This study analyzes the characteristics of poetry. It does not. Quantify textual features. So qualitative research design is suitable. It provides the flexibility needed for textual interpretation and critical analysis.

Research Method

Close reading is an examination of literary texts. It focuses on language, structure, and stylistic features. Developed by New Critics like I. A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks close reading encourages attention to a text's internal organization. It seeks to uncover meaning by examining how literary elements function together. In this study close reading is the analytical tool. It involves repeated and detailed engagement with each poem to identify patterns and relationships.

Data Collection Procedure

The selection of poems is guided by criteria. The poems must be written by recognized Balochi poets. They must demonstrate use of literary devices. The data collection process involves identifying, selecting and organizing secondary materials. Primary texts are collected from published anthologies and poetry collections.

Data Analysis Procedure

The study employs reading as the primary method of data analysis. Each selected poem undergoes readings. The analysis proceeds through stages including identifying the central theme and examining imagery and symbolic patterns.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in New Criticism principles. New Criticism emerged in the twentieth century. It emphasizes the autonomy of texts. New Criticism advocates analyzing literature through reading. It rejects approaches relying heavily on context or authorial intention. According to New Critics meaning resides within the text itself. The study integrates the contributions of scholars. T. S. Eliots theory of impersonality provides a foundation. I. A. Richards theory of criticism informs the methodological approach

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction to the Poem NO 01

The first poem that has been chosen to be analyzed, is a poem by Mubarak Qazi translated in English by Fazal Baloch and published in *Borderless Journal*. Mubarak Qazi is one of the most popular poets of the modern Balochi literary world with his work focusing on social, cultural, and human issues in a simple language but with a profound message. The poem lends itself well to analysis by means of New Criticism, as it makes frequent use of the elements of a poem, which are intrinsic, rather than the story itself. The poet creates meaning by using repetition, symbolism, and contrast. The poem doesn't tell a story but conveys a cohesive emotional and intellectual case for non-violence and for love, beauty, and human interaction.

Analysis and interpretation of the poem

Theme

The main message of the poem is to reject violence and to extol peace. The poet throughout the poem asks the reader to transcend the issue of war and conflict and to reflect on the issues of love, beauty, and human relationships.

"Cast away the gun!"

The poem's theme and structure is centered on the word. The poet surrounds this recurrent command with a series of images of nature, beauty, affection, and art. These images come together to form a unified poetic perspective that encourages peace not war. The poem provides a fine illustration of the way in which literary features work together to create formal unity, from a New Critical point of view. Rhetoric, image, symbol, diction, and repetition are all interconnected and work toward a common artistic purpose. Thus, the poem offers good resources for discussing the issue of formal unity in modern Balochi poetry.

"You too forget the roar of muskets and bullets,
Of our sorrow and happiness, the reasons have changed."

The speaker implies that times have changed and that the current times should not be bound by past conflicts. The mention of muskets and bullets evokes violence and destruction, themes against which the poet calls the reader to stop. As the poem goes on, it repeatedly pits war against the values which are good for life:

"Speak of the sun, Of the moon. Speak of light, Of life."

The sun, moon, light and life represent hope, growth, and renewal. The poet focuses the attention on these images and is thus encouraging a perspective of creation, not destruction. The other theme is the power of love to change. This is clearly stated in the second stanza:

"I long for love, its love I'm so desperate for."

Love is not just a personal feeling but an alternative to hatred and violence. The speaker promotes a peace through love and understanding.

The importance of beauty and human connection is also mentioned in the poem. The attention given to flowers, lips, maidens, intimate moments, and colors honor the many things of life that are lost in the shadow of war. The poet's argument in these images is that true fulfillment is not in conflict, but in human relationships. The poem thus unfolds a series of themes that are interrelated: peace, love, beauty, hope and human solidarity.

Imagery

The imagery is important to conveying the anti-war message of the poem. The poet creates a sequence of contrasting images which react to the violence and to life. The poem starts with images related to war: The sound of muskets and bullets. This is an aural image that reminds of sound, destruction and conflict. The sound of weapons represents a world filled with violence and fear. In contrast the poet brings in elements of nature:

"Speak of the sun, Of the moon. Speak of light, Of life."

These pictures provide a positive and optimistic atmosphere. The sun and the moon are significant for continuity and balance, and light represents understanding and renewal. The second Stanza presents Artistic Imagery:

"Fiddle pain, pluck soulful strings."

