Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 The Relevance of this Study in Yemen

Yemen is a Middle Eastern country. It is in the southwest part of the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen is to the south of Saudi Arabia and to the west of Oman. The Red Sea is to the west of Yemen and the Arab Sea and Aden Gulf are to the south of it.

English Language is a foreign language in Yemen. It is not spoken in the society. Arabic Language is the mother tongue. So when one considers the teaching of English Poetry in Yemen, one should consider that English is a foreign language.

English Poetry is taught in the Departments of English in the Yemeni Universities under both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education. In these two Departments, the students have to study for four years to get their undergraduate degrees. Poetry is taught to the students of the third year and the fourth year.

In the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Metaphysical and Augustan Poetry are taught in the first semester of the third year. This course is concerned with the Seventeenth Century English Poetry. In the second semester, Romantic Poetry is taught. It aims at acquainting the students with the salient features of Romanticism in English Literature. Selected poems of William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Alfred Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold are intensively studied. In this semester, another course is taught. It is Analysis of Literary Texts in which some poems are taught. Besides, the Eighteenth Century Poetry and Drama, together as one course, is taught in the second semester of the third year.

In the first semester of the fourth year, the Twentieth Century Poetry is taught. The aim of this course is to develop in the students, a critical and historical awareness of
the evolution of English Poetry in the Twentieth Century. The course content includes selected poems of Yeats, Eliot, Auden, Rupert Brooke and E. E. Cummings.

In the Department of English, Faculty of Education, three English Poetry courses are taught to the students of the third and fourth level. To the third year students, the Seventeenth Century Poetry is taught in the first semester, and Romantic Poetry is taught in the second semester. Another course which includes some poems to be taught is given to the students of the third year in the second semester. It is called Analysis of Literary Texts. In the first semester of the fourth year, one English Poetry course is taught. It is the Twentieth Century Poetry.

The most important point that the present researcher is concerned with is how the poems of John Keats are taught in the Yemeni Universities in both English Departments of the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education? As it is mentioned above, Romantic Poetry is taught to the students of the third year in both the Departments of the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education. One or two of the poems of John Keats will be selected to be taught. Most probably, the choice will be two of his Great Odes. Naturally, before teaching his poems, the teachers will teach the students something about his life, his works and what critics said about him and his works and style of writing. Then his poems which have been selected will be critically appreciated. Teachers will provide the students with their notes or some other notes from the available books and the students have to memorize and copy these notes to be used in their answers if they are asked in their exams. This way of teaching does not create the motivation in the minds and the hearts of the students to study Keats' poetry and English Poetry in general. As Widdowson argues in his book *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*, "instead of being guided towards techniques of individual interpretation, students are often provided with other people's individual
interpretation" (75). And for that reason, according to Widdowson, the students are passive and they are not encouraged to be real readers of English Poetry. The students are "mouthing the authorial or principal judgments of others, not acting as interpretive authors in their own right" (Widdowson, 1992, XII).

The way in which Keats' poems are taught and English Poetry is taught in general does not help in "the development of the capacity for individual response to language use" (Widdowson 1975, 76). Teaching Poetry in such situations and in such a way will not encourage the students and they will feel that to study English Poetry is a difficult and boring task. They will not get any interest to be real readers of English Poetry though most of them do like to read and to appreciate Arabic Poetry. It should be taught in such a way as "to acquaint students with the manner in which literary works in English use the language to convey special meaning" (Widdowson, 1975, 78). So, for engaging the interest and ensuring the participation of the students of English Poetry, this study is of the view that Stylistics will help in "the learning of the language system" which will extend "into the learning of language use" (Widdowson, 1975, 81).

There is one relevant study, *Teaching English Poetic Text to Yemeni Undergraduates: A Stylistic Approach* done by Gibreel Alagbary, who is now an Assistant Professor in Department of English, Center for Languages and Translation, Taiz University. He states that

"...all the teachers would introduce background information. [Teachers] chose "historical" and "cultural" background information, but [the] other two types of background information (i.e socio-cultural and linguistic) were not common choices of teachers"(75).

