

From Poetic Imagination to Imaging: Contemporary Notions of Poetic Imagination in Poetry

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Abstract

When we consider what constitutes the essence of poetry, we are confronted with a variety of questions none of which may be answered with final satisfaction. One feature that seems to emerge repeatedly through time is the notion of imagination and the term 'poetic imagination' to depict the emotional, imaginative, intellectual and the expressive language used to reflect the writer's consciousness. This paper primarily aims to demonstrate the core finding of my research in the concepts, theories and ideas of poetic imagination. The research characterizes a series of modes of imagination in contemporary poetry. These modes have been drawn from the existing notions and concepts of poetic imagination. The research identifies that imagination in contemporary poetry moves more towards imaging rather than poetic imagination. In other words, imagination shows greater affinity to imaging in contemporary poetry. This paper primarily presents the significant contribution of the overall research which is the conceptualization of a paradigm of various modes of imagination in contemporary poetry, with imaging and poetic imagination as its two ends. Other modes of creative imagination reside between imaging and poetic imagination.

[**Keywords:** contemporary notions of poetic imagination, modes of imagination, imaging, creative imagination, poetry, theories of imagination]

1.0 Background of the Study

When we consider what constitutes the essence of poetry, we are confronted with a variety of questions none of which may be answered with final satisfaction. One feature that seems to emerge repeatedly through time is the notion of imagination and the term 'poetic imagination' to depict the emotional, imaginative, intellectual and the expressive language used to reflect the writer's consciousness. The significant question is, therefore, to understand and conceptualize what *poetic imagination* is. My Ph.D. research in the concepts of imagination in poetry initiated an interest with this question and pursued the answers with focus on contemporary notions of poetic imagination in poetry.

My research commenced with a conceptual history that traced the ideas, concepts and theories of poetic imagination. The relevant literature was driven to establish that the concept of *poetic imagination* has evolved from the concept of *imagination* leading to conceptualizations of imagination in poetry as poetic imagination in the Romantic period. More significantly, the research found that

poetic imagination has not been featured in the theories of modern and contemporary poetry, although the Romantics had celebrated its creative nature in poetry. The research aimed to develop an approach for the study of poetic imagination in poetry (2008, will be forthcoming in 2012). This paper primarily aims to demonstrate the core finding of my research in the concepts, theories and ideas of poetic imagination which is the conceptualization of a series of modes of imagination in contemporary poetry. These modes have been drawn from the existing notions and concepts of poetic imagination. The research identifies that imagination in contemporary poetry moves more towards imaging rather than poetic imagination. In other words, imagination shows greater affinity to imaging in contemporary poetry. This paper primarily presents the significant contribution of the overall research which is the conceptualization of a paradigm of various modes of imagination in contemporary poetry, with imaging and poetic imagination as its two ends. Other modes of creative imagination reside between imaging and poetic imagination. This paper also offers a summary of some key moments in the conceptual and historical developments of the concept of poetic imagination in poetry.

2.0 The Notions and Concepts of Poetic imagination

Imagination was linked to the concepts of emotions, feelings and passions from its early accounts. Imagination was considered as the faculty that generates images that are associated with feelings, passions, desires, aversions, and the like called “emotional states” (Hume 1978). The close connection between images and emotions and feelings related to them, and the fact that each mind has its own volume of images sets up different imaginations for different people. Every poet/author connects his own passions, emotions and feelings to the images he creates. The phenomenon implies the existence of more than one mode of imagination in poetry and literature.

Imagination was initially considered similar to memory as it was thought to mediate the reproductive images of mental realities rather than those of sensory realities. This conceptualization highlights some dimensions of imagination that were developed later when imagination became distinct from memory. This position associates imagination with mental reality rather than sensory ones. The early distinction between memory and imagination stresses the fact that memory refers to the past while imagination does not (Hobbes 1651). This also emphasizes that imagination cannot be defined in terms of time and place which distinguishes between images that belong to the past compared with images that are associated with imagination and are not from the past. Emotions were also conceptualized as “secondary impressions” that are received from the actual feeling of things (Hume 1978). In Hume’s terminology, “impressions” are directly received from the senses and are reproduced as “ideas” under the process of imagination.