The depiction of musical strings converts emotional miseries into artistic expression. The poet does not glorify war, but rather calls for creative involvement in the human experience. In the last stanza another striking image emerges:

"Remind me of soft-treading maidens, And of sweet and dainty betel nuts."

The emphasis of these images are on gentleness, beauty, and cultural memory. They are very different from the violence and war that is mentioned at the beginning of the poem. The final sequence:

"Speak of flowers, Of lips. Speak of love, Of intimate moments."

Establishes a rich emotional – filled with love and softness. The images are used to accentuate the main theme of the poem, which is love over violence. So the imagery becomes a kind of self-contained system; as the images of peace are constantly confronting and supplanting images of war.

Symbolism

The poem is structured and meaningful using symbolism. The gun is perhaps the most significant symbol; it is featured in the repetition:

"Cast away the gun!"

The gun represents violence, hatred, war, and destruction. It is mentioned multiple times throughout the poem, thus serving as the main symbol for the speaker's rejection of everything.

The sun and moon represent hope, guidance, continuity, and life, in contrast. These images from the heavens are symbols of values beyond violence and conflict. The second stanza is filled with symbols of joy, celebration, emotional expression, and human companionship, all embodied in the wine and wineglass:

"Speak of wine, Of wineglass."

These symbols don't necessarily evoke in toxification; instead, they can be used poetically to denote pleasure and sociality.

Likewise, **flowers** represent beauty, growth and renewal, and **lips** represent affection, communication, and intimacy. The many mentions of **love** are a symbol of reconciliation and emotional healing. The ultimate alternative to violence and hatred in the poem is **love**. All these symbols together form a network of meanings to help amplify the anti-war message of the poem.

Irony and Paradox

There are some subtle uses of irony and paradox in the poem that contribute to its meaning. The paradox of pain and creativity is that:

"Fiddle pain, pluck soulful strings."

Usually, pain is accompanied by suffering, but here it is a means of music and artistic expression. This change forms a paradox in which pain becomes the source of beauty. Another ploy of the poem is the way that strength is treated. The traditional perception of strength is with weapons and war. The poet, however, proposes that love, compassion, and understanding are the qualities of strength. There's also an ironic contrast between the repeated glorification of war in many societies and the poet's call to renounce the use of weapons. Rather than embracing conflict, this speaker keeps on calling for peace:

"Cast away the gun!"

This change is a defiance of the normal idea of power and heroism. These paradoxes and ironies further the poem's critique on violence and further strengthen its call for peace.

Diction and Structure

The diction of the poem is simple, direct, and persuasive. Mubarak Qazi uses language that is easy to understand, so that the message of the poem can be understood by many. Imperative verbs are the main verbs of the poem:

"Speak..." "Remind..." "Cast away..."

These commands create a sense of urgency and involvement. The reader is spoken to by the speaker and invited to think actively. The poem is structurally divided into three main stanzas, each with a refrain of:

"Cast away the gun!"

This repetition gives coherence and strengthens the message of the poem. The unity is also achieved because of the parallel structure of the stanzas. Every section features positive images and values, before ending in violence's condemnation. This creates a rhythm and helps to maintain the theme of the poem. The form of the poem is free verse, but the poem has some good structural organization with repetition, parallelism.

Formal Unity

The formal unity of the poem is obvious. All the literary elements lend themselves to the theme to reject violence and embrace life. The images throughout are always juxtaposed with war and beauty, and the symbols are always in opposition to destruction and hope. The diction is persuasive, and the use of the refrain is structurally coherent. The poem's paradoxes and ironies enhance the message without breaking up the unity of the poem. Rather, they reinforce the connections among the various elements of the poem. Most importantly, all parts of the poem serve a single artful purpose. The images of the sun, moon, flowers, love, wine, and music are presented as an opposition to the symbol of the gun. This systematic opposition gives coherence and exemplifies the formal unity of the New Critical. Accordingly, the poem is an artistic whole and each of its components serves its antiwar message.

Introduction of Poem NO 02

Streets of Melody by **Munir Momin, translated from Balochi to English by Mujeeb Azad**, which appeared in *Issue 18 of The Ana*. it contains a rich blend of imagery, symbolism, metaphorical language, and philosophical reflection. The poem is well suited for analysis using the New Criticism approach, due to its qualities of low level of abstraction, dialogic character, and multiple points of view. Streets of Melody is not like ordinary narrative poetry in that it builds meaning by a series of linked images and symbols. The poem is not a simple narrative; rather, it invites the reader to consider its complexities in terms of language and structure. This aspect is very similar to the New Critical approach that posits that meaning in literature is found within the text itself, and that it can be found by using close reading.

