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Term Paper  
Urban Imagery in Poems About New York

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## INTRODUCTION

Imagery is the instrumental component of any literary piece, playing an especially prominent role in poetry. This powerful tool is known to enhance the written works, transforming simple descriptions into vivid sensory experiences. In the realm of poetry, imagery is employed to add depth, complexity and vibrance to the poems via appealing to human senses. Urban imagery, among many other types, is an intricate subject-matter to explore owing to the simple fact that in the city one may encounter a lot of opportunities which account for contrasting experiences its residents and visitors have, leading to numerous variants for its portrayal in literature.

**The object** of the study is imagery of New York City. **The subject-matter** of the study is the stylistic means of urban imagery representation, their purpose and connotation in the poems about New York.

The study **aims to** provide an in-depth examination of contrasting New York's portrayals in poetry, to present an investigation of the expressive means utilized to craft the urban imagery and to produce the accurate interpretation of the images.

To achieve this, aim the following **objectives** are set:

- To define imagery and the different types of images;
- To examine the contribution of imagery to the poem's atmosphere and theme;
- To find out the prevalent type of images used in urban poems;
- To figure out the dominant representation of New York City in poetry;
- To identify patterns, motifs, and symbolic elements recurrent in the depiction of urban life in the poems;

**The theoretical significance** of the research is that it contributes to the broader field of literary studies by examining the relationship between poetry and imagery. The analysis of language means used to convey urban imagery done in this study can be insightful for scholars as well as common readers, who are interested

in the intersection of literature and urban experience. Moreover, this research may serve as the foundation for further investigation of the portrayal of urban environments in poetry.

**The practical significance** of this term paper is that this research can provide valuable insights into how poets perceive and depict the urban landscape of New York City. The analysis of works of different poets sheds the light on the common themes, as well as helps to uncover the nuances of urban life, explore the city's identity, and gain insights into the experiences of its inhabitants. The study's findings can be utilized by scholars and writers to gain deeper understanding of imagery contribution to creating engaging and vivid literary work.

**The scientific novelty** of the research is that it offers a comprehensive analysis of urban imagery in specific poems about New York which share some common themes but have not been a subject to such investigation before. The novelty of the term paper is achieved by implementation of unique approaches and transmission of fresh insights.

**The research methods** employed for the research are literary analysis and analysis of scientific literature of foreign scientists.

## **CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF IMAGERY IN LITERATURE**

### **1.1. The notion of imagery. Types of images.**

Imagery, a crucial element of poetry, serves as a foundation for poetic composition. Through the usage of expressive language, poets paint vivid mental pictures that appeal to human senses and draw readers into their worlds carved by imagination. The term “imagery” is one of the most widely used in poetic theory, occurring in a variety of different contexts. Nonetheless, it is very vague and poorly understood notion in literary criticism, thus a unanimous definition of imagery as such is absent.

Thoughts differ when it comes to outlining this concept, since it is often treated as an umbrella term, which encompasses a variety of meanings, including repeated motifs, symbols, scenes and objects, mental pictures, figures of speech etc. For instance, British poet C. Day Lewis propounded a definition of the imagery which stated that it is “a picture made out of words”, and that poem itself, in fact, may be an image made up of collection of images (Lewis, p. 18). Irish writer S.J. Brown had a view of this notion which zeroed in on its representative aspect, defining it as “words or phrases denoting a sense-perceptible object used to designate not that object, but some other object of thought belonging to a different order or category of being” (Brown, p.1). He believed that imagery was a way of depicting spiritual concepts through material objects, based on the analogies and resemblance of physical items and abstract ideas. Canadian professor Laurence Perrine in his work “Sound and sense: An Introduction to Poetry” presented a similar view on the matter, defining imagery as “a representation through language of sense experience” (Perrine, p. 45). The imagery was considered to be a picture created within mind, an efficient method of evoking vivid experiences that engages stimulation of human senses. Highly informative definition was given in The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, which stated the following: “Imagery includes images produced

in the mind by language, whose words may refer either to experiences which could produce physical perceptions, were the reader actually to have those experiences or to the sense impressions themselves” (The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics).

Despite a myriad of imagery descriptions, three most common uses of this term were recognised according to M. Abrams. The first one centres around imagery being all of the objects and qualities that appear in the poem and can be perceived through human senses. This includes both literal descriptions and indirect references using similes, metaphors or allusions. Another definition narrows down this notion to only specific, detailed and vivid descriptions of visible objects and scenes within a poem. Last usage explores imagery as a figurative language, specifically the vehicle component of metaphor and simile, that not only sets the tone and atmosphere for the literary work, but also reveals hints on personal experiences of the author (Abrams, p. 150-152).

Discussing this matter, it is crucial to emphasise that imagery is not solely a visual concept. Despite existence of various classifications of images, in this work we will utilize the following categorization of images: visual, auditory, gustatory, kinaesthetic, tactile, organic, and olfactory. Visual images, the most prevalent kind, refer to objects and qualities described in poem that can be perceived by human eye, including colour, shape, size, etc. Apart from the images that appeal to the sight, there are also auditory images, which represent the sounds that the readers may imagine hearing while reading the poem. Such images frequently involve usage of onomatopoeia – imitation of sounds made by animals and nature. Verbal description of the taste of particular item generates a gustatory image in human mind, it pertains to human sense of taste and evokes mental portrayal of flavours. Some images in poetry employ descriptions which evoke sensory response, making readers experience the perceptions of softness or coldness to the touch, these clusters bear the name of tactile images. With regard to olfactory imagery, it should be mentioned

that it incorporates words and phrases which transmit the scent and aroma, thus, appealing to the sense of smell. More complicated to comprehend are kinaesthetic images, which appeal to human sense of motion, providing the readers with the feeling of the movement, sensation or vibration. Last but not least imagery in the realm of poetry – organic, which articulates emotional states of the character like fear, despair or love, and physical experiences such as hunger, thirst and fatigue (Sharma Paudyal, p. 118-121). Undeniably, this list is not exhaustive, owing to the fact that imagery is a broad and versatile notion, possible to be classified into even further categories.