He noticed that
"in choosing background information the teachers would focus more on the "dominant thinking at the time of writing the poem" and on the "historical and social events that might have produced the poem" and less on the "events which are promoted by the text" being taught"" (75).

According to him, 53.06% of his sample students "asserted that the background information introduced [by their teachers] was historical, and 33.67% of his sample students asserted that "the background information was cultural" (75).

He states that

In teaching the selected text, three of the four teachers would spend more time on the content of the poems than on their language. The fourth teacher would spend 'equal' time on content and language. Besides, two of the sampled teachers believed that "sometimes" the application of linguistics to literature would damage the essential power of literature to evoke feelings and disclose the truth of life; the other two teachers were less disapproving but not willing to take linguistics into their poetry classes (750-6).

The present study suggests that teaching poetry with the help of Stylistics, as Widdowson argues in *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*, will help in achieving the goals and objectives of the educational process. It also helps in giving "the total communicative effect of the poem as a kind of discourse" (84) and "brings up more general issues about the different ways in which language is used to communicate and develops an awareness in the learner which can be transferred to other instances of language use…. [Stylistics] can be used to develop sensitivity to language in the most effective way" (85).

Gibreel Alaghbary remarks that
The imposition of [the] dichotomy between language and content, or between linguistics and literature, and the partiality for the latter did not trigger a positive response from the students. The poetry classes become boring to the students and irrelevant to their learning objectives (76).

He argues that

When the poem's theme was too complex to figure out or when the language was too difficult for the students to understand, all the teachers would turn to paraphrase – the rendering of the content of the poem in other, simpler, words. The resort to the strategy of paraphrase is understandable, given the teachers' preoccupation with the content of the poems. The teachers also used other 'techniques' but ranked them from second to fourth. Two of the teachers provided the students with "ready-made critical material" and three others would use language activities and group work. The reliance on paraphrase also hints at the teacher-centeredness of the classrooms. The teachers lecture and when things do not go well, it is also the teachers who reformulate their own words (77-8).

He finds that "the students did not agree with their teachers... the teachers did not ask them to do anything in a class" (78). The students remain passive in the classrooms.

"Whether the source of the information was the teachers or critical textbooks, the students remained uninvolved all through. They were assigned the animator role," mouthing the authorial or principal judgments of others, not acting as interpretive authors in their own right" (Widdowson, 1992, xIII)" (Alaghbary 79).
So, the students' job, "as depositories", is to hand back the teacher's critical appreciation when they have been asked for that. This is the result of the passive classrooms-role [which] produces students with poor English proficiency and literary sensitivity (Alaghbary 80).

In this case, the result according to Alagbary, is that

"the teaching of poetry did not have any positive impact on the students. Besides being irrelevant to their learning objectives, it did not instill in them any love for reading English poetry. This is not because they did not have the interest in poetry but because of the method in which poetry is taught" (80).

Alaghbary remarks that "the current pedagogy has failed to relate the teaching of poetry to the learning of language skills and has also failed to make readers of the students" (80). It has failed also to satisfy [the students'] learning objectives (108).

Teaching poetry as subject and discourse is not concerned "with the transmission of facts and ready-made interpretations but with the development in the learners of interpretative procedures which can be applied to a range of language uses" (Widdowson, 1975, 84).

The present researcher made a study through a questionnaire by email to ten Professors and colleagues who have the experience of teaching English Poetry in some Yemeni Universities. The questionnaire consists of three points or enquiries. They are as follows

1. How is Keats taught in your Department?

2. Do you think that Stylistics in line with the organic form notion will help if it is used in teaching Keats' Poetry and English Poetry in general?
3. Do you think that the research on "Organic Form as the Voice of Feeling: A Stylistic Analysis of Keats' Odes" will help in some way or another in teaching Keats' Poetry in Departments of English in the Yemeni Universities?