Analysis and interpretation of the poem

Theme

The theme of the interconnectedness of existence is one of the central ones of Streets of Melody. Using different objects, natural things, and human experiences in the poem, the speaker considers them each as contributing to a greater whole. This notion is suggested in the first lines:

"We are shards of the same mirror, So are the tree and the moon, The street and the door, And the blue river steeped in scented night."

With the metaphor of the mirror, objects and people can seem different but they are alike and are still bound together by the same origin. The tree, moon, street, door and river are not individual objects but are linked to a whole. The concept of unity is the basis and theme of the entire poem. The second theme is transformation. The poem continually transforms one thing into another. For example:

"When the vast ocean shrinks, Into my eyes, Just a drop, A tear."

From an ocean to a single tear shows how much can be conveyed in a single experience. The poet implies that the external can be seen as reflected in the individual's feelings and memories. There is also a theme of longing, in the emotional journey throughout the poem. Questions such as:

"Whom should I mourn for?" and "Whom do you go seeking for?"

Add an element of quest, insecurity of feeling. The answers to these questions are never given, and invite the reader to ponder issues of loss, memory, and human connection. Moreover, the poem talks about hope and renewal. Even if the poem talks of disappearance and loss, it ends with creation and possibility:

"Let us make melody, From the broken streets of the hearts."

The image shows that beauty and harmony can come out of broken things. The poem, therefore, offers a vision of hope that attempts to reconcile fragmentation with artistic and emotional wholeness.

Imagery

Using imagery is an essential part of the meaning and atmosphere of Streets of Melody. The poem is created through a series of striking and imaginative images which engage the visual and emotional senses.

"We are shards of the same mirror."

This picture immediately sets the tone for the reflective and symbolic qualities of the poem. The broken mirror indicates disintegration, but the words "same mirror" also highlight unity. In this image, the poet initiates the theme of separation and connection, which is experienced throughout the poem. The poet also adds natural imagery:

"The blue river bathed in sweet night."

A combination of visual and sensory details in this image. The movement and continuity of the river, and the mysterious beauty of the night, contribute to the whole. The combination of these images creates a surreal atmosphere where reality and imagination merge.

The most effective image is in the next couple of lines:

"When the vast ocean shrinks, Into my eyes, Just a drop, A tear."

The contrast between the vastness of the ocean and the small tear evokes a powerful visual effect that connects the outer world with the inner world. In the image, one's sorrow is shown to be as wide as an ocean.

"Let us take the moon, Like a golden ring, Attach it to a bird's foot And let it fly."

A rich vision of movement, freedom, and heavenly beauty. The moon becomes real, the bird becomes symbolic: it is a symbol of possibility and transcendence.

"Place me in the pot, like antimony dust, A caravan has left behind a abandoned vehicle. And you be the lantern."

The antimony dust, a lost caravan, and a lantern evoke a feeling of history, abandonment, and guidance. The images are also emotionally resonant and help to reinforce the themes of the poem, such as memory and hope. The overall structure of the imagery creates a sort of system that forms the emotional and artistic effect of the poem.

Symbolism

One of the most notable aspects of literature in Streets of Melody is symbolism. The poem is rich with symbolism, often exceeding its literal referents. The most important symbol is the mirror: "We are shards of the same mirror. "The mirror is a symbol of common existence and identity. The mirror is broken into pieces, but each piece is a part of the whole. The symbol is used to strengthen the central theme of the poem, unity during fragmentation. The river represents continuity, movement, and life's flow. The river is a dynamic element, indicating movement and development. It plays its role in the exploration of transformation in the poem. The ocean provides a symbol of a great emotional experience. As it turns into a teardrop, the poem implies that human emotions have tremendous depth and complexity. The moon represents beauty, imagination, and aspiration. The poet makes the moon a golden ring and attaches it to a bird's foot to form the symbols of beauty, freedom, and connection. In the same way, the bird signifies movement, liberation, and transcendence. It takes the moon beyond the ordinary means something that cannot be bound by the ordinary, thus the unlimited possibilities of imagination and hope. The lantern at the end of the lines represents guidance and illumination. It is a light that can guide people from the uncertainty and darkness. The use of these symbols brings a richness of meaning to the poem, enhancing the thematic complexity and artistic unity.

