

THE FUNCTION OF IMAGERY IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY

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Abstract: One of the many strategies used by poets and other authors, whether intentionally or inadvertently, to strengthen their expressions is imagery. Therefore, it is essential that readers understand this literary device, but most readers do not take the use of imagery seriously or explain how it contributes to the successful literary analysis and teaching process. Poetry in particular benefits greatly from the use of "imagery," which stimulates the senses and helps readers understand the message that poets or other authors are trying to convey. Investigating the rationale behind the use of imagery and the degree to which it can further literary analysis and education is the primary concern that motivated this study. Explaining the importance of images in literary analysis and the teaching process is the study's goal. The article's references were gathered from a variety of print and internet sources. To support the claim, a qualitative research approach based on secondary sources has been used. According to the study's findings, any text can become both formally and functionally appealing through the use of imagery.[1] The study also finds that by stimulating readers' interest and engaging their senses, the employment of imagery in literary texts improves their perceptual capability.

Key words: literary, qualitative, analysis, essential, employ, emotional, dynamic, personal, selfhood.

Introduction: Poetry frequently uses sensory details and vivid descriptions to evoke strong feelings in the reader. Here's when imagery is useful. To conjure up mental images and arouse the reader's emotions, imagery employs sensory elements and descriptive language (Britannica, 2020). In order to create mood and emotional resonance in poetry, imagery is essential (eNotes Editorial, n.d.). It facilitates the reader's immersion in the poem's environment. Additionally, it enables the poet to effectively and immediately convey difficult concepts and feelings. The strength of imagery in modern poetry will be discussed here, along with how poets employ this device to produce poems that are impactful and unforgettable. We will also look at some modern poets like Warsan Shire, Claudia Rankine, and Nayyirah Waheed who are masters of imagery.[2] We'll talk about how their readers have been affected by their use of imagery. Furthermore, we'll look at how images can be employed to convey

difficult concepts, build a feeling of community, or evoke strong emotional responses. We'll wrap up by summarizing the main conclusions. Lastly, readers who want to learn more about the potency of imagery in modern poetry will be given some recommendations.

Figurative Language and Literary Studies

Here the sentence says, "Man is a toad." Is it possible that a man is a toad? No, man is a man, not a toad. In this expression, one should be able to identify the literariness of the expression, that is, the special use of a word for a different thing. Here, the toad has not been used in a literal sense, but in a figurative sense, that is, toad implies ugliness. This figurative meaning is an extra linguistic feature. It means a reader should be able to think outside the box of linguistic arena. The word 'toad' has been used as an image for ugliness. Novels, short tales, poetry, dramas, and many more genres are written by authors employing unique word choices that evoke certain images in the reader's mind or stimulate the senses. Writers employ particular word patterns in literary studies. Through their words, they evoke mental images of objects or people and auditory sensations. Additionally, by using words in the text, these authors allow us to smell or taste certain foods. By employing words in two separate ways—literal and figurative—they engage our senses and assist us in seeing pertinent items by comparing and contrasting what is said with what it alludes to in our minds.[3] The authors directly express their opinions through the literal usage of words. They avoid using words or expressions that have hidden meanings. The intended meaning is what is stated explicitly. The meaning of the terms is rather obvious, so readers don't need to put in much effort to figure it out. When the words are employed literally, their dictionary definition suffices. "That man is hideous," for instance. "Ugliness of the man" is the clear meaning conveyed by the illustration. Even casual readers can easily deduce the correct meaning of the term based on the man's photo because just the dictionary definitions of the words have been used to describe him. The words have been utilized literally in this instance. The following description of the same person has a unique quality that sets it apart from the previous one: "The man is a toad." Because the description employs a unique language use strategy, this statement is not clear-cut and leaves lay readers perplexed. The statement "Man is a toad" is used here. Can a man possibly be a toad? No, man is not a toad; he is a man. One should be able to recognize the literariness of this expression—that is, the unique way a word is used to refer to something else.[4] In this instance, the toad is employed figuratively rather than literally, meaning that it connotes ugliness. This additional language component is the figurative meaning. It implies that a reader ought to be able to think beyond the confines of language. "Toad" has been used as a metaphor for ugly things.

Conclusion: In conclusion, imagery in contemporary poetry serves as a dynamic and multifaceted tool that goes beyond mere decoration or description. Its functions

are deeply interwoven with the emotional, intellectual, and cultural fabric of modern life. Through vivid, often fragmented, and multi-layered images, poets communicate the complexities of human experience, challenge conventional boundaries, and engage readers in critical reflection on societal issues, personal histories, and universal themes. One of the most significant roles of imagery today is its ability to evoke emotions and stir empathy. Whether through the raw beauty of a moment or the starkness of a painful truth, imagery in contemporary poetry taps into the reader's senses and emotions, forging connections that transcend time, place, and language. It makes abstract concepts tangible, translating ideas into experiences that resonate on a personal level. Furthermore, contemporary poets are pushing the boundaries of traditional imagery by blending cultural references, experimenting with metaphor, and using digital and technological motifs. These innovations reflect the increasingly complex, interconnected world we live in, allowing poets to explore issues of identity, memory, trauma, and displacement. Imagery in this context becomes a vehicle for re-imagining selfhood and belonging in an era of global migration, rapid technological change, and cultural hybridization.[5] The rise of hybrid, fragmented, and non-linear imagery reflects the fragmentation of modern consciousness itself. Poets are increasingly attuned to the dissonances of contemporary existence—where personal, political, and environmental crises converge—and imagery is often employed to mirror that disjointedness. At the same time, imagery remains a potent tool for healing, resistance, and transformation, offering readers new ways to process the world and make sense of their place within it. Ultimately, imagery in contemporary poetry is not just a passive reflection of the world but an active, transformative force. It shapes how we see and understand reality, while also questioning the limitations of language and perception.[6] As the landscape of contemporary poetry continues to evolve, imagery will remain at the heart of poetic expression, offering both poets and readers a space to explore the complexities of modern life in all its beauty, ambiguity, and pain.

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