

# The Word and the Image in Arab Imagination

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## Abstract

The research aims to study the word and image and their role in the Arab imagination, and to provide guiding models that confirm the work of the Arab imagination, to achieve results of a specific nature related to their role in revealing the system of the Arab imagination. The research relied on the analytical method.

**Keywords:** Imagination, Word, Image.

## 1. Introduction

The human imagination is shaped by a collection of artistic works of various types, whether based on words (literature), images (visual arts), or both words and images together (drama). All of these reveal the nature of imagination, the extent of its depth, and its ability to impact the human soul, as it serves as the target of imagination and the area of its operation, acting as the bridge between the sender and the receiver. What the writer's imagination produces requires the receiver's imagination to be active for the process of reception to be complete. In the literary arts, imagination plays an active role in producing the text and its semantic field, and before that, in producing the image. In poetry, for example, the concept of the image is formed "only on the solid basis of a coherent concept of poetic imagination itself; the image is the tool of imagination and the means of its important material through which it exercises its effectiveness" (Asfour, Jabir, 2007). Examining the image is an examination of imagination. Its various forms are: "In its simplest form, imagination is the ability to produce representations that resemble internal perception in the absence of corresponding sensory inputs (Van Mulukom, 2020), and it can

include mental representation experiences that are distant from the present, whether they are experiences of other people. (Valerie van Mulukom).

The creator uses imagination to understand the mysteries and secrets of existence, in addition to their ability to express the nuances of their souls, feelings, and thoughts. As we explore the impact of imagination and its role in shaping the artistic image, it should be noted that imagination, in its general concept, is not functional; its meanings and functions are diverse, and among the most prominent are:

1. Expanding human thought by enriching it.
2. The creation of the human future: there can be no future without an imagination capable of envisioning future scenarios.
3. Combining the compatible and the incompatible as well.
4. Organizing human activity through the arrangement of energy and the results of the mind.
5. Linking between times and experiences and benefiting from their possibilities and outcomes.

Words and images are indeed tools that represent the sensory appearance of imagination and its means of revealing its content, meaning, goals, and methods of enriching human thought. The words that make up the text are merely a collection of linguistic segments organized by imagination in its various systems and diverse products: "The narration of a story can at any moment transform into a presentation of a closely interconnected theory, filled with abstract verbal segments" (Clare Hanson, 2021). The Arab imagination has invested the energy of words in imagery, granting them their utmost potential for production, employing them as a renewed expressive method throughout the ages. The use of the living language prevalent in any era is but a true manifestation of this renewal, as evidenced by the aesthetic functions of words in Arabic rhetoric across its various forms and fields of realization, ranging from the everyday aesthetic form (the song) to the higher aesthetic form (poetic and narrative creativity).

In turn, Arabic rhetoric has invested all the possibilities of the word, and Arabic rhetoric is formed from a set of methods that primarily rely on the word itself. The sciences of Arabic rhetoric (eloquence, embellishment, and meanings) are a reflection of this. In the science of eloquence, verbal embellishments are based on the relationship between two words, as seen in paronomasia and antithesis. In the science of embellishment, some images are formed based on a single word or a stylistic structure, while in the science of meanings, rhetoric relies on the relationships between words and letters to produce various styles.

In Arab culture with its vastness both written and oral expression styles have been shaped by the ability of words to move between various techniques and artistic conventions. Words, in their movement through sentences, achieve the maximum results of their function. The creator of diverse styles can achieve their aesthetic goals by nurturing the activity of words within their different stylistic contexts. Among the most prominent of these activities is the placement of words within two fundamental styles: the declarative and the imperative, as they represent

models that encompass several Forms of the sentence vary; the declarative style has its methods (such as nominal and verbal sentences or semi-sentences), while the imperative style has its own techniques (like questions, wishes, and others). Words have significant freedom to shift between various styles to achieve multiple rhetorical, aesthetic, and communicative purposes. It is enough to point out two positions within the sentence where the meaning of a word changes: its position in the nominal sentence as a subject or as a predicate.