Irony and Paradox

The poem is quite lyrical and gentle, but there are also some instances of irony and paradox that add depth to the poem.In the first picture there is a paradox:

"We are shards of the same mirror."

A mirror symbolizes unity and wholeness; a shard symbolizes separation and fragmentation. These conflicting thoughts present a dichotomy that becomes the intellectual underpinning of the poem. A second paradox comes in the metamorphosis of ocean into a tear:

"When the vast ocean shrinks, Into my eyes,, Just a drop, A tear."

The ocean is huge and big; a tear is small and personal. It is a paradox to think of something great in something small, thus demonstrating the connection between outward reality and inward feeling. Irony can be found in the poem too! The speaker is constantly trying to connect and understand, but there are many questions that remain unanswered:

"Whom should I mourn for?" and "Whom do you go seeking for?"

When there are no answers, there's a strange paradox of wanting to know what the answer is, while it's not known. The juxtaposition of these paradoxes and ironies adds to the richness of the poem, providing a layer of complexity and prompting a deeper appreciation.

Diction and Structure

The diction of the poem is simple, lyrical, and very evocative. The poet's language is simple and avoids using any unnecessary complex words but chooses to use words that are well selected that evoke strong images and emotional responses. The words mirror, river, ocean, tear, moon, bird, journey, and lantern are ordinary words, but give symbolic meaning in the context of the poem. With this simplicity, readers can interact directly with the images and find out the meaning of the images in layers. The overall tone of the poem is introspective and reflective. The poet does not make direct arguments or statements, but rather invites the reader to think about something by asking questions, using metaphors, and creating images. The poem is in free verse. There is no constant rhyme scheme, allowing the poet to explore ideas in a natural way. The short lines and the many pauses lend a soft beat to the poem, echoing the meditative quality. The poem is not a story, but a succession of related images. As new images are introduced, they are related to the previous ones that were introduced. This form provides movement and development without a definite story.

Formal Unity

Form is the most important element in this analysis as it is the central tenet of New Critical theory. Cleanth Brooks says a poem is formally unified when all the poem's parts unite to form a unified artistic whole. This is illustrated in Streets of Melody through harmony of imagery, symbolism, paradox, diction, and structure. The images of mirrors, rivers, oceans, moons, birds, journeys, caravans, and lanterns seem at first to have little in common. Upon closer examination, however, all these images work to the poem's thematic focus on connection, transformation, and exploration of emotion. The symbols also reinforce each other similarly. The mirror symbolizes unity, the river, continuity, the ocean, emotional depth, the bird, freedom and the lantern, guidance. All these symbols form a uniform web of meaning. Paradoxes also help to create formal unity. Fragmentation and wholeness, vastness and smallness, loss and hope are all present and

create tension, which adds to the thematic richness of this poem. Additionally, the language and the free-verse form of the poem complement the introspective nature and symbolism in the work. All literary elements serve to the same artful purpose.

Introduction of Poem NO 03

The third poem selected for analysis is "The Desolate Shadow of Old Acacia" by Qasum Faraz, translated into English by Mujeed Azad and published in *Neon Origami Literary Magazine*. This poem was chosen because it exemplifies several central concerns of New Critical theory, particularly the concept of formal unity. The poem demonstrates a remarkable integration of imagery, symbolism, personification, atmosphere, and structural coherence, making it highly suitable for close reading. One of the primary reasons for selecting this poem is its symbolic richness. Throughout the poem, ordinary objects such as a postbox, envelopes, locks, and an acacia tree function as symbolic elements that contribute to deeper layers of meaning. These symbols are not isolated images; rather, they work collectively to construct a unified artistic experience. Such interconnectedness reflects the New Critical notion that meaning emerges from the interaction of textual elements rather than from external contexts.

Analysis and interpretation of the poem

Theme

One of the dominant themes of the poem is waiting. The speaker exists in a prolonged state of expectation and uncertainty, hoping for an event that never arrives. This sense of waiting is established from the opening scene and reaches its fullest expression in the concluding lines:

"A pouring evening. An old man, Threw me in the postbox Beneath the desolate shadow Of an old acacia tree."

The imagery of the "pouring evening" and the "desolate shadow" creates an atmosphere of abandonment, stillness, and uncertainty. These images establish the emotional tone of the poem and continue to influence the reader's interpretation throughout the text. The poem is also significant because of its personification. The speaker appears to be a letter or envelope capable of observation, memory, and expectation. This unusual narrative perspective transforms an ordinary object into a conscious voice, allowing the poet to explore themes of waiting, displacement, neglect, and unrealized communication. Such a technique contributes to the complexity of the poem and invites careful textual analysis.