## **1.2. The concept of urban imagery**

The second half of the previous century, characterized by a rapid spike of urbanization, brought more attention to the issue of significance of space in literature. Increased interest in living in a city, as well as growing disparity between the urban and rural landscape, have prompted the advent of such term as spatial turn in literature, i.e. acknowledgment of crucial role of spatial elements in literary works (Şen, p. 475). Consequently, the dynamics between the characters and their surroundings converted into a prominent subject matter of the story, exploring the impact living space may have on humans and their perception. That is how a sub-genre named city poetry has emerged, which not only portrays the city in its content part, but also may imitate the city and its ambience in the poem's structure. These works serve as a great example of urban imagery implementation, that is the usage of descriptive language to conjure up city's sights, sounds and atmosphere, by portraying bustling streets, skyscrapers, neighbourhoods, urban residents, etc (Şen, p. 479).

Undoubtedly, a city has been a key element in literature for centuries, going from being considered merely a setting, a physical background, to being viewed as a character, a symbol, a metaphor, and even a text which tells some story, spanning multilayered subjective narratives, that depend on individual perspectives and



experiences. The city image in poetry, typically, is the assembly of the actual city as it is, its depiction in previous literary works and the author's unique perception of it (Şen, p. 477). Accordingly, urban imagery in poems provides the readers with insights about the complex relationship between the poet and the city. Depending on the communicative aim, poet's perspective, the city becomes dynamic and evolving entity that may take on different shades of meaning and as the subject of poetry.

Thus, a poem becomes a medium of correlation between the author's personal experience and perception of the city and its portrayal in literature. This process presupposes the juxtaposition of author's impressions of the city against established literary depictions, using a character in the story as a vehicle for this interaction. Such image construction helps not only explore the city, but also express poet's feelings and convey their perspective.

### **1.3. The functions of imagery in literature**

Imagery performs multitudinous functions in the poetic realm, serving as the powerful tool of engaging the audience into the story. As an inseparable constituent of poetry, imagery shapes the poem, designates its meaning and brings life into the piece of art. Such image clusters are always meaningful and have a definite purpose, as they transmit various messages and make a dominant impression on the readers. Hence, authors thoroughly construct the image pattern, carefully selecting the imagery representations and their arrangement.

The primary reason for imagery employment in literature has to be its capability of ensuring efficient transmission of author's thoughts, opinions, emotions. The principal function of imagery is to produce faithful and accurate images and evoke sensory experiences, thus, enabling the readers to see, listen, taste, smell things with the help of their imagination. Imagery may appeal directly or indirectly to human senses, assisting in generating clear mental pictures in the mind, visualizing the scenes with greater depth and richness.

Regarding the experiences that the imagery may immerse people into, two alternative variants exist. Firstly, literary images may help people relive an experience that they already had undergone. Thus, imagery based on this familiarity is significantly easier for people to grasp and visualize as well as to establish their own associations. For instance, being under the dazzling sun, feeling the gentle breeze, burning our fingers, etc. Moreover, imagery can introduce the readers to completely new and unfamiliar sense experience. Hence, imagery allows people to see, hear and feel things they seemingly have never experienced before. It is achievable via existing sense memories that are recalled in the mind in a totally different way (Delaney, p. 8). Besides evoking emotional response in readers, imagery may as well reveal the author's attitude towards, or opinion of the subject matter described.

Additionally, focal point of imagery revolves around its ability to make the abstract concepts in poetry concrete and sensory, thus, facilitating communication of ideas and their comprehension by readers. In this way the image structure resembles that one of metaphor or simile, accordingly, the image is comprised of three elements: tenor, representing specific object under discussion, vehicle, denoting an abstract notion with which the comparison is made, and ground, which is the feature that both of them share. Hence, imagery acts as a bridge between the vague concepts and tangible experiences, allowing the readers to connect more deeply with the emotions and ideas expressed. For instance, the image of a lonely pine tree in a broad-leaf forest may go well beyond its literal meaning, and address the broader issue of loneliness, feeling misunderstood by others and even racism.

Aside from everything mentioned, imagery certainly contributes to establishment of author's unique artistic style, via appearance of innovational figures, symbols, representations in the literary work. In this matter there exist unique images created with the imagination of the author and regarded as original in poetry. Eventually, it is quite possible for this characteristic imagery to acquire

universal significance and convert into archetypal symbols, considered to be everlasting (Hui, p.108).

Last but not least, images also serve the function of embellishing the story and giving aesthetic pleasure to the audience. Undoubtedly, the wordsmiths can convey the same ideas using common vocabulary, yet it would be less appealing and rather monotonous piece of literature, tedious to read. Furthermore, imagery as a decorative factor provides the sudden change of the established pattern, which activates the audience's attention and makes the work interesting and engaging (Sharma Paudyal, p.122)

#### **1.4. Language as a means of image construction**

The key component of imagery creation is language, with the help of which people can describe and process this world, thus, it acts as the bridge connecting the external world, experienced by individuals through their senses, and human mind, comprehending the acquired data and generating mental images. To craft the images in poetry authors generally utilize both literal and metaphorical language, however, the preference is given to the latter. Irrefutably, it is possible to construct an image using stylistically neutral words, yet implementing figurative language in image building will make the work more memorable and impactful.

Thus, literal language allows for clear description and expression of ideas, defined by absence of implicitness and usage of straightforward dictionary meaning with direct reference to the object or concept. Such lexicon typically doesn't require delving too deep in the analysis of its hidden meaning, unlike figurative language, which is far more complex. An accurate statement on this matter was uttered by a poet Robert Frost "Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another" (Fahas, p.1), which totally illustrates the essence of imagery and figurative language usage.