Imagination serves as a tool for attracting words and choosing between them, placing them in their appropriate contexts, and infusing them with energy capable of expressing the human self in its attempts to break free from the endless realities and problems across the ages: "When a poet uses their imagination, they do not flee from the truth but rather seek the truth within the realm of imagination. "Both imagination and reality are means of conveying the internal struggle that the artist endures. Thus, it becomes clear to us the mistake in concluding that the artist's desire to escape reality is what drives them to artistic creativity, in that this escape from reality is into a fantastical world and that imagination is an essential element in artistic creation. The truth is that the poet deceives reality with imagination, meaning that they attempt to deepen reality with imagination. (Ismail, 2014).

## 2. The image.

The image represents a vital field for the work of imagination, a conduit for its activity to the recipient, and a means of crossing between two imaginations: the imagination of the creator and the imagination of the recipient. The image forms the orbit of expression. In its diversity: poetic and prose (of all kinds), in addition to other forms of expression: auditory, visual, and audiovisual, one can identify two main types of imagery:

1. The imagined mental image.
2. The visual image observed.

The first relies on words and their linguistic and stylistic formations in its production, which is the focus of Arabic poetic production in its ability to shape expression, generate meaning, and bring the life of words to its communicative capacities. Meanwhile, the second depends on visual formation and has its various patterns and images.

First: The imagined image.

It is the foundation of poetic production across its various eras, establishing a precise bridge between its creator and its audience, as they come together in a meaningful linguistic system. Claudel says: "Poetic inspiration is characterized by the two gifts of (image) and (number) - that is, meter through image, the poet becomes like a man who has climbed to a high place, allowing him to see a broader horizon where new relationships between things are established, not determined by logic or the law of causality, but by a harmonious connection that forms meaning. Through number, language frees itself from circumstances and contingencies, and meaning penetrates the mind through the ear, rich with what delights both the soul and the body" (Abdullah, Muhammad, (2015).

The poetic image is based on a set of components:

1. Expanding the horizon of the image itself.
2. The diversity of vocabulary.
3. The sensory mastery of the elements of the image.

The forms of Arabic poetry that indicate this are numerous, and we could cite thousands of examples, including, for instance, the image of the poet Dhū al-Rumma.

On the eve of my helplessness, I find myself

Enthralled by picking up pebbles and tracing lines in the soil. I write and erase the line, then I rewrite it.

With my hand, while the crows in the house are signing. It feels as if a Persian spear has struck me on my side, but the pain of separation is even more agonizing.

The visual field: it is defined by the element of time (evening), which is a productive element of vision, granting it its abilities to reveal.

The spatial determinant:

The house.

Elements of the image: They are formed into two groups of elements: sensory elements: the self, the house, the pebbles, the soil, the crows, the Persian thorns, and the abstract elements: cunning, passion, sorrow, separation, pain. Poetry combines types, expanding the recipient's perspective and embodying the abstract while solidifying the sensory in the mind of the recipient.

The Arab imagination has excelled in creating thousands of poetic images based primarily on the choice of words and placing them in their appropriate context, according to the power of imagination that can simultaneously serve as a tool for revelation and differentiation among poets. The difference between two poets. There is a difference between wild imagination, calm imagination, fertile imagination, and imagination that is less than that. The work of the poetic image is the work of imagination in its strength and weakness, in its superficiality or depth. It is what guarantees the survival of poetry, gives beauty to the image, and enables meaning to have an impact on a person when they employ their imagination in receiving the imaginative image. The word that casts shadows of imagination when it stands alone, presenting a mental proposition to its recipient, continues to exert its semantic action when it enters a context that is always renewed, serving as a network of relationships capable of producing thousands of diverse images and meanings that expand the recipient's imagination. This means that the word is in a constant and active state of generating imagination, investing its energy, and relying on its strength to remain influential and productive.

Secondly: the visual image.

That image, based on the intertwining of words and visual formation, which we might refer to as the formative image, relies on the shaping of Arabic calligraphy and the creation of linear visual imagery. There is a long history that attests to this art, which fundamentally represents an imaginative aspect. Imagination connects to the image through three areas: before the image is produced, the artist works on shaping the image in their imagination; then, imagination plays a role in shaping it according to the envisioned image; and in the third area, the recipient's role is to explore the space of imagination and its fertility, which is capable of creating the aesthetic formation of the visual image. In many formative images, we cannot say with certainty that.

The calligrapher moves randomly to produce his work, but he has imagined it beforehand.