"Waiting for someone to come, To break the rusted, Dusted locks."

The waiting described in the poem is not temporary. Instead, it appears endless and almost timeless. The passage of time is emphasized through the sequence:

"Days and nights, Months and years Pass."

This progression from days to years highlights the duration of abandonment and reinforces the poem's atmosphere of stillness.Closely connected to the theme of waiting is the theme of neglect. The speaker, along with other undelivered envelopes, remains trapped inside the postbox, forgotten and disconnected from its intended destination. The image of rusted locks symbolizes prolonged neglect and the failure of communication.Another important theme is displacement. The speaker possesses an identity and a destination, yet remains unable to fulfill its purpose. This idea is evident in the final lines:

"And deliver us To the exact addresses,, Stamped on our faces."

The phrase "exact addresses" suggests certainty and direction, while the inability to reach those destinations creates tension between purpose and reality. Thus, the poem explores waiting, neglect, displacement, and unrealized communication through a unified network of images and symbols.

Imagery

Imagery is one of the most significant artistic features of *The Desolate Shadow of Old Acacia*. Throughout the poem, Qasum Faraz employs vivid visual images that create an atmosphere of loneliness, stillness, and abandonment. These images are carefully arranged to reinforce the central themes and contribute to the poem's formal unity. The opening lines immediately establish a strong visual setting:

"A pouring evening. An old man, Threw me in the postbox Beneath the desolate shadow Of an old acacia tree."

The image of a "pouring evening" creates a gloomy and melancholic atmosphere. Rain is traditionally associated with sadness, isolation, and uncertainty. The phrase "desolate shadow" further intensifies this mood by suggesting abandonment and emotional emptiness. The acacia tree, standing silently over the postbox, becomes a dominant visual presence throughout the reader's imagination. The imagery of time is equally important. The speaker states:

"Days and nights, Months and years Pass."

Rather than presenting specific events, the poet uses the passage of time itself as an image. This image emphasizes stagnation because although time moves forward, the speaker remains trapped in the same place. Another powerful image appears in the lines:

"The wind stand still, The leaf flower stir not."

These images create a world deprived of movement. Normally, wind and leaves symbolize vitality and change, yet here they are motionless. The absence of movement reflects the speaker's condition and reinforces the atmosphere of suspension.The final image of the poem is equally striking:

"To break the rusted, Dusted locks."

The rust and dust symbolize prolonged neglect. These physical details provide visual evidence of the immense passage of time and strengthen the reader's understanding of the speaker's abandonment.

Symbolism

Symbolism is one of the most important structural elements in the poem. Almost every object in the poem carries symbolic significance beyond its literal meaning. The most prominent symbol is the **postbox**. Literally, it is a container for letters; symbolically, it represents confinement, suspension, and interrupted communication. The speaker exists within the postbox but cannot fulfill its intended purpose. Similarly, the speaker itself functions as a symbol. Although the poem never explicitly identifies the speaker as a letter, textual clues strongly suggest this interpretation. The reference to addresses and delivery supports this reading:

"And deliver us, To the exact addresses, Stamped on our faces."

The letter symbolizes unrealized communication. It possesses a destination and purpose but remains unable to reach either. The acacia tree also operates symbolically. Trees often symbolize life, growth, and continuity. However, the "desolate shadow" of the old acacia transforms this traditional meaning. Instead of representing growth, the tree becomes a symbol of decay, memory, and abandonment.The rusted locks symbolize barriers and obstruction. They prevent movement and communication while simultaneously emphasizing the effects of time. Their rusted condition suggests that neglect has become permanent or nearly irreversible. Furthermore, the absence of natural processes carries symbolic significance:

"No dew falls anymore. No gun is fired from distance."

The absence of dew symbolizes the disappearance of renewal and hope, while the silence of distant gunfire suggests the end of activity, change, or human presence. These symbols are interconnected and collectively contribute to the poem's exploration of waiting, neglect, and unrealized purpose.

Irony and Paradox

Irony plays a subtle but significant role in the poem. The central irony arises from the nature of the speaker itself. A letter exists to communicate, yet it remains permanently undelivered. Its purpose is communication, but its reality is silence. This irony becomes apparent in the concluding lines:

"And deliver us, To the exact addresses, Stamped on our faces."