The interconnection of imagination to the notion of the soul forms one of the distinguishing characteristics of imagination in poetry and literature. This interconnection highlights the emergence of the poetic image from the poet's soul rather than the poet's mind. The early exploration of the existence of a connection between soul and imagination conceptualized imagination as a medium of soul (Neo-Platonists' theory). The interconnection of soul and imagination was one of the concepts that led to the recognition of the creative imagination in artistic creation. The soul of the artist/poet is the only area that imagination is able to create superior works of art (Sulzer 1792-1799 in Engell 1981). In other words, any work that embodies greatness, uncommonality and beauty (as the elements of a true creative work according to the judgment of taste) permeates soul with revelation and newness, which raise pleasures in the imagination (Addison 1712).

The exploration of imagination's working in the soul led to establish a dichotomy between mind and soul. This dichotomy places thought in one realm, referring to mind as the objective part of the psyche, and imagination in another realm, referring to soul as the subjective part of the psyche. The idea that poetic image is not associated with thought indicates that the poetic image belongs to the poet's soul (Bachelard 1969). Similarly, the phenomenological conceptualization of not considering any past for the poetic image, which means poetic image has no cause, discusses emerging of the poetic image from the soul into the consciousness.

Fancy is another significant concept that contributed to the development of the concepts of imagination in poetry and literature. Fancy's conceptualizations in relation to imagination in poetry characterize concept of imagination with levels of power. Fancy is an important concept that has been associated with imagination in the conceptual history of imagination. Fancy was initially taken synonymous with imagination, associating fancy with supernatural and superstition (Hobbes 1651 and Addison 1712). Such conceptualizations highlight that fancy is a form of imagination which embodies creativity. The development in the concept of fancy and its distinction from imagination introduced these concepts as the powers that produce two kinds of poetry. Fancy was conceptualized as an inferior mental faculty which produces a mechanic form and is associated with the definite (Coleridge 1817). On the other hand, imagination produces an organic form which is higher in creativity, and is associated with the indefinite.

The notion of nature was connected to imagination in poetry, stressing the capability of imagination to get access to a kind of knowledge that cannot be provided by other means (the senses or reason). This conceptualization was initiated and developed only during the Romantic period. Nature's elements were discussed as important in developing imagination from a perceptive power to a creative and poetic power. The Romantic conceptualizations of the connection between nature and imagination explore several dimensions of creative imagination in poetry and literature. The co-existence of imagination with nature

as are evoked in poetry brings tranquility to the mind. This means that the aesthetic beauty of nature affects the poet's in creative process. Furthermore, creative imagination is a source of energy that can regenerate nature in the artistic creation (poetic creation). Romantics' belief in the poet's forming power of imagination in poetic creation similar to God's divine imagination in creation of nature is the substantial contribution to the study of this concept. This notion associates creative imagination of the poet as being capable of conveying the intuitive and transcendental knowledge in the poem. In a similar vein the unifying power of imagination is one of the important features that was only explored in the Romantic period. The unifying power of imagination is a "synthetic magical power" that reconciles the opposites and forms a whole (Coleridge 1817). The significant aspect of imagination as a unifying power is to provide forms of knowledge that are intuitive and subjective.

Bringing the concept of meaning and language into the discussions of imagination by the modern phenomenologists, highlights the mediatory function of imagination in relation to its creative aspects. This conceptualization explains the way imagination contributes to the creation of meanings behind the words in poetry and literature. Concept of metaphor with the focus on "semantic innovation" (Ricoeur 1991) helps to explain the creative role of imagination in relationship with meaning in literal and figurative levels. In metaphor one semantic field is changed or restructured to another semantic field which results in the expansion of meaning. Imagination offers its mediatory role when a new meaning emerges out of the destruction of semantic fields in the literal level (Ricoeur 1979). The restructuring or change in the semantic fields is the result of a semantic shock which sparkles the emergence of new meanings.