As previously mentioned, imagery is often identified with the term figure of speech, especially, with metaphor or simile, mainly because such figurative language conjures up comparison built on resemblance or contrast, which then evokes sensory impression, leading to creation of an image in mind. In contrast to literal usage, literary language is known to be indirect and metaphorical, with multiple underlying layers of meaning, which are not registered in the dictionaries and their interpretation may depend on the context, author's perspective and reader's imagination. Thus, such descriptive language presupposes that the words spoken do not reflect their actual meaning, but rather convey something else, relying on the connotative meaning of words, assigned by author and readers based on their associations and experiences.

Literary language implies usage of a myriad of stylistic devices, figures of speech and expressive means, as a way of adding depth to the work. Consequently, two of the most favoured language means in the imagery construction are metaphor and simile. Metaphor is a fundamental figure of speech, which involves total identification between things compared, until the extent where they could be interchanged. Unlike metaphor, simile requires utilizing such words as "like" and "as" to draw comparison between vastly different things (Abdulayev, p. 158-159). Others commonly used stylistic devices include personification and onomatopoeia.

Furthermore, writers employ some special literary techniques to express their unique artistic vision and make the text engaging, including foregrounding and defamiliarization, which allow to highlight particular concepts and present the familiar things in a completely different unusual light respectively. Additionally, authors may also resort to poetic license, meaning they can violate the established rules of grammar and invent nonsense words to create a desired effect (Sharma Paudyal, p.116)

## **CONCLUSIONS TO CHAPTER 1**

Imagery is the fundamental literary term which refers to a set of mental pictures

created by the author via employment of figurative language to make his work memorable, evoke certain emotions, convey the tone of the literary piece etc. The common classification of images categorizes them into visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, organic and kinaesthetic.

Urban imagery is a distinctive kind of imagery which features portrayal of urban landscapes, their unique atmosphere and diverse perceptions of the cities. The imagery in poems is utilized to articulate feelings and thoughts, to embellish the story, to engross the readers into the narrative, to present abstract concepts via tangible things and to design unique artistic style of the author, among many others.

To craft the mental images mainly the figurative language encompassing metaphor, simile, personification is prioritized. Metaphor is a figure of speech which directly likens two unrelated things, simile compares two objects via using the words 'like' and 'as', and personification grants human qualities and abilities to non-humans.

## **CHAPTER TWO. THE PORTRAYAL OF NEW YORK CITY IN POEMS**

### **2.1. The symbol of New York in world's culture**

The 20th century notable for the processes of modernization and urbanization being under way hadn't made the writers lose inspiration and go extinct, yet it significantly altered the form, size and subject matter of literary works. Thus, this era prompted many authors to opt for short literary pieces, due to lack of time caused by a rapidly progressing world, tumultuous period of wars and possibility for writers to earn more by producing many short works rather than few but extensive. Therefore, poetry was thriving as a brief but precise form of thoughts expression, frequently depicting the ugliness of automatization, lifelessness of urban spaces, disillusionment with the society and the world in general. Hence, one of the most common themes underlying such works was urbanization and the city itself.

Needless to say, what other city could have been more suitable for the role of prototypical urban space than the most populated city in, arguably, the most powerful and well-known country in the world – the United States. With that being said, it is only natural that New York has been a backdrop for many works of art ranging from poetry and prose to paintings, movies, songs, etc. Yet almost in every instance this city is shown in a different light, owing to a myriad of diverse experiences people had with it. For instance, New York was the setting for such famous literature bestsellers as *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Catcher in the Rye* and others. Notably, in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* the city is portrayed through a rather glamorous and glorified lens with its affluence and a variety of opportunities for better life. On the flip side, New York in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Catcher in the Rye* is depicted as a rather pessimistic, immoral and depressing city, although the luxurious lifestyle is covered as well.

More recent example of New York's representation can be found in series of fantasy novels by American writer Rick Riordan about a demigod Percy Jackson.

According to the plot, the Mount Olympus and Greek gods always shift to the current centre of the Western civilization, aka the place with the most power and influence. As it was stated in the book, the Mount Olympus was currently located in the USA, in particular in the Empire State Building, which is in New York City, once again promoting the idea of the immense power this city harbours.

Furthermore, New York acted as a background for a multitude of films and TV series, which portrayed the city either as sophisticated or chaotic and criminal. Consequently, the Central Park located in Manhattan (New York) is said to be the most filmed location of all time, appearing in approximately 500 movies and television series.

Being the cultural and media capital of the world and hosting some of the world's most prolific companies of book, newspaper, music, television industries, New York City has acquired a ton of nicknames which reflect its essence. It has been called "the city that never sleeps" due to its incessant hustle and bustle and fast-paced lifestyle, "the Five Boroughs" referring to the five districts of the city, "the Melting Pot" owing to its ethnic diversity with more than 800 languages being spoken there. Other well-known labels include "The Big Apple" alluding to the countless opportunities this city provides, "The Gotham City" and, lastly, "New Amsterdam" hinting at the Dutch origin of the settlement that served as the basis for New York (Pattiz).

Overall, New York City was and still is a beacon for writers, artists and other people, serving as the backdrop for many works of art. The fame and relevance of New York as well as contradictory outlooks on the city life may be exemplified via an extremely popular song by Jay-Z and Alicia Keys "Empire State of Mind". The lyrics of the song romanticize the city and the hardships it provides, calling it "concrete jungle where dreams are made of" (Jay-Z & Alicia Keys), this line simultaneously points out it being the land of countless possibilities to make your dreams come true and a place of survival among stone-cold power-obsessed

individuals. It is a rap song, rap standing for rhythm and poetry, thus, it's possible to consider it the representation of urban imagery in poetry as well.

## **2.2. New York as the city of dreams and beauty**

New York is seen by the majority of people as a large megalopolis of wealth and affluence with countless number of concrete skyscrapers and success opportunities, a place where anyone despite their race and social status can achieve their goals, the manifestation of American dream. Nevertheless, people, often blinded by the bright glow of city lights and deafened by the incessant hustle and bustle, fail to notice its peaceful and relaxing side, connection with the nature. For this reason, we selected several poems which include this particular outlook on this city to scrutinize the peculiarities of their urban imagery implementation.

