

## Imagery in the Novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* by Mohammed Hanif

Muhammad Hafiez Hatta<sup>1</sup>, Sufi Ikrima Sa'adah<sup>2</sup>,  
UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya<sup>1,2</sup>  
wizteria27@gmail.com

### Abstract:

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the various forms of imagery, and their corresponding meanings within the novel *The Case of Exploding Mangoes* by Muhammad Hanif. Perrine's framework serves as the foundation for this research. Additionally, the study employs the New Criticism theory, as imagery is considered an intrinsic element of literary analysis. The research methodology employs a qualitative descriptive approach for data collection, focusing on the narrative text of the last chapter of the novel to fulfill the study's objectives. The results of the findings and discussion reveal that visual imagery becoming the majority used in the last chapter of the novel and gustatory imagery becoming the least amount of used. From the in-depth analysis of these images, seems like the author's primary intention is to engage visual senses which can enhance reader comprehension by creating a vivid, immersive, and clear portrayal experience throughout the story. This study illustrates how imagery influences readers' perceptions and raises the level of engagement with the story's narrative. Future research may examine more closely how various types of imagery interact with other literary devices in the novel or compare Hanif's use of imagery to other contemporary works to get a deeper understanding of the significance of imagery in modern literature.

**Keywords:** Imagery; Intrinsic Element; Literary Analysis; Novel

### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melakukan analisis komprehensif terhadap berbagai bentuk pencitraan dan makna yang terkait dalam novel *Kasus Mangga Meledak* karya Muhammad Hanif. Kerangka kerja Perrine menjadi landasan penelitian ini. Selain itu, penelitian ini menggunakan teori Kritik Baru, karena pencitraan dianggap sebagai elemen intrinsik analisis sastra. Metodologi penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif untuk pengumpulan data, dengan fokus pada teks naratif bab terakhir novel untuk memenuhi tujuan penelitian. Hasil temuan dan pembahasan mengungkapkan tujuh jenis imaji dengan imaji visual menjadi yang paling banyak digunakan pada bab terakhir novel dan imaji pengecap menjadi yang paling sedikit digunakan. Dari analisis mendalam terhadap gambar-gambar tersebut, sepertinya tujuan utama penulis adalah untuk melibatkan indra visual yang dapat meningkatkan pemahaman pembaca dengan menciptakan pengalaman penggambaran yang hidup, imersif, dan jelas di sepanjang cerita. Studi ini mengilustrasikan bagaimana pencitraan memengaruhi persepsi pembaca dan meningkatkan tingkat keterlibatan dengan narasi cerita. Penelitian selanjutnya mungkin mengkaji lebih dekat bagaimana berbagai jenis imaji berinteraksi dengan perangkat sastra lain dalam novel atau membandingkan penggunaan imaji oleh Hanif dengan karya-karya kontemporer lainnya untuk

mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang pentingnya imaji dalam sastra modern.

**Kata kunci:** Imaji; Elemen Intrinsik; Analisis Sastra; Novel

## INTRODUCTION

Every novel must have intrinsic and extrinsic elements because both of these elements are important for developing the literature in terms of the structural and the real purpose of strengthening the literary works. "Both extrinsic and intrinsic elements are essential in the creation of literature, as they influence the structural development and ideas behind literary works" Furada, (2023). From both elements, this study focuses on the novel's intrinsic elements. One of intrinsic elements in a novel is called imagery.

Imagery is the process of literary works to show an image with a mental description so the reader can imagine the context in the novel created by the author of the novel with the reader's mind. A study conducted by Deguzman, (2021) "Imagery is a literary device used in poetry, novels, and other writing that uses vivid description that appeals to a readers' senses to create an image or idea in their head." Imagery is one of the important aspects that are included in a novel because the novel doesn't provide a real image for the reader to see, furthermore most of the authors use authentic style in terms of showing imagery in the novel to give information about what happens in the novel. According to Perrine's theory in Johnson & R.Arp, (2017), there are 7 types of imagery based on the five senses. Visual imagery portrays the image of sight, organic imagery shows the image of feelings, auditory imagery portrays the image of sound, kinesthetic imagery shows the image of motion, tactile imagery portrays the image of touch, olfactory imagery shows the image of smell and gustatory imagery shows the image of taste. Every specific imagery can give the reader experience to feel more about the novel rather than just to know the context of the novel.