In addition to the conceptualization of the role of imagination as a medium of creating new meanings in language through forging a link between concept of "metaphor" and imagination, the phenomenological studies focus on concept of "intentionality" to open up some other aspects of the similar conceptualization. Intentionality refers to being conscious of direct meanings of things, and double intentionality is of indirect meanings that exist behind direct meanings as mostly seen in poetry and literature. The role of image and imagination in creation of meanings in poetry and literature is made through a "double intentionality". In an overall view, intentionality refers to our consciousness of imagining things or their images in language. It specifies the act of making images and imagining in order to establish the specific meaning of things as images or the experience of imagining them which are separate from the meanings of things that might be found through other experiences such as understanding, feeling, etc. Double intentionality specifies the act of imagining in order to establish meanings of objects in language when the real object is not present or does not exist in the world, which is true in the case of figurative language and poetry.

The change of focus from imagination to image in several conceptualizations manifests a change in the treatments that the concept of

imagination receives in the modern period. Studies on poetic image and its feature in phenomenology define imagination as a faculty that produces poetic image. The poetic image is characterized with spontaneity, suddenness and novelty. It also has the capacity to create new meanings in language, similar to imagination in relation to metaphor. Poetic image does not carry the old and familiar meanings of perception. Another characteristic of poetic image is to consider no past reality for it. These characteristics of poetic image indicate that imagination that produces poetic image (poetic imagination) is not restricted to the realm of perception and sensation.

The creative/poetic imagination of the artist/poet finds many new dimensions in the modern period. Imagination was conceptualized as an interaction between the conscious and the unconscious. The methods of Freudian “free association” in psychoanalysis, Jungian “active imagination” in analytical psychology and studies on dreams as a mode of communication provide some insights in the modern concepts of imagination in poetry and literature. These studies clarify especially the imagining process of artistic/poetic creation, its materials and the artist/poet’s psychical release in the process of creation. The spontaneity and autonomy of imagination and self-dramatizing feature of imagining process are explored in studying and examining the interaction between the conscious and the unconscious. In poetic creation, creative imagining helps the poet to know his inner self or the unconscious. This interaction also shows the materials with which the artist/poet works in artistic/poetic creation. Freudian psychology defines function of the creative/ poetic imagination as to express the psychological complexes of artist or the poet. This also helps the reader to experience the work and gives expression to his unfulfilled wishes and desires.

The notion of imagination in poetry as a tool to understand reality indicates a change in the concept of poetic imagination in the modern period. Reality is defined as an admixture of the real and the unreal. Imagination does two acts referring to the poet’s stages in the creative process: imagination helps the poet to discover the unreal out of the real which define the origin of imagination in the perceived reality. This imagination is not poetic and creative. This is poetic imagination that helps to create the unreal out of the real which, in fact, leads into creating reality. One large area of the unreal belongs to the territory of the self. The modern poet writing particularly about personal life has the tendency to discover this territory of the unreal with no much attempt at creating the unreal through poetic imagination. Before the modern period, poetic imagination was considered as a human faculty concerned with creating autonomous aesthetic artifacts (poetry and literature) which could represent directly or indirectly the human experience. This notion has now been turned into as “an agency that is used solely for nurturing and insulating the self’s interiority” in the modern world (Stevens in Samson 2000).

The notion of image as picture in poetry emphasizes the objective dimensions of image referring to its object in the real life. To evoke an image as picture, image in poetry and literature possess some characteristics: image is direct and specific, meaning that image embraces the clear representation of the external object or sensory perception; image is exact and non-decorative, meaning that image depicts the effect of the object; image is the unit of a poem in poetic composition, meaning that emphasis is on the image rather than words; too many abstractions reduces the concreteness and pictorial quality of images. The notion of image as picture has been a feature examined by the Imagists in the modern period.

The attempt at characterizing the image in poetry provides and contributes to the exploration of some aspects of the concept of imagination in poetry and literature. Defining poetic image as the embodiment of “psychic energy”, stresses the vitality and the animated quality of the poetic image. Poetic image is defined as the natural speech of imagination, and cannot be drawn from or inserted back into the real world (Bly 1982). In this way, poetic image cannot be described only as picture as Imagists were willing to do. Psychic energy refers to the animated quality in an image that infuses it with liveliness and vitality. This means that while objectivity is still present to make the context of poem/text seem real, the level of subjectivity is increased through the imagining process.