The first poem under analysis is “New York at Sunrise” by Anna Hempstead Branch which depicts the city during the day's early hours. This literary work employs urban imagery to showcase quite unusual side of New York, portraying it as a serene and alluring city. The main image of the poem is that of dawn awakening the city, and not only bringing light in quite literal way, but figuratively as well, thus, enlightening the author herself, opening her eyes to see New York from a different perspective than ever before.

The poem is full of visual images that help to teleport the readers into this setting, the opening lines offer the first image “*the early dawn illumines our doubtful streets*” (Hempstead Branch), which already paints the picture in the readers' mind of the break of the dawn illuminating every corner of the city. This image also features striking contrast between the light of the dawn and the doubtful streets, which can be interpreted in several ways, either the streets being quite dim with low visibility, which makes a person doubt what they see, or the streets being questionable due to dark and dangerous things which happen there at night. However, the sun brings the light which completely transforms the city, banishing the darkness in all senses. In the following lines a new image is created by means of



simile “*As if a sleeping soul grew happy and smiled, / The whole dark city radiantly blooms*” (Hempstead Branch) where New York City is being compared to a real human being, who while sleeping is smiling because of happiness. Thus, the dawn awakened this sense of joy in the city, the personification used here highlights this change of ambience. Besides, A. Hempstead Branch uses here quite contradictory words such as “dark” and “radiantly” together to create this contrasting landscape and emphasize the significant change that has occurred. The author, also, draws a parallel between the city and the flowers, mentioning that New York, metaphorically, blooms and comes to life, just like flowers blossom under the sunlight.

The next line provides an image built again with the help of personification “*pale spires lift their hands above the glooms*” (Hempstead Branch) which reflects the idea that every little thing is drawn to the sun, trying to reach it and escape from the darkness. In this line inanimate spires that sit on top of buildings are assigned human-like characteristics of having arms and being able to lift them up. Here the imagery of spires reaching upward may symbolize people and their never-ending aspiration and hope, desire to overcome “the glooms” of life and strive for prosperity. Then the author is utilizing yet another simile to portray the dawn “*Like a resurrection, delicately wild*” (Hempstead Branch) which implies the sense of rebirth, renewal and awakening, creating the image of city coming back to life. The term “delicately wild” suggests a paradoxical combination of fragility and untamed energy of the sunrise, which spreads in a rapid unmanaged manner yet possesses such delicate beauty.

The following lines present quite surprising imagery of the Tombs, a notorious jail in New York, “*And flushed with slumber like a little child, / Under a mist, shine forth the innocent Tombs*” (Hempstead Branch) which describe the place as innocent and compare it to a little child, only reinforcing the said concept. Via the usage of the simile here the author manages to identify the Tombs during the early

hours of the day with a sleeping child with flushed cheeks, creating a visual image, which suggests the warmth and pinkish colouring of the dawn that gives a tint to the buildings. It contributes to the creation of tender and serene image, which suggests innocence, vulnerability and tranquillity of New York in the morning. Additionally, there is a mention of the mist, possibly signifying some mystery or when it comes to the jail, felony, uncertainty and isolation. Nonetheless, the shining light manages to reach the place and illuminate it as well, perhaps, indicating that good is always stronger than the evil, or that there is always something to appreciate even in the worst situations.

Ultimately, the final lines of the poem reinforce the imagery of the sunrise in the city, specifying in the line “*As unsubstantial as a dream it grows*” (Hempstead Branch) the fleeting nature of the dawn, drawing parallel with a dream, since both may quickly dissolve and change their demeanour. The employed simile highlights the fact that it’s not easy to catch this colourful sight of the dawn as it rapidly transitions into the day. In the following lines “*Is this Manhattan, virginal and shy, / That in a cloud so rapturously glows? / Ethereal, frail, and like an opening rose*” (Hempstead Branch) the author by means of various adjectives outlines her newly acquired perception of New York as the delicate, divine, pure and innocent city. Here the image of the city glowing despite being surrounded with clouds is repeated, yet again focusing on the fact that regardless of the obstacles, it’s possible to radiate light and positivity, that in spite of the prevailing opinion of New York being grey and dull, the city has a lot more to offer, people just have to notice. Finally, the poetess also has drawn a comparison between the New York City during sunrise and a rose which is opening its bud, with the help of simile “*like an opening rose*”. The common ground between the two being the absolute beauty, burst of colour, ethereal and captivating nature. Moreover, the opening rose also represents the beginning, in this case of the day and even life in the city, as it is slowly awakening and flourishing like a flower.

To conclude, the poem employs a strong visual imagery of the city at dawn, creating a colourful and shining picture of New York, so rarely seen by many. The poetess through such urban imagery puts forward the message that everything we surrounded by is multifaceted, and sometimes it's necessary to stop and observe, noticing the beauty in small details, to look at things from different perspective as it will surely change your perception of the world.

To continue with the analysis, another poem was chosen for this research "The New Colossus" written by Emma Lazarus which focuses not on New York City in its entirety but rather on the notable landmark of the USA – The Statue of Liberty. The poetess, being American herself, transmits her patriotism through the poem and portrays New York City, as well as the country as a whole, as a place of success and opportunities for everyone. Initially, the author juxtaposes the statue of Colossus of Rhodes which stood in the Ancient Greece, the civilization known for its enormous influence and power at the time, with the Statue of Liberty, established in the United States, thus, subtly hinting at the grand impact this country holds. To support this statement, Lazarus named the poem "New Colossus", drawing a parallel between the two statues, and therefore, between two nations, labelling the USA a new dominant state, "ruling empire" of modern times. Moreover, the Statue of Liberty is depicted as being superior, something which could've been understood from the line beginning with "*Not like...*" and a comparison between the statues with apparent bias towards the American colossus. The statue is described as a "*mighty woman*" and "*Mother of Exiles*" (Lazarus) suggesting a few things, firstly, that unlike the Colossus of Rhodes, it is a female figure, representing a new country, a new world which disregards the patriarchal society and grants women more possibilities. Secondly, as the following lines state, the statue is a beacon of hope for all the exiled, tired, poor, homeless and those who simply want to be set free and start over, assuring that all of them can obtain peace, liberty and happiness here. Furthermore, the statue is said to be located "*beside the golden door*" or "*sunset gates*" (Lazarus), the phrases which can be interpreted as the metaphorical representation of the

entrance point to the United States, it being the New York City. These metaphors allude to the wealth and happiness associated with concepts “golden” and “sunset” respectively, implying the idea that this city will welcome everyone, and it will open countless doors of possibilities and prosperity for its residents. This poem is a wonderful example of urban imagery of New York representing the city of opportunities, somehow, the perspective so seldomly seen in the majority of poems.