Imagery contains in every literary work, one example of the literary work is the from Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* this novel tells a story based on a real-life event in Pakistan in 1988 when there was an event of tragedy that involves a controversial plane crash that killed the president of Pakistan at that time. This novel is one of the famous novels based on an Islamic perspective because the author came from

the Middle East and the settings of the most story take place in Islamic backgrounds. Thus, literary work is the proof that Muslim country has a lot of famous authors that involves in creating literary work, whether it's in the kind of novels, poetry, or drama.

With the richness of famous literary works in the Middle East, the literary work is called Islamic literature. It relates to the religion of Islam because the majority of people who live in the Middle East are Muslim and the culture is also based on Islamic point of view. Damrosch, (2018) argue that "A literary work can reach out far beyond its own time and place, but conversely, it can also provide a privileged mode of access into some of the deepest qualities of its culture of origin." Besides the Islamic perspective, the authors of Muslim English Literature have experience and knowledge about the religion of Islam and Islamic countries. Based on a research by Hassan, (2018) he stated that "As Islamic literature is a combined form of two words; Islam and literature, so the literature that includes the ideology and ethics which Islam wants to establish and spread to the nation is called Islamic literature".

The use of vivid and expressive language by the author to stimulate readers' senses and generate mental images is termed as, imagery in the context of this study. The study of imagery is conducted from the novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, which acts as the main object of the analysis. Literary devices that are thought to be crucial for generating imagery are the figure of speech. Figure of speech contains the elements of similes, metaphors, symbols, and descriptive language. Furthermore, this study aims to investigate the novel's dominant types of imagery and the explanation of each category of imagery that impacts readers in comprehending the finale of the plot in this literary work.

Several researchers have conducted research with similar novel of this research. The first study conducted by Riaz et al., (2023). In this study, the researchers focused on a critical analysis of the novel from an Islamic feminist viewpoint, examining themes of gender, patriarchy, and social transformation, with a specific emphasis on the female characters and the wider Islamic cultural context.

Another study that conducted the same study was from Mengal & Khanda, (2023). For this study, the researchers adopt a historicist viewpoint, examining the novel's setting in light of the particular period in history it represents. It analyzes the text in light of its

historical setting, emphasizing how characters and events correspond with authentic historical events.

For the next study is from Arafat et al., (2019). This study explains the novel's postcolonial elements and the effects of Pakistan's colonial history and totalitarian rulers. This study evidently investigates problems related to governance, control, and power, highlighting the political background to the work of literature.

After mentioning several previous studies, the researcher's objective for this part is to mention and explain the research gap in this study. The researcher has found that this study can be seen as different from another previous study in several aspects. Muhammad Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* its examined from postcolonial, historical, and feminist perspectives in the previous several studies. But none of them seem to be concentrating on the imagery aspect, which is an essential literary device utilized by Hanif to point out themes, provide the narrative depth, and influence the experiences of the characters. Previous studies have addressed the novel's themes as well as its cultural and historical context, however, the several previous study that mentioned by this researcher of this study did not investigate to determine the understanding of imagery from the figure of speech elements such as metaphors, symbolism, and visual descriptions contribute to the storytelling or highlights important themes like political satire, corruption, or military influence.

By this research gap, the researcher found the highest potential research gap to fill by examining the dominant category of imagery used in the literary work and the breakdown of all kinds of imagery used to assist readers in comprehending the literary work's plot's ending. This aspect of the research gap is able to assist the researcher in reaching the goal of this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### New Criticism Theory

A literary theory called "New Criticism" first appeared in the United States in the early to mid-20th century. Instead of taking into account outside factors such the author's biography, the historical setting, or the response of the audience, it establishes an emphasis on close reading and analysis of the text itself. A literary work should be evaluated for its inherent features, according to New Critics, who concentrate on

components like form, structure, imagery, symbolism, and language. This technique provides an assumption that interpretation is created by the way these components interact within the text, enabling a more dispassionate examination of the literature. One of the central ideas of New Criticism is the unity of form and content. From the perspective of New Critics, a literary work's form and content are inextricably connected. "The text's overall impact and meaning are influenced by its style, imagery, and structure." Brooks (1947). The concepts of paradox and ambiguity are also crucial. The complexity of language and meaning is considered important in New Criticism. "A text's ambiguities and paradoxes are viewed as crucial to its richness, encouraging more in-depth investigation and interpretation." Empson (1949). Lastly, the application of symbolism and imagery is vital. Since imagery deepens a work's emotional and thematic resonance, it is an essential component of New Criticism. The role that imagery plays in the text's overall meaning and aesthetic appeal is analyzed by critics.