The respondents were from Taiz University, Thamar University, Albaidha'a University, and Amran University. The study showed that most of the respondents were of the view that the present study is significant not only in teaching poetry but in teaching the English language in general in the different Departments of Yemeni universities as well. They are of the view that teaching literature in general is somehow a preparation for the final tests.

The respondents from Taiz University are of the view that the students' knowledge of stylistics will surely help them in understanding the literary texts such as novels, short stories, and poetry better. A stylistic analysis is an essential task when it comes to understanding poetry. Therefore, integrating and highlighting it in the University syllabus they assume will have its influence on the students' performance.

The respondents from the Department of English, Albaidha'a University state that John Keats is usually taught as one of the representative poets of the Romantic Movement in English literature. Reading Keats starts by giving a biographical note on the poet. This is followed by taking selected texts of his poetry. The text is studied in the light of the characteristic features of Romantic Poetry. The text is not deeply analyzed as an independent piece of literature. Critical rendering of the text is mostly absent. This is partly due to the level of the students' understanding and partly because of the lack of a critical approach on the part of the instructor. Thus, the text will remain restricted to its biographical and historical setting. The stylistic and other literary features have been kept untouched most of the time. In line with this teaching trend, Keats’ poetry has not been given its due analysis, especially its stylistic
structure as a characteristic feature of his poetry. The students have not been urged to appreciate the poet’s artistic and stylistic innovations. They have been taught to read his odes and imagery, without pinpointing his language, poetic diction and unique style.

The respondents from Department of English, Ibb University state their own views that mostly, poetry is taught in the old traditional lecturing method in which the lecturer spends a minimum period of three hours going deeply into the details of the poem at hand using a very complicated literary language. That consequently makes the students complain about the difficulty of English poetry. For them, this kind of difficulty in reading and enjoying English poetry is mainly because of the way it is taught. University teachers should try to make teaching poetry a more interactive process that involves the students in analyzing and exploring the piece of poetry and stylistics, if adopted, will surely help in teaching poetry in the Yemeni Universities. To be fair enough, some university teachers try to escape the restrictions of the traditional lecturing method and teach poetry in a way of teaching English adopting stylistics effectively to make students understand the poem taught as well as develop their language. The results were encouraging. But still it remains as individual efforts.

The respondents from the Department of English, Al-baidha's University state that Keats, like any other poet, is not given his due for a number of reasons: the little space accorded to him within Romanticism (only one or two poems); 90% of the students are not able to digest what Romanticism is and what Keats means to it; few teachers are specialized in this field. They are of the view, that any stylistic study is very important for teaching poetry because what students need at the degree level is not so much psychological or ideological criticism as stylistic analysis. Stylistics is very
essential to understanding Keats because his poetry cannot be dealt with in isolation from the sensuous imagery for which he is best known.

The respondents from the Department of English, Thamar University argue that in their Departments, John Keats is taught as part of English Romantic poetry which is in itself a section in a 24-hour B.A or B.Ed. course devoted to English poetry in the Nineteenth Century. Even within the domain of Romantic poetry, Keats almost receives less attention than other poets like William Wordsworth, William Blake and Shelley. Hence, the student usually gets introduced to two of Keats' poems.

The respondents are of the view that, pedagogically, the present research study will have a significant importance in the teaching process in the Yemeni universities for the three following reasons:

1. It will be a vital material and good reference for the teachers of English poetry in the Departments of English.
2. Since John Keats is one of the major canonical Romantic poets, the thesis will definitely provide the students with keynotes to grasp the main characteristics of the Romantic phenomenon.
3. The stylistic approach used in this study is, would be interesting, and convenient for Yemeni students, who are mostly poor in understanding English literary texts, than other approaches. It has, indeed, a twofold objective. Firstly, it simplifies the semantic and figurative meaning of the poetic language which makes English poetry more accessible and comprehensible and thus enhances the students' critical and analytic reading of literary texts. Secondly, it is one of the most beneficial methods of teaching English language through literature.
5.2 Conclusion