As was mentioned earlier, this paper primarily aims to discuss and present one of the main outcomes of the research and demonstrates contemporary notions of poetic imagination which help to characterize and explain the manifestations and modes of creative imagination in contemporary poetry.

3.0 Modes of Imagination

My research characterizes and conceptualizes a series of modes of imagination in contemporary poetry and literature: Prosaic imagination, Pictorial imagination, Fancy imagination, Fancy-realistic imagination, and Poetic imagination. These modes have been drawn from the existing notions and concepts of poetic imagination. The definitions of these modes signify that some of them embrace more poetical and imaginative imagination. These modes of imagination are, however, not distinctively separate from each other as some characteristics and features are shared albeit with fine and subtle variations. These modes are described below:

Prosaic imagination is characterized with non-pictorial images that cause a sense of matter-of-factness that reduces imaginative aspects of the poem. There are too many abstractions in image making process which makes the poem look like a good prose composition that has been cut off into line lengths.

The idea of this mode of imagination is based on Imagism’s notion of using too many abstractions in image making process which they believe makes the

poem looks like a good prose except for “chopping ... composition into line lengths”. This reduces poeticality and creativity of images in poetry (Pound, 1916). Abstractions are mostly rendered through images that do not evoke pictures. The poet’s excessive use of non-pictorial imagery causes a sense of matter-of-factness and reduces imaginative aspects of the poem. This is what Bly says makes the poem “dry” (Bly 1982).

Distinguishing characteristic of this mode of imagination is an explicit lack of pictorial quality. Immediate imagery, such as concrete images and sensory images are usually characterized with pictorial quality. Idea images, on the other hand, which render thoughts and intellect, do not evoke real pictures in the mind. In prosaic mode of imagination idea images are connected to each other by concrete images and sensory images or any other type of images. The crux of the matter is the poet’s extensive use of idea imagery in the poem that overshadows pictorial dimensions of other types of images in the poem. This also results from explicit lack of features of poetic imagination (referring to the second category of the framework).

Dominant use of idea imagery in prosaic mode of imagination enhances didactic and informative dimensions of the poem. Narrative is also wrought in the overtly intended aspects of the image making process in prosaic mode of imagination.

Pictorial Imagination is to see the thing imagined when it is absent but exists in reality. It allows the poet to treat images that deal with reality but does not extend to the occasions when imagination is creatively engaged in a project in which the real object is not known. This is particularly true when the imagined object is known beforehand. Imagism’s stress on exactness, clarity, concreteness and use of visual images echoes the main idea in pictorial imagination that emphasizes pictorial dimensions of images.

Pictorial imagination is characterized with a high pictorial quality of images in the poem especially when they evoke strong visualizing pictures in the mind. However, pictorial imagination does not refer to mere copying of things. In pictorial imagination the poet does not merely record what he sees: he envisions it under the stimulus of the objects actually seen. In this way, perceiving with emotion, he may disclose the immanent beauty of things which escapes ordinary seeing. This mode of imagination works with the effect of things as presented themselves to the poet’s mind. There is a strong sense of objective reality in this mode of imagination that is achieved through the immediacy of pictures images invoke. Most of sensory and concrete images are connected with this kind of imagining. It is characterized with a high pictorial quality of images in the poem, especially when they evoke strong visualizing pictures in the mind.

Fancy Imagination gathers images from memories or sensory perceptions and mixes them together to create new imaginary ideas. It works according to a

mechanic association of ideas, and imposes a prefabricated or predetermined pattern upon the work of art. This is the factor, indeed, that diminishes the creativity of this mode.

The close association between fancy and imagination in the conceptual history of imagination in poetry shows that fancy has been discussed as a mode of imagination. The original idea of fancy imagination is based on what Wordsworth wrote about fancy in the *Preface to Poems* (1815: 9): “Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and *vice versa*”. By using the term “fancy imagination” I mean to stress the Romantic notion of fancy as a mode of creative imagination that is involved with fanciful creativity.