Through the use of New Criticism in assessing Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, readers may investigate the text closely and concentrate on how Hanif uses imagery to strengthen the story and communicate difficult themes about identity, corruption, and power.

### **Imagery**

The brilliantly crafted combination of satire and political commentary found in Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* achieved through a variety of visual elements. In this literature review, we apply Laurence Perrine's theory of imagery which breaks down imagery into visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, kinesthetic, and organic types to analyze how Hanif uses these elements to strengthen character development, advance the plot, and communicate complex themes.

### **Visual imagery**

Visual imagery is portrayal of an mental image that created inside of the mind. A study conducted by Alam, Iskandar, & Abdullah (2023) they stated that "Visual imagery is something that relates to the visual imagination...". Visual imagery provided imagination image to help the reader to gain understanding of the plot in a novel. This kind of imagery easily help the reader to add more additional information that given from the plot of the story. But, visual imagery can't define as creating an imagination

perception, even though visual imagery help the reader to understand deeper context. “Visual perception tottaly different with the ways of visual imagery, because in order to visually a perception requires the realistic thing, while visual imagery not a neccesity” Zain (2009). The concept of visual imagery recuire a strong reading comprehension to fulfil a clear mental picture of a story in a novel.

### ***Auditory imagery***

A study from Hubbard, (2013) implies that “Important knowledge about auditory stimuli is captured by auditory imagery, which enables people to represent that information in a way that seems to replicate components of the auditory experience.” Auditory imagery is crucial for producing the atmosphere as well as developing suspense. Furthermore, dialogue plays a key role in evoking auditory imagery that highlights character tensions and dynamics. Auditory imagery also adding to the setting's realism of a story in any literary works.

### ***Gustatory imagery***

“The sensation of "smelling with the mind's nose" or "tasting with the mind's tongue" is generated by gustatory behavior” Bensafi, Tillmann, Poncelet, Przybylski, & Rouby, (2014). Gustatory imagery, while less frequent than visual and auditory, adds depth to the characters' experiences and cultural identity. This imagery enriches the narrative by connecting characters to their heritage and personal histories, offering readers insight into their emotional landscapes.

### ***Olfactory imagery***

Olfactory imagery enhances the sensory experience of the novel by invoking specific scents that trigger memories and emotions. Smells are one example that specialized the olfactory imagery to enhanced a vivid atmosphere. These olfactory details not only ground the reader in the setting but also reflect the characters' internal states. “Olfactory imagery can influence how odor is perceived and can be formed and processed in the central nervous system in ways that are similar to that of sensory processing that takes place in response to real stimulation” Meng-Hsien, Cross, & Childers, (2014).

### ***Tactile imagery***

Tactile imagery is employed to convey physical sensations and emotional states, allowing readers to feel the characters' experiences more intimately. “When describing

something, tactile imagery illustrates elements which can be accessible by touch or felt” Bouchrika, (2024). This type of imagery enhances the emotional depth of the narrative, making the characters' struggles and vulnerabilities more relatable to the reader. Additionally, tactile imagery is used to illustrate the physical environment and its impact on the characters.

### ***Kinesthetic imagery***

Kinesthetic imagery portrays motion and action, highlighting the characters' experiences on a physical level. “The ability to mentally picture how the body feels when it moves is defined to be kinesthetic imagery” Dun & Burton, (2005). Furthermore, the characters' emotional states are emphasized through the use of kinesthetic imagery. The reader's involvement with the characters' psychological experiences is strengthened by this vivid imagery, which also improves the pacing of the story