This study is a stylistic analysis of Keats' Odes in line with the modern emphasis on a sustained intellectual analysis of poetry, especially of Romantic poetry, which insists on the intrinsic approach, the close reading of the text itself, especially lyric poetry, which is generally limited in length but expresses the complex thought and feelings of the poet. This type of poetry, like Keats' Odes of 1819, offers a fruitful area for practice in which the content is inextricably bound up with the structure or form. Form and content cannot be separated, they must be considered as one when united in a poem. When the focus and attention is on the form of a poem, the form is a means to achieve content.

Since form and content are indivisible, the outcome is the organic unity or self-sustaining quality of a poem which is an organic principle in which the Twentieth Century, and especially theorists and critics of various persuasions in the last forty years, generally concur (Abrams 121).

The modern criticism assumes that form and content are inseparable in literature and that the meaning of a literary work can be divided only from an analysis of its form-content fusion.

The poem is no way a moral message (content) wrapped in a suitable form, and the poet by his creative technique fuses form and content and achieves coherence, and uses linguistic resources, sound pattern, and stylistic devices which partially comprise poetic unity. So, when the parts of the poem are examined in relation to the whole and the poem is judged as a successful coherent one, the poem in this case achieves the organic unity of form and content. This organic unity is achieved by studying the poem's imagery, meter, inner tensions as functional stylistic devices which act as unifying agents in the fusion of form and content. The formal elements of a poem do
not operate separately but, on the contrary, are constantly acting upon and through each other until the fusion of irreconcilables of that poem eventuates.

It is said that in the Odes, Keats gives one the most of his innermost self, and he does so with the sure hand of a great artist. The Odes of Keats are constructed with harmonious skill. He, as a great poet, successfully achieves the organic unity of the poem in his 1819 Odes and the organic form of each and every ode successfully conveys his own true feeling. His organic form is the voice of his own true feeling.

In "Ode to Psyche", it is noticed that the sensuousness of the words clashes with the dreamy quality of the verse. The lines become increasingly synaesthetic as they are loaded with images – one image after another. Keats uses the visual and tactile images in a very effective way. His use of alliteration helps the sounds to make the emotion and related meaning clear. The sensation of lightness and quietness that suffuses the Ode brings the necessary atmosphere to the work. It enriches the qualities of tenderness, delicacy and refinement in the human situation when embodied in art. The Ode nourishes these qualities. The reader has to be fully aware of the quality of the imagery which suggests these attributes. In this Ode, as well as in the "Ode to a Nightingale", the imagery is regarded as decorative and functionally perfect. Though only elementary among the imagery of the greater Odes, the images in this Ode are a glimpse of what is to come – a surer use of the synaesthetic quality that imbues the later work with a richness and concentration found only in parts of this Ode.

In "Ode to a Nightingale", it is noticed that the magnificence of imagery is the Ode's valuable feature. In this Ode, the imagery is regarded as decorative and functionally perfect. It sufficiently achieves the ironic effect of the contrasts throughout the poem. Moreover, the imagery shows Keats to be a master of beautiful description rich in association. In reading this ode, the structural organization reveals
Keats' inclusive sureness of grasp in the entire Ode. The details are not merely a linking together of beautiful images but are so related as to lead to a realized whole. The Ode is a finely-constructed, complex organism. Thus, one can say that Keats, in his "Ode to a Nightingale", has achieved the organic form which is the true voice of his feeling.

In "Ode on a Grecian Urn", Keats uses colloquial words, but their commonality has been raised a bit to the heightened level by their poetic use. Keats uses these words in a way which helps in expressing ideas in a very sensitive way and with great beauty, imagination and precision. Though these words are common, they have been impregnated with passion so that, in spite of their usual colour, they can convey the passion to the reader. So, the words are very simple but their impregnation with sound, image and meaning is so deep and heightened that they attain a natural dignity which immediately affects the senses and the mind of the reader.