The faculty of fancy was associated with mechanical poetry by Coleridge. The kind of poetry that fancy produces is the work of “talent” like the writings of Fletcher, Ben Jonson and Pope (Abrams, 1953: 176). In addition, fancy was also used with reference to the process of producing a light-hearted, simple, or fanciful poetry and reserve the term imagination for more serious, passionate, or intense poetry. However, for the original Romantic critics and poets, the distinction in terminology marked two different types of creativity. They valued imaginative creativity more than fanciful creativity regardless of whether the poetry was serious or light-hearted. Fancy imagination in this framework takes both issues of the Romantic notion of fancy into account; however, fancy imagination does not necessarily produce less serious poetry (bad poetry) than what poetic imagination produces. The point is not what kind of poetry fancy produced but the level of creativity and poeticality that is lesser in fancy. Because fancy imagination is less creative – *fanciful creativity* – than poetic imagination – *imaginative creativity*, therefore the kind of poetry produces is different. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge concurred that the materials, the processes, and the rhetorical or psychological effects of fancy differ from those of the imagination in that they are merely capricious, transient, only temporarily surprising.

Fancy imagination gathers images from memories or sensory perceptions and mixes them together to create new chimerical ideas. This process is similar but inferior to the higher mental faculty of imagination, which in its highest form – poetic imagination – would create completely new ideas and entirely novel images rather than merely reassemble memories and sensory impressions in a different combination. Fancy imagination (fancy) receives “all its materials ready made from the law of association” (Coleridge 1817). It works according to “a mechanic association of ideas”, and imposes a prefabricated or predetermined pattern upon work of art (Abrams, 1953: 168-177). This is the factor, indeed, that diminishes the creativity of this mode. This is similar to the kind of writing that was called “*fairy way of writing*” by Dryden. This means that the poet “has no pattern to follow in it, and must work altogether out of his own invention” (Addison 1712).

The absence of pattern for the poet to follow in fancy imagination is connected to the role that “will” plays in this mode of imagination. Kant’s unwilled productive capacity of fancy and Coleridge’s notion of fancy’s independency from will explain the role of will in fancy imagination. Fancy imagination (fancy) is a lower cognitive mode of imagination related to and influenced by the will, but not dependent upon the will for its operation (Coleridge 1817).

Fancy-Realistic Imagination refers to the poet’s imagining process when he mingles realistic portrayals of ordinary events and characters with fancy images, surrealist elements, fantasy and myth. Fancy-realistic imagination is based on magical realists’ notion of fantasy in a natural context. It refers to the use of the elements of fantasy in a natural context – magical realism – and also to the use of natural objective reality-principles in a fantastic context. Fantasy is used in two senses as making the elements (magical realism) or preparing the context. In addition, fantasy is used in a broader sense than in magical realism. Fancy-realistic imagination refers to the poet’s imagining process when he mingles realistic portrayals of ordinary events and characters with fancy images, surrealist elements, fantasy and myth. This is to portray real world as having marvelous aspects in it. Treating fantastic as normal and normal as fantastic, or the ordinary as miraculous and the miraculous as ordinary through imagination and poetic/creative imagery is the trademark of Fancy-Realistic mode of imagination.

In magical realism that elements of fantasy as part of the unreal are combined with the elements of the real through imagination. This means that the unreal is brought into the real and makes the unreal appear as part of reality. In magical realism, the focus is on reality rather than on magic and *fantasy*. In the fancy-realistic mode of imagination, the focus is both on reality and *fancy*. Fancy is used in the term “fancy-realistic imagination” because it carries levels of creativity and not merely elements of supernatural and fantasy. In other words, in the fancy-realistic mode of imagination the unreal is brought to the real or the real is brought into the unreal. An example of fancy-realistic imagination can be found in *Lord of the Rings*. This is why the product sometimes seems real and sometimes unreal. This means that the creative imagination transforms the domain of the real to the magically real and the domain of the unreal to realistically magic.

The difference between fancy imagination and fancy-realistic imagination lies in the use of reality-principles in the latter mode and absence of these principles in the former. Some creative amendments in the course of the story “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Garcia Marquez as an example of magical realism, helps to clarify notions of magical realism and fancy-realistic mode of imagination, and also to explain the difference between the modes of fancy-realistic imagination and fancy imagination. In this magical realist story, an angel falls to Earth among ordinary people and is treated as a natural bird. This is magical realism in which the writer’s imagination transforms the unreal (angel) to the real (a natural creature like a bird). Now imagine if a man lands in heaven

among angels and is treated not more unusual than a heavenly creature. Such context is fanciful which also has the elements of reality (man and all his earthly natural traits). In both cases of angel falling into earth (magical realism) and man transcending to heaven mentioned above, the dominant mode of imagination is fancy-realistic. Now let's consider angels among angels or in fairy tales with no conspicuous or emphasis on elements of reality. The dominant mode of imagination is fancy imagination.