The addresses are known and clearly marked, yet delivery never occurs. The certainty of destination contrasts sharply with the impossibility of arrival. The poem also contains a paradox involving time. Time continues to pass:

"Days and nights, Months and years Pass."

However, despite the movement of time, nothing changes. The world remains motionless and stagnant. Normally, the passage of time implies development and transformation, but here it produces only further stillness. Another paradox appears in the image of communication without communication. The speaker possesses a message and an address but remains trapped in silence. It is simultaneously connected to human communication and completely separated from it. The coexistence of movement and stagnation, purpose and failure, connection and isolation creates tension within the poem. These paradoxes deepen its meaning and contribute to its artistic complexity.

Diction and Structure

The diction of the poem is simple, precise, and highly effective. The poet employs ordinary language while achieving significant emotional and symbolic depth.Words such as “desolate,” “weatherworn,” “rusted,” and “dusted” establish a semantic field associated with decay and neglect. These words repeatedly reinforce the poem’s atmosphere and thematic concerns.The simplicity of the language also reflects the condition of the speaker. The absence of elaborate vocabulary creates a quiet and restrained tone that mirrors the stillness of the poem’s setting.Structurally, the poem is written in free verse. There is no regular rhyme scheme or fixed metrical pattern. This freedom allows the poet to focus attention on imagery and symbolism rather than formal constraints.The short lines contribute significantly to the poem’s effect. Each line appears isolated, visually reflecting the speaker’s loneliness and separation. The frequent pauses create a slow rhythm that mirrors the prolonged passage of time described within the poem.The progression of the poem is carefully organized. It begins with the act of abandonment, moves through a period of prolonged waiting, and concludes with a hope for eventual release. This structure creates coherence and reinforces the poem’s thematic unity.

Formal Unity

Formal unity is the most important aspect of this analysis because it represents the central concept of New Criticism.According to Cleanth Brooks, a poem achieves formal unity when all of its elements work together to create a coherent artistic whole. In *The Desolate Shadow of Old Acacia*, every major element contributes to a single unified experiences of waiting, abandonment, and unrealized communication.The imagery of the pouring evening, the desolate shadow, the motionless leaves, and the rusted locks all reinforce the atmosphere of neglect. Similarly, the symbols of the letter, postbox, acacia tree, and addresses collectively support the theme of interrupted communication.The poem’s irony and paradox further strengthen this unity by highlighting the tension between purpose and failure. The speaker exists to be delivered but remains trapped. Time moves forward but produces no change. Communication is possible yet never achieved.The diction, imagery, symbolism, irony, and structure do not operate independently. Instead, they interact continuously to reinforce the same central experience. Every image contributes to the atmosphere, every symbol develops the theme, and every structural choice supports the emotional effect.Consequently, the poem exemplifies the New Critical concept of formal unity because its various components function as parts of a single integrated artistic structure.

DISSCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings from the close reading of selected Balochi poems from the theoretical perspective of New Criticism will be discussed. This chapter build on the textual analysis of individual poems presented in Chapter Four, discusses the implications of such analysis and considers how it relates to the main principles of New Critical theory. The concept of formal unity is given special attention, as it is the focus of the present study. It was in the early twentieth century that New Criticism became a major literary movement, and it focused on an indepth examination of literary works as self-contained art forms (Ransom, 1941). The New Critics neglects methods that depended too heavily on the author's intention or historical period or on readers' emotional reactions. Instead, they suggested that meaning should be found within the internal relationships of the elements of the text as such (Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1954). Therefore, literary analysis should aim to consider the artistic coherence of the work through its use of imagery, symbolism, irony, paradox, diction, structure, etc.The results of this research prove that multiple literary elements are used in the selected Balochi poems to create the meaning in the poems. The poems have different content, mood and form but are generally well unified formally. They use interconnected images and symbols for their themes and structural patterns for the poetic coherence. The discussion in this chapter will, therefore, try to elucidate how these findings fit the theoretical postulates of the New Criticism and how it is applicable to Balochi poetry.