The last but certainly not least poem to be examined in this part of the research is “N.Y. Harbor: Sunday Evening” by Robert Clairmont. The title already specifies the spatial and temporal setting described in the work, the New York Harbor during a tranquil Sunday evening. Contrary to the other two poems which depicted the city during the morning and day, this verse portrays the quiet and peaceful side of New York at dusk.

The primary image offered in the poem is an auditory image quite extraordinary for New York or any city in general “*this quietness*”, later also repeated in the line “*What are all those ferryboats going down so quietly, all by themselves down the river?*” (Clairmont). This image makes the readers visualize the quiet ambiance of the harbour, with little to no noise being made in this part of the city, even the ferryboats silently glide through the water with few passengers on board, as they are “*all by themselves*”. Such imagery already sets the tone for the entire poem, suggesting that its content will disclose a glimpse caught by the author of still and calm Sunday evening in the megalopolis. In the temporal context of the setting, such peace and quiet is quite logical, since the day goes to its end, and the city is preparing for the slumber, also given that it is Sunday, the weekend, means the majority of individuals is preparing for the working week ahead and doesn’t roam around the city. Although, it’s worth to note that New York at the time of the author writing this poem and New York now are vastly different, and it’s quite difficult to experience such serenity even on Sunday evening in this city.

Similarly to New York during sunrise described in the previously analysed poem, the sunset time also offers the vibrant and colourful view portrayed in the line “*the sun having gone down and the sky so full of color*” (Clairmont). This sentence features an antinomy of images and contributes to creation of visual image of dusk and the sky being painted with different shades of orange, pink and purple typical for such phenomenon. The said description refutes the belief that the city can only be dull and sombre, depicting the picture of sunset making the splashes of colour appear on the sky. The meaning behind such imagery may be that just like in the countryside, the same sunsets and natural beauty can be observed there, suggesting that life is in full swing in the cities. Moreover, this could be a reminder to pause and reflect on the beauty and tranquillity that can be found everywhere, even in the simplest moments.

Another image crafted by the author is seen in the line “*The buildings, standing there so still, what are they doing there?*” (Clairmont) which via using emphatic construction even further contributes to the sense of solitude and stillness in the scene. This urban imagery presents New York at such peaceful hour, when it seems as if the time has stopped and everything is at rest, unmoving. The actual stillness of the buildings, which is their constant feature, often goes unnoticed amidst the bustling activity of city life, when the skyscrapers are almost brought to life, as if they also participate in this rushing lifestyle. Yet, when this place appears to be almost desolate, the immobility of buildings is foregrounded, thus, they reveal their true nature – devoid of life, their silent presence is accentuated against the backdrop of stillness. The author questions their purpose, since without human beings living there, running around and utilizing these buildings for work, study or rest, they are just lifeless concrete structures.

The final imagery presented in the poem may be found in the lines with rhetorical questions “*What is all this darkness? / Where are all the people?*” (Clairmont), indicating the visual image of the city being immersed in darkness and

not a soul can be seen outside now. Such image already demonstrates the change in timeline, as it is already the nighttime and the sky is not full of colours anymore, but rather it is pitch dark. However, taking into account the author's choice of words, he doesn't perceive this darkness and emptiness as negative or evil, instead presenting this as the moment of silence, when the city takes a deep breath in, relaxes and falls asleep until the morning of the next day and the beginning of the week when it's rush and chaos yet again. The rhetorical questions and the following replies at the end of the poem seem to convey an inner dialogue of the person, who may worry about the sudden change in the environment to quiet and desolate, so untypical for New York. However, the inner voice is quick to reassure that such solitude and silence are not to be anxious about, but rather it's worth relishing, the peace of this moment, since the people, the light and the bustle, all of it, will come back the next morning. In conclusion, this poem is a great example of reflection of cyclical nature of the world, as well as depiction of the city at its tranquil, yet mesmerizing, hour. Moreover, it also alludes to a broader concept of life, reassuring that it is not worth worrying about, since after every dark night there comes dawn bringing the light, people will be come back, happiness will come after sorrow, thus, everything will return eventually, so no need to lose hope.

### **2.3. The grit and gloom of New York City**

The prevailing number of literary works depict New York as depressing, appalling and exhausting place. Although the great part of media nowadays tends to idealize and romanticize New York, making it a picture-perfect city to reside in. Such portrayal results in numerous occasions of people becoming utterly disappointed, as this city often falls short of their expectations, and this frustration is frequently expressed through literature. Truly, the city may be quite overwhelming, particularly such megalopolis as New York, which brings a sense of isolation and alienation, despite huge crowds, prompts hardships, especially for

marginalized communities. Therefore, in this subchapter we will investigate poems which explore themes of disillusionment with the city and its imperfections.