Poetic Imagination is closely attached to the idea of 'creation'. The creative core of poetic imagination encompasses and defines its other dimensions. This mode of imagination is characterized with the highest level of creativity and poeticality. The idea of this mode of imagination is mainly from the Romantic notions of poetic imagination, the phenomenological concept of poetic image and notion of imagination as a tool to understand reality. The distinguishing characteristic of this mode of imagination refers to the consistent presence and working of features of poetic imagination. The features of poetic imagination include "poetic Image as an act of the poet's soul", "communicability of poetic image", the presence of "reality-principles in imagining", "Intuitive Knowledge of Poetic Imagination", and "the dynamic freshness of poetic image".* This mode of imagination embodies poetic image which is the act of the poet's soul; when images in the poem communicate and acquire new meanings through their interaction; when the poet using the reality-principles creates the unreal out of what is real; when imagination is capable of providing "intuitive knowledge"; when poetic image epitomizes the dynamism and freshness by which it can create noble meanings and aspects in the poem. These features permit a certain actualization of new meanings or the emergent of possible meanings by re-vivifying moribund discourse of thought in this mode of imagination (Zalipour 2008).

Fundamentally, the creative essence of poetic imagination sets to free itself from the domination of the senses. Poetic imagination embraces the moment that imagination does not have to confront an image with the objective reality. Poetic imagination is when imagination deviates more and more from that which is called reality in ordinary language and vision, and approaches the heart of the reality which is no longer the world of manipulable objects. This does not mean poetic imagination is the world of the supernatural and fantasy. Rather poetic imagination is a power within the poet which is nourished by reality, and moves towards a renewed reality. By imagination we abandon the ordinary course of things. It is the world of reality which has been created poetically in the poem/text, where mind produces images of events or objects that are either insecurely related or unrelated to past and present reality.

Additionally, poetic imagination can combine the contradictory things together in a new synthesis and "generates and produces forms of its own" (Coleridge's notion). This mode of imagination "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities of the idea with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness with old and

familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order (Coleridge 1817).

The mode of poetic imagination is thus the most poetic and the densest as it reflects the competence to inextricably intertwine all types and forms of images with the philosophical, phenomenological, psychological and artistic threads of the imagination.

4.0 Imaging-Poetic Imagination Continuum

My research in the concepts, theories and ideas of imagination in poetry and literature discovered the account of the existence of other modes of imagination apart from poetic imagination in contemporary poetry and literature. These modes of creative imagination as discussed in the previous section include: Prosaic imagination, Pictorial imagination, Fancy imagination, Fancy-realistic imagination, and Poetic imagination. As such a significant contribution of the research is that it determines a structured continuum termed here as *Imaginium* for contemporary notions of poetic imagination. The term *Imaginium* is configured using the combination of two semantic concepts: imagination and continuum. *Imaginium* epitomizes the continuum-nature and structure of the conceptualizations for the study of imagination. This research indicates that imagination in poetry and literature can be organized as a continuum with *imaging* on one end, and *poetic imagination* on the other. Other modes of imagination are found to reside in a structured manner between these two ends in accordance with their level of creativity, poeticality and imaginativeness.

The following diagram illustrates *Imaginium*:

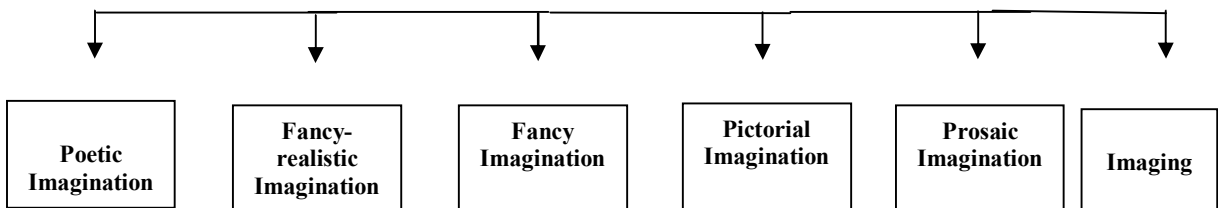


FIGURE 1- *Imaginium*: imaging-poetic imagination continuum

'Imaging' is indicative of the act of making images and pictures in the mind. It is a mode of mental activity like seeing, remembering and thinking. Imaging bears a basic sense of creativity and poeticality, and it is considered the binary opposite of poetic imagination in which creativity and poeticality is at its highest. Imaging refers to the mode of creative imagination that shows little or no affinity to poetic manifestations of image and imagery. It merely draws out pictures. Imaging together with other modes of imagination is used in *Imaginium* to show the

spectrum and the continuum nature of imagination in contemporary poetry and literature. This continuum frames a structure by which the level of imaginativeness, creativity and poeticality of a poem/text can be explained. The imaging-poetic imagination continuum points to the the amount of creativity invested in the mode of imagination in a poem/text. It also enables to explore and discuss the various manifestations of literary/creative imagination in a poem/text. It is not possible to say at what point along the continuum contemporary poetry's imaginative status might anchor. However, it is probable to find to which end the imagining process in the poem is lurking. By offering this continuum I mean typically the ways of explaining what seems happening to poetic imagination in its contemporary sense in poetry and literature. There is no implication that poetic imagination is not occurring; poetry/literature is being written with different sense of imagining. My research identifies that imagination in contemporary moves more towards imaging rather than poetic imagination. In other words, imagination shows greater affinity to the imaging end of *Imaginium* in contemporary poetry and literature.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Although today we use the term 'poetic imagination' liberally especially in discussions of poetry, literature, arts and aesthetics, we find that in attributing a concrete specification to the concept of poetic imagination, we remain with something inherently protean in character and fugitive in conventional literary terms. This means that poetic imagination is being used freely without referring to specific definitions in literary terms or its manifestations in critical/literary analysis of a poem/text. My research in the concepts, theories and ideas of imagination highlights the implicit nature of studies on poetic imagination in contemporary poetry and literature.

The research manifested an exploration of contemporary notions of poetic imagination in poetry and literature and provided insights into the current nature of this concept. The account of the existence of other modes of imagination apart from poetic imagination and discussing the level and amount of creativity, imaginativeness and poeticality of these modes create an opportunity to explain the manifestations of creative imagination in the contemporary poetry and literature.

There is a tremendous emphasis on image in contemporary poetry, literature and art in particular and humanities and arts in general, which manifests a change in the treatments that the concept of imagination has received compared with the past. This reflects that the notion of poetic imagination in contemporary poetry and literature carry a different sense of (creative) imagination. The research identifies that imagination in contemporary poetry and literature moves more towards *imaging* rather than *poetic imagination*. In other words, imagination shows greater affinity to imaging in contemporary poetry and literature.

The effect of a good poem, Coleridge says, is to make us see life anew, to remove “the film of familiarity” which sets at length on all our thoughts and perceptions. An imaginative poem is characterized by its “awakening the mind’s attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us” (1817). The naïve belief that writing re-produces reality rather than re-figuring and re-imagining it through forms of images, signs and emblems, leaves contemporary poetry and literature to show an absence of wildness, transformation and surprise. Imagination in poetry remains as important as it ever was, although now it is extended from the faculty by which we engage the world to the faculty by which we take our stand on why that engagement might matter. We must acknowledge that our age has produced competent poems with different sense of imagination, but largely moving away from poetic imagination.

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Arezou Zalipour has a Ph.D. in Literary Studies from the National University of Malaysia. For her PhD thesis, she developed an approach for the study of poetic/creative imagination (will be forthcoming as a book). Later, she developed an interest in Diaspora Studies within the broad category of Asian diaspora in the West. Currently, she is based in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato, undertaking a research project on Asian diaspora in New Zealand film and literature with a focus on representation, reception and the elements of cultural production. Meanwhile, her fascination with the concept of imagination/image has led her to investigate the notion of diasporic and aesthetic imagination in literary and media texts.