Formal Unity in the Selected Balochi Poems

One of the most significant concepts in the New Critical theory is Formal unity. In the estimation of Brooks (1947), a poem is a whole organic unit, from which all the literary elements are part of a unified artistic experience. The individual elements of imagery, symbolism, diction, irony, and structure are not distinct, but they gain meaning from the design of the poem and from the interaction between the elements. The results obtained in the present study fully corroborate this concept of poetry. A formal unity is established in Qasum Faraz's *The Desolate Shadow of Old Acacia* through the development of themes of abandonment, waiting and interrupted communication. The poet's powerful imagery of the postbox, rusted locks, weatherworn envelopes, and the silent acacia tree establishes an emotional tone throughout the poem. These elements become part of a single image that embodies neglect and suspended motion. The imagery and structure of the poem emphasizes the symbolic meaning of the undelivered letters, creating a unified artistic whole. In much the same way*, The Streets of Melody by Munir Momin*, is formally unified by a series of interwoven symbols and images. The themes of transformation, interconnectedness, and emotional exploration are shared by the mirror, the river, the moon, the ocean, the bird, and the lantern. The significance of each symbol is more easily understood when viewed with the other symbols. These elements coalesce; the philosophical reflections of the poem come from the interaction of these elements, not from any one image or statement. The interdependence of the parts and the whole is the subject of Brooks's (1947) claim that poetry is significant. The poem of *Mubarak Qazi* is also highly formalistic. The theme of "*cast away the gun"* is a recurring device that holds the poem together and emphasizes the anti-war

message. Flowers, love, music, beauty, and the human heart are always juxtaposed against symbols of violence and destruction. In this oppositional pattern, coherence is achieved, and the poem conveys a humanistic vision. The repetition of the refrain helps to reinforce the development of the themes, and it adds to the structural consistency. The conclusions are thus challenged in turn in the sense that the formal unity is not exclusively tied to a specific type of poetry. Instead, it can be done in many art forms such as symbolism, repetition, imagery, and thematic consistency. The selected poems, though different, show how the elements of literature are organically connected, thus sustaining the basic tenets of New Critical theory.

Imagery as a source of unity

Further examination of the poems selected suggests that imagery is one of the major elements of formal unity. Imagery is not simply for ornament but depicts structure and helps support the theme. The literature image is effective, according to Richards (1929) in the process of creating the image of literature, it can create relations between ideas, feelings, and senses so that the reader can understand. Images add to the sense of desolation in The Desolate Shadow of Old Acacia. The old postbox, natural surroundings, still leaves and corroded locks all combine to form a visualization of isolation and waiting. These images constantly remind the viewer of the emotional state, creating a single artistic impression. Likewise, Streets of Melody uses a series of interrelated pictures to create a sense of cohesion. The elements mirror, river, moon, ocean, and lantern—create a symbolic setting that the poet uses to discuss the notion of connection and transformation. The theme of movement, reflection and continuity ties these images together. Because of this, they develop a coherent ‘imaginative world' which sustains the poem's philosophical vision. Imagery is used persuasively in Mubarak Qazi's poem. The imagery of flowers, lips, wine, music, light and intimate moments is always contrasted to the imagery of guns and warfare. Thus, the poet builds up a continuous argument to promote peace and human love. Recurrence of these positive images helps to create a thematic consistency and formal unity. The results show that imagery is not just a representational tool, but it is also an essential tool in the process of realizing poetic unity. In all the poems selected, imagery serves a unifying force that connects the parts to the whole and to other larger themes. In this lesson, students delve into the process of how symbolism is used to develop meaning.

Symbolism and the Development of Meaning

The use of symbolism is important in the creation of meaning in the selected poems. The new critics stress that literary symbols be read solely within the text, and not in terms of associations outside of it (Wellek & Warren, 1949). The results of this research corroborate this view, as internal relations between texts provide the basis for the emergence of symbolic meanings.

The postbox in Faraz's poem stands for isolation and a fragmented connection, while the rusted locks act as a metaphor for obstacles that block the path towards connection and fulfillment. These symbolism elements are directly aiding the poem's central theme and creating the atmosphere of waiting and abandonment with the poem. Momin's poem is more expansive and philosophical in terms of symbolism. Shared Existence: The mirror is a symbol of shared existence. Continuity: The river is a symbol of continuity. These symbols form a intricate web of

meanings that help to solidify the poem's investigation into interrelatedness and change. Similarly, **Qazi's** poem is based on symbolic opposition. The gun is the sign of violence, destruction, and hatred, while flowers, music and love are the sign of peace, creativity and reconciliation. In this contrast, the poet creates a logical symbolic structure to back up the anti-war message of the poem.The analysis shows that symbolism serves as a unifying element in all the poems selected. Symbols are not just literary devices but are part of larger patterns or themes to help develop the poem and give it a structure.