The first poem chosen to represent this particular outlook on New York is “The City” written by Prabhath Avadhanula. This poetic work illustrates the dreary, chaotic and realistic aspect of New York City without any embellishment. The opening line of the poem presents the first visual image of the urban space “*The city is gritty, dark and hard*” (Avadhanula) which sets the tone for the entire verse. Through this image, the author conveys his impression of New York, describing it as unrefined, which evokes mental pictures of weathered streets and worn-down buildings, as well as the particular roughness typical for the residents, without which it’s a struggle to survive there. Additionally, the city is said to be dark, owing to either its unsaturated colours or the concealed secrets and hidden truths lurking, then it is also depicted as demanding and unforgiving, alluding to high rates of competition and resilience required to thrive there. The next line offers an auditory image “*The subways rumble on and on*” (Avadhanula), persuading the readers to envision the noisy and bustling underground, which only further contributes to the said chaotic ambience. The subway representing the constant movement and active lifestyle here is portrayed rather negatively, reflecting certain irritation of people who strive for tranquillity. The last lines of the stanza include another visual imagery “*The rats scurry as the people overflow, / Onto the station and up to the neon show*” (Avadhanula), which depicts a scene of subway being filled not only with a vast number of people but rats as well, implying the filth and urban decay. The mention of rats, associated with unsanitary conditions, shows the ugly but authentic side of the city. Moreover, the juxtaposition of rats with the neon show suggests the counterintuitive nature of the city, where both the grit and glamour co-exist.

Other images can be detected in the following line “*The traffic rushes scornful of the streets*” (Avadhanula) which appeal to both vision and hearing. The author paints the picture of city streets being full of cars and public transport which move

swiftly through it, prompting the readers to visualize the image and the sounds. The traffic is said to be contemptuous, perhaps, denoting the attitude of the people in those vehicles, who hurriedly move around the city, implying the dehumanization, recklessness and egoism of the individuals, who are indifferent to the city, its residents' safety and well-being and only are preoccupied with their problems. In the given context "*the traffic*" may be considered a metonymy, since the traffic itself is a general concept, which substitutes and stands for the complex network of vehicles and people who drive them.

Another visual image found in the line "*Marred and littered with a million moving feet*" suggests the plethora of people not only operating vehicles, but also walking on foot on the streets of New York. Such huge population roaming around is said to flaw and ruin the city, straining its resources, burdening other individuals and diminishing the quality of life. The author's words choice straightforwardly delivers a message of disdain and disapproval of such enormous number of residents in the city, suggesting he believes they only make this place worse with their presence.

Nonetheless, as the following line indicates "*And yet the congregations grow*" (Avadhanula) despite the city being so monotonous, hectic and dreary, it is still a beacon for a multitude of people searching for money and fame. Thus, the city expands in a rapid manner, with its population constantly increasing, however, one can notice certain surprise of the author, who is baffled by the fact that despite the city's problems people are still drawn there.

The last image of the poem can be detected in the lines "*Worldly masses turn and flow to money as Muslims do to Mecca*" (Avadhanula) where once again it is emphasized that masses of individuals relocate to New York, mainly these are people who are concerned with materialistic values only. Furthermore, this image is crafted with the help of simile, which draws a parallel between the money-oriented people in New York and the spiritual Muslim individuals who visit their sacred city



of Mecca. This juxtaposition of money and religion, of the material and immaterial highlights author's frustration with the urban landscape and worldly society.

Another poem to be examined in this part of the research is "Autumn Dusk in Central Park" by Evelyn Scott, which portrays the city as a sombre place during an evening hour. Unlike the previously analysed poem, here the author doesn't describe the city as chaotic and profit driven, yet she manages to convey the dim and depressing atmosphere, nonetheless.

The poem begins with evocative imagery which allows the reader to visualize and experience the poem's setting. The primary line encompasses the visual image of people moving around the city "*Featureless people glide with dim motion through a quivering blue silver*" (Scott). In the given sentence, the people are described as featureless, alluding to, perhaps, dehumanizing effect of urbanization or the masses of people whose faces merge into one. Another interpretation may refer to the subdued and dull population of the city, which does not stand out and turns into a grey mass. Nevertheless, the movement of people is said to be smooth and unrushed, as if they glide on the surface. Moreover, the entire poem seemingly provides us a glimpse of city in a slow motion. The temporal setting of the poem is dusk, thus, people being featureless, and their movements dim can stem from the setting sun and low visibility. The visual image of "*quivering blue silver*" may refer to the blue hour, a transition from day to night, when the sky and the surroundings are coloured in blue, and the silvery hue may be light from the moon or stars. Besides, "*blue silver*" might convey a sense of cold or frostiness in the atmosphere, a typical weather for a late autumn season described in the poem.

The following line "*Boats merge with the bronze-gold welters about their keels*" (Scott) suggests yet another visual image of seamless fusion of the boats with water. The blend between them can be attributed to this evening hour, when everything seems to wane and merge into one another. The "*bronze-gold welters*"

refer to the water's surface with warm and metallic hues, suggesting the reflection of golden tones of sunlight and the dynamic movement of the water around the boats.

Another visual image can be found in the line "*The trees float upward in gray and green flames*" (Scott) which conveys the implicit presence of the wind blowing, evidenced by the trembling leaves of both trees with leaves and bare trees. Here the poetess utilizes the metaphor to compare the shaking leaves with the tongues of flames, on the basis of their visual similarity. The green flames refer to trees still adorned in leaves, and grey to the trees whose leaves had already fallen off, so they are left only with grey branches.

The line "*After some gray old women who lift their gaunt forms, / From falling shrouds of leaves*" (Scott) features a visual image crafted via means of metaphor. The old grey women are supposed to represent the trees, their haggard and dreary appearance symbolizes the trees' bareness after shedding their leaves. The parallel between grey old women and nature is reasoned, since both are in a state of gradual decline, the late autumn when vibrant colours gradually fade away and the flora and fauna is in the process of decay or is preparing for slumber is compared to the aging process of an elderly person. This idea is supported by the mention of "*shrouds of leaves*" where "shroud" signifies a cloth used to wrap a dead body, likening a death of a person to a "death" of nature. Furthermore, the image depicts a woman, not a man, since nature is frequently perceived as feminine and nurturing, associated with the matriarchy.