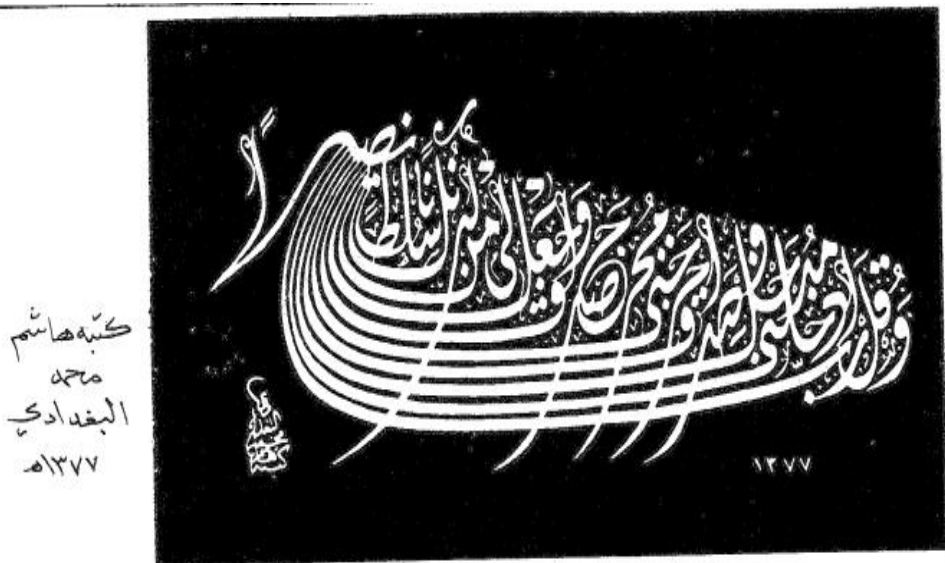
If we look at the following image, for example:



Image number (1) (The calligrapher, Mohammed Hashim)

We pause at a distinctly imaginative form, one that is based on a visual image (a ship and sailors rowing), but delving into its details reveals a Quranic text (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra, verse 80). This means we are faced with two texts: a visual text that does not linger on details, and a written text that is inseparable from the visual text. Both texts are products of imagination, and there is no way to comprehend them without the imagination of the recipient.

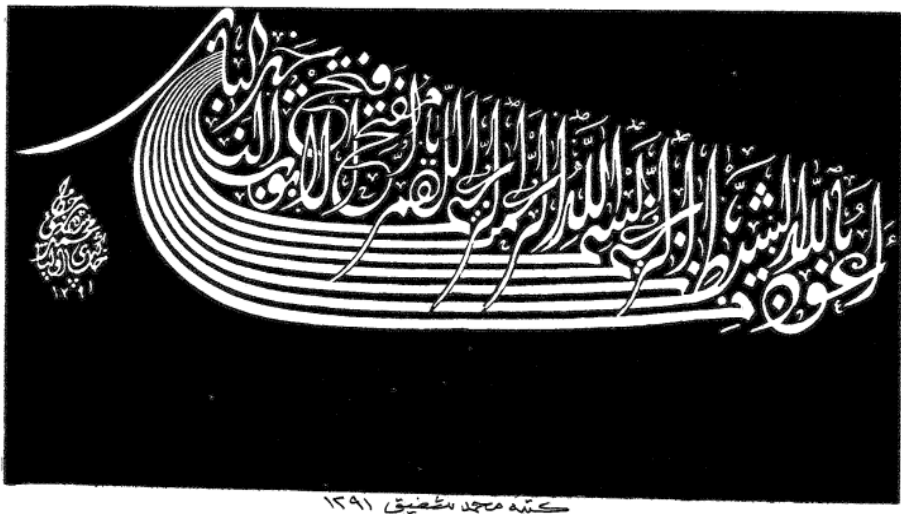
The visual form has been repeated so often that it has become a visual icon with multiple meanings, among which are several shapes that employed the same visual perspective, including, for example, what the text itself relied on:



(Written by Hashem Mohammed Al-Baghdadi 1377)

(Aesthetics of Arabic Calligraphy p. 156)

Among them, some relied on other texts, adopting the same perspective:



Written by Mohamed Shafiq 1291

(Aesthetics of Arabic Calligraphy p. 159)

To affirm the imaginative phenomenon, we can look at the hundreds of visual artworks produced by Arab artists who specialize primarily in Arabic calligraphy. They harnessed the power of imagination in shaping their artistic output, adapting many forms and objects that are represented as such. Cultural patterns that express Arab life and culture in all its rich forms, among the most prominent of which is the famous Arabic coffee pot, which almost represents a cultural pattern and a landmark of Arab life, especially in the Arabian Gulf.