### ***Organic imagery***

Organic imagery centers around inner feelings and emotions, revealing details about the characters' mental conditions. From a research conducted by Rahayu & Widyastuti, (2015) the researchers explain that “A visual representation that corresponds to an internal feeling, sensation, or experience is known as organic imagery.” The characteristic of organic imagery can be seen from the writing style that contains internal feeling like a happiness, joy, sadness, and any other kinds of feelings. Based in a research from Sastrawan, Jayantini, & Juniarta, (2023) they implies “ This type of imagery is represented by internal sensations or feelings, such as happiness, sadness, hunger, thirst, fatigue, or nausea”.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Descriptive qualitative method is the research approach used in this study. Regarding to the findings, the related method used in this descriptive qualitative study is suitable for conducting the research. Leavy, (2017) study that “To record how things are experienced concerning the phenomenon they are studying, researchers may use related interview techniques or meticulous observation.” Furthermore, by approaching this study with descriptive qualitative is the correct method to work this research. The source

data for this research is taken from the last chapter of Mohammed Hanif's novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* entitled "THIRTY-SEVEN"

The quality and richness of imagery in the novel stand as the dependent actual data, subject to careful analysis and interpretation. The actual data encompass the type of imagery employed (visual, organic, auditory, olfactory, kinesthetic, tactile, and gustatory) the dominance of its usage, and the contextual and thematic relevance within the narrative based on the concept from Perrine's theory in Johnson & R.Arp, (2017). The conceptual framework draws from the New Criticism theory emphasizing the active engagement of readers in interpreting imagery subjectively without analyzing the author's background, only focusing on the novel's intrinsic element to understand how imagery contributes to coherence and meaning.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Imagery in the selected text is an important mechanism that assists in the description of scenarios and invokes strong sensory responses among the readers. The use of visual, organic, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory imagery by the author, each serving in a different way to develop the overall atmosphere and the nature of the characters.

Beginning with the view, the author commonly provides long descriptions with the purpose of drawing a profound picture in the reader's mind. An example is the phrase "a waiter in a white turban offering us iced Coca-Cola in plastic glasses," which provides a detailed illustration of the attire worn by the waiter and the serving experience, whereby the reader can evoke an image representing the setting with ease. Likewise, when "Warrant Officer Fayyaz's bald head emerges from behind the stack of wooden crates," the officer's baldness, along with the presence of the "wooden crates," provides necessary information about both character and setting that allows the reader to create a clear mental image of the scene. The elaborately worded messages "stencilled in blue ink" on the crates adds an extra dimension to this visual emphasis, wherein the blue ink is used to further make sense of the crates to the reader. While the "bold letters" painted on the crates trigger the imagination by suggesting their size and texture. In the visual imagery, there are also more specific details like the "plastic belt" used to hold the crates to the floor of the plane. The use of material of the belt helps the reader to perceive the texture

of the belt, hence adding to the dimensions of the visual image. Similarly, the vivacious description of a "scornful look" along with Major Kiyani "slumped in his chair with his eyes closed" allows the viewers to imagine not only the facial expression but also the body posture of the characters, therefore giving a sharp mental image of their actions. Further, the description of General Zia's corporeality is completed when he "puts an arm around his waist and lowers his voice to a whisper," which drives home stance and behavior through sensual description. The same idea is furthered later in General Akhtar, whose "face buried in his hands" along with the description of "the fluffy white carpet" again press both texture and color to better emphasize dimensionality in the scene.

Another major component in the text involves the use of organic imagery along with internal sensations and emotional states, for example, "the President is not feeling too well" during the non-availability of air conditioning carries an impression of bodily distress without spelling it out explicitly. Again, "grinding pain in his abdomen" brings out a candid view of the immediate bodily state of General Zia and shared realism of his body ache. There are also emotional and existential crises, for instance, when General Zia is thinking, "How will history remember me?" This question, stirred by the obsession about leaving a legacy, is a direct echo of the inner psychological conflict of the protagonist. The sentence "he knows that the only person he can rely on is Arnold Raphel" wraps feelings of dependence and affective attachment, while hinging on naturalistic images to illustrate reliance and trust. In addition, the phrase "loses his cool" aptly catches the brief instance of frustration from Arnold Raphel and invites readers into active participation in cognitive and emotional states.

The auditory imagery enhances the visual and organic elements by appealing to the reader's auditory perception. In the line, "Enjoy your VVIP flight," the loudness and inflection come out clear, thereby allowing the reader to locate the fervor of the situation. Similarly, when General Zia makes his voice "a complaining voice" or modulates it "a whisper" accordingly, this also makes the reader much aware of the shifts in their emotional feelings. Moreover, the "pleading voice" that he uses for his speech concerning his legacy with Arnold Raphel hugely conveys urgency and despair, therefore making his statements more emotionally deep. The sound of "Carmelite orphans' hymns still echoing in his mind" evokes a memory that continues to linger, thus intensifying the emotional atmosphere of the passage.