Afterwards, the following lines again reinforce the image of the trees "*Thin fingered twigs clutch darkly at nothing. / Crackling skeletons shine*" (Scott). In this context the metaphor is employed to juxtapose the twigs of the trees with thin human fingers, based on their similar fragility, partially reverting to the previously mentioned image of old women. Besides, the twigs are personified, thus, assigned a human ability to clutch something. This image further emphasizes the trees' barren state, as the twigs reach out into the empty space, no longer embellished with leaves,

and in the darkness which slowly descends on the city they cannot grip anything. Then another vivid metaphor, utilized there, portrays the skeletal appearance of the trees, stripped of their foliage. The comparison is made between the bare trees and human skeletons, the common ground is both of them being at the particular stage of their life cycle, human skeleton representing a dead body, and bare leaves – nature at the state of decline. Additionally, the “skeletons”, thus, trees are described as crackling conjuring up a visual image of the branches and twigs of dry trees producing the sounds of faint crackles as they sway in the breeze.

The concluding lines of the poem provide additional vivid imagery “*Along the smutted horizon of Fifth Avenue / The hooded houses watch heavily / With oily gold eyes*” (Scott). Primarily, the author refers to the image of smudged horizon, when the city is immersed in darkness, and everything is blurred and vague. Then, the poetess crafted an image of houses that silently observe their surroundings with “*hooded eyes*” implying a sense of weariness, as if they are tired and are about to fall into slumber as the evening approaches the city. The “*oily gold eyes*” indicate another visual image, which may denote the windows of the buildings that serve the function of “eyes”. They are said to be coloured in oily golden hue, perhaps due to the yellowish light emitted by the lamps. This imagery was conjured up by means of personification, as the houses were assigned a human ability of having eyes and observing. This expressive means was utilized to create a more vivid experience for the readers, as well as reinforce the theme of evening and slumber, emphasizing that even the houses are exhausted and sleepy.

Overall, this poem is an excellent example of imagism, with a variety of intriguing urban imagery. This literary piece focuses on the theme of cycle of life and nature portrayed via symbolic images of trees, boats, flame. Moreover, the poem explores the topic of inevitability of change presented through the imagery of late autumn. This poem shows the city being quite grim, dark and weary.

The analysis of urban imagery usage in poetry concludes with the examination of Claude McKay's "Song of the Moon". This poem juxtaposes nature and the manmade world, through the contrast of the shining moon's beauty and grim artificial urban environment. The primary visual image emerges within the first lines "*The moonlight breaks upon the city's domes, / And falls along cemented steel and stone, / Upon the grayness of a million homes, / Lugubrious in unchanging monotone*" (McKay) portraying the delicate light of the moon illuminating the grey concrete buildings of the city. The author highlights the difference between the moon and the city via the disparate colours which reflect their essence, the ethereal white moonlight and the grey constructions. The mentioned colours represent opposing concepts, the colour white symbolizes innocence, elegance and peace, meanwhile, the colour grey stands for strength, impartiality and detachment. Moreover, these lines encompass a tactile image of "*cemented steel and stone*" which encourages readers to imagine the buildings which are rather firm and cold to touch. This image certainly represents the stability of the city, as well as the fact that it toughens people, since they learn to cultivate composure and cold emotionless demeanour. In addition, the city's homes and buildings are described to be "*lugubrious in unchanging monotone*" once again appealing to this sense of gloominess and consistency of urban landscape, characterized by repeating tedious days. The moon, on the other hand, is inherently different, constantly undergoing changes, and frequently representing emotions, vulnerability and variability.

In the following line the author presents another visual image crafted by means of simile "*Upon the clothes behind the tenement, / That hang like ghosts suspended from the lines*" (McKay). The hanging clothes are compared to the ghosts on the basis of visual similarity, both being rather shapeless with faded colours. Besides, their likeness is enhanced in this scene owing to the moonlight, which grants the clothing eerie glow and creates a haunting atmosphere, evoking a sense of mystery.

This description continues to paint a vivid picture of the setting with the moonlight portrayed as incompatible with the surroundings in the lines *“Linking each flat to each indifferent, / Incongruous and strange the moonlight shines”* (McKay). Firstly, the moon is said to be out of place and its delicate glow and majestic presence not aligning with the plain and dull city. Secondly, it is said to connect the flats to one another, suggesting a sense of disconnectedness and detachment among the city’s residents, even further enhancing the mood of loneliness. The apartments are depicted as *“indifferent”* implying the self-centred mindset prevalent in the urban space, where individuals prioritize their own concerns without much regard for lives of others.

The next stanza reinforces author’s opinion that the moonlight is truly captivating, and it doesn’t belong in the urban environment. The following lines highlight the lack of appreciation for the moon within the city *“There is no magic from your presence here, / Ho, moon sad moon, tuck up your trailing robe, / Whose silver seems antique and so severe / Against the glow of one electric globe”* (McKay). The depiction of the moon as sad may suggest its tendency to evoke feelings of nostalgia and melancholy. Moreover, the poet utilized a metaphor by referring to the moon’s glow as a robe, emphasizing the soft and flowing nature of both. The moon’s silvery light is described as *“antique”*, symbolizing its long-standing presence since the dawn of time illuminating the Earth. This natural glow is juxtaposed with the modern sources of light powered by electricity, contributing to the theme of contrast between tradition and modernity.

In the final stanza the author effectively employs personification to create the imagery *“Go spill your beauty on the laughing faces / Of happy flowers that bloom a thousand hues, / Waiting on tiptoes in the wilding spaces, / To drink your wine mixed with sweet drafts of dew”* (McKay). In this context the flowers are attributed various human abilities, including the capacity to laugh, experience joy, wait eagerly, and even drink. These lines portray how nature's elements find joy and

happiness in the moonlight, with the flowers personified to enhance this connection. The flowers are full of eager and anticipation for the moon to illuminate them, allowing to shine in a different light, such typical human emotions that although weren't experienced by people in regard to moon, as they frequently ignore the beauty they are surrounded by and focus on their problems. Moreover, in stark contrast to the city, which lacks the vibrancy and diversity of colour, the flowers are depicted blossoming and blooming in radiant hues. Finally, the last line includes the concluding image of the poem, a gustatory image of wine and sweet drafts of dew. The wine is a metaphorical representation of moonlight, which similarly spills its glow, together with dew creates a pleasing mixture that nourishes the flowers.