Thus, with the selection of choicest natural words and without any aid of supposed ornaments, the poet not only communicates his passion and thought but also gives an organic unity to them and to the poem. With so little he achieves so much. And that is the beauty of the simplicity of words. It seems, as if words are not being used by the poet; rather, they are created by the passion of the poet. They come out with the same spontaneity from within as the passion of the poet.

By the stylistic analysis of this ode, a picture of Keats' artistry is noticed, particularly with regard to Keats' achievement in integrating the content or meaning with the form or context of the entire poem. This can be considered as an evidence that reveals Keats' ability to achieve organic unity.

In "Ode on Melancholy", Keats has achieved the organic form which is the true voice of his own feeling. The stylistic analysis of the ode demonstrates conclusively
that the ode's form is inseparable from its meaning. Keats' use of words, images in the
ode illuminates the structural complexity in the ode. His use of various images and his
perfect functional imagery in the ode demonstrates the organic unity in "Ode on
Melancholy".

As in other Odes, Keats shows his craftsmanship in his ode "To Autumn". He
manages to demonstrate the structural complexities in the poem. In *Modern Poetry
and the Tradition*, Brooks commends the "perfection of form" (225) in "To Autumn"
and examines the circumstances of Keats' superiority to Shelley (230). Brooks states
that "the Keats of the Odes may well prove to be one of the heroes of modernist
criticism" (246). He adds that Keats has the ability of making his imagery functional
and he has achieved in his odes an integration of intellect and sensation, an organic
unity. He argues that "In the Odes there is an integration of intellect and emotion.
Form is meaning. The thinking goes on through the images and receives its precise
definition and qualification from the images" (251). He sees Keats as a poet who in
the odes created an "inexhaustibly rich" (251) poetry.

The imagery in the odes is rich in association. The stylistic analysis of the Odes
illustrates in some measure the inseparability of form and content in the great Odes.
Keats' ability is noticed in achieving the organic unity. His ability lies in the form-
content synthesis. Imagery is used in such a creative way to synthesize content and
form.

In the Odes, Keats is seen as a poet of potential genius. His genius is clearly seen
in the intellectual insight and emotional depth of the great Odes. In fact, Keats' Odes
speak for themselves and they are an evidence of Keats' maturity as a poet. In
*Revaluation*, Leavis admits that "Ode to a Nightingale" is still luxury, "Ode on
Melancholy", and "To Autumn" present more than luxury (255). Leavis points to the
serious, mature poetry Keats achieved before his death. He argues that the Odes and the revised Hyperion demonstrate not only growth but also attainment of genius.

So, as it is mentioned in Keats's Development as a Poet,

"The Ode to Psyche which deals with mythological lovers shows too clearly the to[p]-mark of the craftsman. But the Ode to a Nightingale, the Ode on a Grecian Urn, the Ode on Melancholy, and the Ode to Autumn are among the mightiest of achievements of English poetry."

(http://neoenglish.wordpress.com/2010/11/page/12/)

Keats is a provoking and an important poetic craftsman who achieved the organic unity of the poem in his Odes. In The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Eliot calls Keats, especially the Keats of the Odes, a "great poet" (100). He insists that "Keats seems to me ... a great poet .... The Odes especially perhaps the Ode to Psyche – are enough for his reputation" (100).

Thus, Keats can be considered as a master of English literature whose imagery produced a skillful synthesis of form and meaning, intellect and emotion in each of the great Odes. This study does agree with Allen Tate's judgement that Keats is among the few truly great English poets. And it comes to a conclusion that the matured genius of Keats lies in the intellectual insight and emotional depth of the Odes. The structural unity of the Odes is clear through the stylistic analysis of the Odes by stating the creativity of Keats in using imagery and other stylistic devices in the Five Great Odes.