The story is also not devoid of kinesthetic images, that is, those related to the sense of movement. For example, the phrase "poking Obaid in his ribs with my elbow" distinctly outlines the body movement of the narrator. On the other hand, the verbs "glancing" and "nudging" further detail shades of bodily movement, thereby allowing the reader to imagine the attendant physical gesture. Force involved in an action is described when the protagonist "shakes the belt hard," shows the use of the body. Furthermore, "walking up to Pak One" and "waving his peaked cap" stress energetic movement that effectively increases the sense of the body. Even the most minor gestures, like "tipping the peaked cap" or "glancing impatiently," are shown through kinesthetic imagery, which allows the reader to visualize these subtle yet telling actions. The characters' actions fill them with life, and the audience can almost see the vigor of that scene when it is said, "General Zia is still standing on his feet with one arm around General Akhtar's waist."

About the olfactory imagery, the author uses scent with the purpose of developing atmosphere and completely involving the reader in the story. For example, a description such as "the floor smells of lemony disinfectants" gives an instantaneous sensory detail that develops the setting and allows the reader to visualize how the sterile and spotless surroundings are. This is contrasted with the "overpowering smell of mangoes" that saturates the cabin and, as mentioned, grows so strong that it is able to "cause nausea." The jarring contrast between pleasant and overpowering aromas makes for a more striking sensory effect, drawing the readers into the setting more actively through scent.

Lastly, sensory imagery related to touch is best described as tactile. The act of the "General Zia clasping Arnold Raphael's hand in both his hands" reflects a physical bonding that speaks volumes about the closeness and coming together of the two minds. Moreover, the phrase "soaked in cold sweat" is a very real sensory sensation; that underlines apprehension and dread with skin dripping with cold sweat. It is tactile, because this description invokes in one's mind the physical strain General Akhtar had to bear. This makes the scene all the more poignant.

From the results of the analysis that has been done, the author effectively uses several types of imagery which is, visual, organic, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, and tactile to create a multisensory effect for the audience. Such sensory descriptions help the characters come alive, and an emotional and psychological bond can be created between the audience and

the characters. It is through chosen imagery that a story becomes not a mere heap of events but a multi-sensory experience, which manages to leave an indelible mark upon the mind of the reader. This novel has the richness of visual imagery in the last chapter of the novel, meanwhile gustatory negatively contrast with the visual imagery and other imageries. This could indicates that the author of this novel prefers the use of visual image to portrays the narration of the last chapter in this novel, which can engage the visual senses of the reader throughout the last chapter of this novel. Also from the least amount of gustatory imagery for the last chapter could indicate that the author is not able to portray the sense of taste throughout the last chapter plot of this novel.

## CONCLUSION

The investigation of Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* imagery concludes by highlighting the novel's essential features via the prism of New Criticism. By using New Criticism, one can closely examine the text and see how, without taking into account outside influences, imagery adds to the overall meaning and aesthetic appeal of the work. Based on Perrine's theory, the study breaks down seven types of imagery: gustatory, olfactory, tactile, kinesthetic, visual, organic, and auditory. The majority category is visual imagery, primarily in the novel's final chapter. Reader's ability to visualize characters, places, and events is significantly enhanced by the focus on visual imagery, which additionally boosts the reading experience overall. Hanif's intention to describe strong mental images that captivate readers while stimulating a deeper understanding of the story explains why visual imagery is most prevalent. Clear visual imageries like "iced Coca-Cola in plastic glasses" and "Warrant Officer Fayyaz's bald head" help readers visualize the scene and add depth to the description. In addition to creating an obvious picture, the use of specific colors and details generates sensations that are compatible with the themes that the narrative assesses.

By emphasizing the use of imagery as a crucial literary device in the final chapter of Muhammad Hanif's work, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* this study closes a large gap in the study of literature. This study indicates how readers' perceptions are shaped by imagery, which also increases their level of engagement with the story. To gain a deeper understanding of the significance of imagery in modern literature, future studies could examine more closely how various forms of imagery interact with other literary devices

within the novel or analyze how Hanif uses imagery in comparison to other contemporary works.

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