To summarize, the poem juxtaposes the moon's beauty against the artificial and stifling atmosphere of the urban environment, highlighting a sense of incongruity. It serves as a reflection of the isolation and disillusionment felt by individuals residing in modern cities.

## **CONCLUSIONS TO CHAPTER 2**

New York is an iconic city-symbol, which serves as a backdrop for a multitude of literary works, movies, songs, as well as houses some of the world's most influential companies, agencies, enterprises. Being extremely culturally diverse and populous, this city is seen as multifaceted, given the numerous ways it is perceived by people.

In poetry in particular New York is mostly illustrated in two ways, the first was as the majestic and full of beauty city where dreams come true, as it was presented in such poems as "N.Y. Harbor: Sunday Evening", "The New Colossus", "New York at Sunrise". Meanwhile other poems analysed depicted New York as rather sombre and unpleasant urban space full of hardships, where the chaos and gloom reign, as it was described in poems like "Song of the Moon", "Autumn Dusk in Central Park", "The City".

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The concept of imagery serves a pivotal purpose in literature in general, that is including prose, however, it is of the primary importance in poetry. After conducting this research, we can formulate the following definition of this term, imagery is the usage of metaphorical language in vivid and detailed descriptions to conjure up a mental image of a particular thing in the mind of the reader by appealing to one or several human senses. It assumes a central position in poems, given that it aids in subtle transmission of impactful messages and description of broader notions in those concise forms of expression. Moreover, imagery helps to add depth to the poem, via skilfully chosen words which frequently carry several meanings, to elicit specific emotions in readers, to relive experiences which one hasn't gone through, to make the story enigmatic and more appealing to read, to establish unique writing style for authors, etc.

The literary imagery is created by means of language both literal and figurative with the preference given to the latter, as well as writing techniques like foregrounding and defamiliarization. The most frequently employed figures of speech in the process of image creation are metaphor, simile and personification. Metaphor presumes complete identification of two different things on the basis of one similar feature, meanwhile simile presupposes comparison between distinct objects with the usage of words "like" or "as". In addition, personification involves attribution of human traits and abilities to non-human entities, like plants, animals and inanimate objects.

The city conveyed via urban imagery started to be seen as the prominent subject-matter or setting of literary works starting from the time period of rapid urbanization and Industrial Revolution. New York City, in particular, was one of the cities most frequently depicted in literature, owing to the immense influence of the USA, the huge population and alluring prospects the city was offering.

The tumultuous period of 20<sup>th</sup> century full of violence and enormous changes has led to disillusionment with the world, with the society a main residence of which was the city. Consequently, city was represented in many works of art across the world as depressing, hectic and gloomy. The New York is not exception, as we have come to the conclusion that the most common portrayal of this city is rather negative, showing it as ruthless and gritty. For instance, the poem “The City” by Prabhath Avadhanula analysed in this research shows the gritty and restless side of New York which nonetheless attract a ton of people greedy for money and success. Then the poem “Autumn Dusk in Central Park” by Evelyn Scott describes it as exhausting, grey and dreary. Lastly, the poem “Song of the Moon” by Claude McKay depicts the juxtaposition of the ethereal beauty of the moon with undeserving of its light sombre city.

However, it’s worth noting that the opposite perspective of New York City is also conveyed in poetry, that is the one which emphasizes its peace and charm, which often goes unnoticed. For instance, the poem “New York at Sunrise” by Anna Hempstead illustrates this city as innocent, glowing and mesmerizing during a quiet hour of the morning. Then the poem “N.Y. Harbor: Sunday Evening” by Robert Clairmont depicts the similar peace and quiet of the city but during the dusk. Finally, the last poem “The New Colossus” written by Emma Lazarus represents the New York with the Statue of Liberty as the ideal place where one may find freedom, happiness, success and pursue his or her dreams.

To summarize, the dominant portrayals of New York City in the poetry were either of the inspiring and alluring place or of the city marked by challenges and gloom. Additionally, this urban imagery was mainly conveyed with the help of visual and auditory images, which were used most often.



## RÉSUMÉ

Дослідження на тему «**Урбаністичні художні образи у поемах про Нью-Йорк**» присвячене аналізу художніх образів міста Нью-Йорк у поезії та засобів їх створення. Курсова робота складається зі вступу, двох розділів, висновків до кожного розділу, загальних висновків, списку використаної літератури та списку ілюстративних матеріалів.

У першому розділі «**Теоретичні засади художніх образів в літературі**» («Theoretical foundations of imagery in literature») основна увага приділяється створенню теоретичної бази для розуміння поняття художньої образності в літературних творах. У цьому розділі досліджуються такі аспекти даного поняття як визначення, класифікація, функції та лінгвістичні прийоми, які використовувались для формування образів. Було висвітлено, що образ діє як потужний інструмент для передачі емоцій та атмосфери читачам, та підвищення їхньої зацікавленості та розуміння тексту.

У другому розділі «**Зображення Нью-Йорку у віршах**» («Portrayal of New York City in poems») здійснюється аналіз декількох обраних віршів, у яких Нью-Йорк відіграє ключову роль. У цьому розділі розглядається як поети з різних епох зображували місто у своїх поетичних творах. Ця частина дослідження висвітлює повторювані теми, мотиви та образи пов'язані з Нью-Йорком та аналізуються способи передання сутності та культури міста у поезії. Шляхом ретельного читання та вивчення обраних віршів, цей розділ має на меті продемонструвати різноманітність представлення Нью-Йорку в літературі, як міста мрій та місця самотності.

**Ключові слова:** художні образи, Нью-Йорк, поезія, літературний аналіз, урбаністична образність.

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