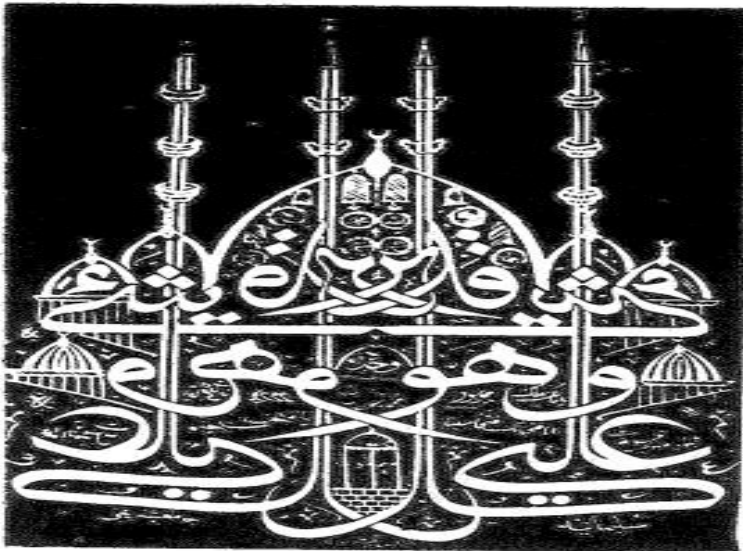
The image carries the verse of the Umayyad poet Al-Muqanna' Al-Kindi:

"I am indeed a servant to the guest as long as they are staying, and there is no other trait in me that resemble that of a servant."

The image represents an embodiment of the poetic meaning produced by two imaginations: the poet's imagination first and the calligrapher's imagination second, before the recipient's imagination comes in, bringing together form and content. It is a manifestation of a rare image of Arab art and a representation of a state of joint authorship – if the term is appropriate – as both (the poet first and the calligrapher second) share in the production of the image in its structure, which is formed twice: the production of the poetic form first and then the written form. In its meaning that is shaped twice: the meaning that the poet initially aimed for, and the meaning that the calligrapher targeted. The work of both has combined to create a distinct art form those transitions from the visual to the readable, from its aesthetic form to its ideal content, from its

repetitive structure to its profound meaning. The theme emphasizes the richness of Arab imagination in merging the poetic with the visual.

"Visual poetic arts reveal a new generation of poets who combine the gift of poetry, the spark of imagination, and expertise in the arts of language, rhetoric, form, and calculation. They have shifted the traditional form of Arabic poetry, which was celebrated and recited due to its high and astonishing poetic music, into another realm, a more innovative dimension that has impacted creative and literary consciousness itself." "The arts have transitioned, in the form of poetry, to a new spatial engagement and a new semiology of form, due to the awareness of the value of the written word, its materiality, and its requirements, in harmony with the spirit of the age." (Al-Warari, Abdul Latif) The image, in its imaginative capacity, plays the role of a visual assistant or what we might call a means of clarifying and reinforcing meaning in the mind of its recipient, who finds them moving between two interdependent poles. This implies that the image is not merely a deliberate reproduction of something else, but rather is intended for its own sake to deepen meaning and shape beauty in both its visual and textual dimensions. In another manifestation, the Arabic calligrapher employs his ability to shape in producing formations with an artistic character that reveals aspects of Islamic architecture, as the calligrapher tends to depict the features of Islamic architecture, among the most prominent of which are the Islamic minarets, capable of expressing. About what you aim to achieve by broadcasting a spiritual energy that unfolds through the image, one example of this is the picture painted by the artist expressing the mosque with its visual details and spiritual meaning.



شکل متمثل " وهو على كل شيء قدير "

Image 3 (Aesthetics of Arabic Calligraphy, p. 134)



It is an authentic form of Islamic architecture that found its way into the architectural engravings themselves, and those phrases that adorn the minarets and domes spread throughout Arab culture:



(Arabic Calligraphy and the Limits of the Artistic Term, p. 185)

It forms a visual style that adds to the authentic Arab architectural style, serving as a testament to the relationship between word and image in Arab imagination.

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