Irony, Paradox, and Complexity

The use of irony and paradox is necessary in successful poetry, according to Brooks (1947), for poets to convey complex truths that they could not do in straightforward language. The result of the present research supports the significance of these devices in the selected poems. *The Desolate Shadow of Old Acacia* is a poem filled with irony, as the presence of letters that are meant to communicate but do not, nor are they even used. As the passage of time passes the letters' purpose is not met, creating an ironic situation where intention and actuality clash. The centrality of the concept of paradox is of central importance in the structure of the poem in Streets of Melody. Fragmentation and unity in “shards of the same mirror” and vastness and intimacy in the ocean being transformed into a tear. These paradoxes intensify the meanings of the poem, prompt several interpretations. Likewise Mubarak Qazi's poem speaks of a paradoxical concept of strength. Whereas traditional notions of power are often associated with weapons and warfare, the poem suggests that genuine strength resides in love, compassion, and human connection. That's a turnaround and it throws conventional thinking off balance and adds to the complexity of the poem. Irony and paradox in the selected poems illustrate that sometimes poetic meaning comes as a result of tension and contradiction. These devices are used to enhance texts and to consolidate their artistic integrity.

Textual Autonomy and New Critical Principles

Careful analysis of the internal features of the text should be used to derive meaning from the text itself. This was the approach used in the present study during the close reading process. The interpretations were grounded in textual evidence and not on biographical data or on historical context of the poems. This approach enabled the analysis to be restricted to the intrinsic nature of the texts. The results suggest that the Poems selected have a level of internal complexity that enables them to produce meaning on their own. They offer evidence for the interpretation through imagery, symbolism, irony, paradox, diction, and structure without the need for large external references. This observation backs up the arguments of Wimsatt and Beardsley (1954), who decried the idea of authorial intention and emotional response. The poems chosen to illustrate that literary meaning can be derived from the internal organization of the language and structure, which has confirmed the principle of textual autonomy.

Concluding Remarks

The aim of this study was to explore the principles of New Criticism and to see how formal unity is attained in selected Balochi poems. In the close reading of the poems, it was observed that the

images, symbols, irony, paradox, diction, and structure all contribute to creating artistic wholes. Although the poets employ themes and styles that vary, there is a remarkable degree of formal organization and aesthetic balance in all the selected poems. This is understood within the framework of formal unity in New Criticism. The study has concluded that New Critical theory is still applicable for analyzing the poetry of Baloch. The theory contributes to the understanding of the artistic complexity of modern Balochi poetry by analyzing literary texts. An important aspect of the study is the richness of the literature of the Baloch and its importance in the context of world literature. Formal Unity in New Criticism is the key, to understanding this.

References

Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. G. (2015). A glossary of literary terms (11th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Barry, P. (2020). Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory (4th ed.). Manchester University Press.

Beardsley, M. C. (1981). Aesthetics: Problems in the philosophy of criticism (2nd ed.). Hackett Publishing Company.

Brooks, C. (1947). The well wrought urn: Studies in the structure of poetry. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Brooks, C., & Warren, R. P. (1976). Understanding poetry (4th ed.). Holt, Rinehart and Winston. (Original work published 1938)

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Culler, J. (2011). Literary theory: A very short introduction (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Eagleton, T. (2008). Literary theory: An introduction (2nd ed.). University of Minnesota Press.

Eliot, T. S. (1932). Selected essays (1917–1932). Faber and Faber.

Faraz, Q. (2008). My some verses [Poetry collection, in Balochi].

Faraz, Q. (2015). My second collection of verses [Poetry collection, in Balochi].

Faraz, Q. (n.d.). The desolate shadow of old acacia. Translated by Mujeed Azad. Neon Origami Literary Magazine.

Momin, M. (n.d.). Streets of melody. Translated by Mujeed Azad. The Ana, (18).

Qazi, M. (n.d.). Cast away the gun. Translated by Fazal Baloch. Borderless Journal.

Ransom, J. C. (1941). The new criticism. New Directions.

Richards, I. A. (1929). Practical criticism: A study of literary judgment. Routledge.

Selden, R., Widdowson, P., & Brooker, P. (2013). A reader's guide to contemporary literary theory (5th ed.). Routledge.

Tate, A. (1951). Essays of four decades. Swallow Press.

Tyson, L. (2015). Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1949). Theory of literature. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Wimsatt, W. K., & Beardsley, M. C. (1954). The verbal icon: Studies in the meaning of poetry. University Press of Kentucky.