This study is an attempt to see each Ode as an organism, to look at the interaction of parts and of parts to the whole, to determine Keats' success in achieving his own organic form which is the true voice of his feeling. This study does agree with the critics who look steadily at each poem as an organic unity, a self-sufficient entity by
studying the poem intrinsically, its form and content to understand the meaning of the poem. It is an attempt to derive meaning from the odes after analyzing them stylistically in their entirety.

It is an attempt to discuss the organic unity that Keats achieved in his 1819 Odes which lies in the form-content integration accompanied by the integration of intellectual and emotional insight, as the standard of excellence in poetry. Keats' Odes are that kind of poetry which offers a fusion of form and content, intellect and feeling. Thus this study finds a rich offering of organic complexity in Keats' great Odes. Keats has surpassed the limitations of his time by fusion of emotion and intellect, form and content. The fusion takes place in varying degrees in each of the great Odes. The formal elements of the Odes do not operate separately but, on the contrary, are constantly acting upon and through each other until the fusion of irreconcilables of each and every Ode eventuates.

According to this study, the Odes of John Keats afford an excellent illustration for the critical method applied to poems which are highly susceptible to illuminating discoveries. The findings offer convincing testimony of the durability of the Odes of John Keats as literary works of art.

Keats' Odes of 1819, the Five Great Odes, have the organic coherence of disparate elements. The organic coherence of a poem is the internal consistency of the poem. This study finds that Keats' lyric poems, the Five Great Odes, perfectly synthesize thought and feeling. The Odes are seen widely as synthesis. They afford imagery which is functional rather than decorative. So Keats, in his Odes achieved the structural integrity or what is called organic unity.

At the end of this study, one can express one's total agreement with Leonard Unger who in "Keats and the Music of Autumn", states that
With the possible exception of Coleridge, who has loomed large as a critic, the reputation of no Romantic poet has in our century maintained so steady a course as that of John Keats. While Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley were being attacked or neglected, Keats was spared, mentioned with special deference, and even given admiring critical analyses and scholarly study. In recent years especially has his better work, so designated "the great odes," received serious critical attention. Messrs. F. R. Leavis, Kenneth Burke, Cleanth Brooks and Allen Tate have all made appraisals and interpretations of one or more of these poems (274, emphasis added).

Keats' mature lyric poems, his great odes, reveal a richness of literary artistry. Cleanth Brooks in his essay "Romantic Poetry and the Tradition", comments that the concern with Keats is "surely no attempt to turn Keats into Donne, or, for that matter, into Shakespeare or Milton, if one observes that his most mature poetry can be brought under the general principles of symbolist – metaphysical poetry" (146). Similarly, other critics recognize metaphysical complexity in Keats' mature poetry, the great Odes.

In conclusion, one can say that this study is an attempt in which the form, language and diction of Keats' Odes have been studied in the light of stylistics. The stylistic features of the Odes suggest that the Odes are authentic and since they are authentic poems, they are representing the true voice of Keats' feeling.

This study has been done through the study of organic form in these Odes. Moreover, it is noticed that Keats, in these Odes, was sincere in feeling and he used a form of poetry that is sincere in catching his own true voice of feeling.
Keats found his own organic form becoming the true voice of his feeling in his Odes. The study of this ultimate development of his own organic form is one of the objectives of this study.

As a matter of fact, Keats was ever searching out new ways of expression – a new form of diction, of poetic style, of poetic form and of poetic felicity – which could carry easily and smoothly, the heavy load of his new thought, sensation, feeling, emotion, imagination, vision and philosophy. He was in constant search for an organic form which could be the true voice of his feeling. This study clarifies that, in the Odes, Keats was able to achieve it with full perfection. It is noticed that Keats, in his Odes, used the stylistic devices which lead to the development of his own Organic form as the voice of true feeling. The ideal of Greek art is the union of Apollo and Dionysus, the wild Dionysian energy chastened and subdued by the mental discipline of Apollo and the result is a reposeful form throbbing with the strong pulse of life and emotion.