

Komparatistik

Jahrbuch
der Deutschen Gesellschaft
für Allgemeine und Vergleichende
Literaturwissenschaft

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AISTHESIS VERLAG

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Neukomparatistik. Mit Ausnahme von Maria Moog-Grünewalds Rückgriff auf die antike Aktaion-Mythe und den Bezug auf den – freilich von Gertrud Maria Rösch in deutscher Übersetzung gelesenen – chinesischen *yingshe*-Roman von Pu Zeng entstammen alle herangezogenen literarischen Texte dem literarischen Höhenkammkanon des europäischen 19., vor allem aber 20. Jahrhunderts. Die beigezogene Forschungsliteratur ist überwiegend in Deutsch oder Englisch, gelegentlich in Französisch, selten in Italienisch.²³ Die Grenze von der Literatur zu den Künsten wird kaum,²⁴ zu den Wissenschaften gar nicht überschritten. Sind diese Beschränkungen nur der Rücksicht auf das studentische Publikum der Ringvorlesung geschuldet? Oder klafft zwischen den Überlegungen zu einer konzeptionellen ‚Repositionierung des Fachs‘ und seiner ‚sektoriellen‘ Praxis weiterhin ein solcher Hiat, wie ihn Christian Moser in seiner eingangs zitierten Bestandsaufnahme bereits 2012 als „Diskrepanz“ zwischen „globale[r] Offenheit“ auf konzeptioneller Ebene und „eurozentrische[r] Beschränktheit im Bereich der Praxis“ beschrieben hat?²⁵ Und verhielte es sich so, sollte man dann nicht eher die Konzepte an den praktischen Ressourcen und lebenszeitlich begrenzten Möglichkeiten, die zu Auswahl und Konzentration zwingen, orientieren? Gerade sie machen die hier abgedruckten Beiträge so lesenswert.

Carsten Zelle

Imagology Profiles. The Dynamics of National Imagery in Literature. Ed. Laura Laurušaitė. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2018. 259 p.

Imagology, which Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen defined as “the cultural construction and literary representation of national characters” in their critical survey from 2007,²⁶ has been experiencing a continuous revival for over a decade now. However, this field of comparative literature has so far received little attention in the East-Baltic region. In this respect, the edited volume *Imagology Profiles*, which goes back to the eponymous conference held in Vilnius in 2015, breaks new ground. The editor and original conference organizer, Laura

23 Eigentümlicherweise werden in den Literaturverzeichnissen, die den Beiträgen beigelegt sind, nichtbelletristische, gleichwohl literarische Werke, obwohl sie unmittelbarer Gegenstand der Untersuchung sind (z. B. Georges *Aufzeichnungen*, Mallarmés *Schriften*, R. Rollands *Au dessus*, Th. Manns *Betrachtungen* etc.), zusammen mit der Forschung unter ‚Sekundärliteratur‘ verzeichnet.

24 Maria Moog-Grünewald geht kurz auf Klossowskis analoge Bildversionen ein (172f.), die wiederholt unter dem Titel *Diane et Actéon* die poetische Poesis piktoral ergänzen. Monika Schmitz-Emans erwähnt Rühmkorfs „Klecksographie“ – namentlich den Band *Kleine Fleckenkunde* (1982) –, in denen der akustische Duplikationszwang des Reims ins Piktorale hinübergespielt wird (193-195). Abbildungen gibt es in beiden Fällen keine.

25 Moser: „Sammelrezension: Komparatistik im Übergang“ (wie Anm. 1). S. 189.

26 Manfred Beller/Joep Leerssen [Ed.]. *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.

Laurušaitė, brings together contributions by authors from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, and Croatia, with topics ranging “from classical to marginal images, from national heroes to (un)conventional aspects of gender, from ethno-imagology to the broader dimension of intercultural references and epistemological post-poststructuralist changes” (1).

Following a general introduction and contextualization of literary imagology, Laurušaitė opens the largely theoretical first section by outlining the status of Eastern and Central Europe, and in particular the Baltic countries, among the national images circulating in Europe and beyond. In the already mentioned handbook *Imagology* (2007), for example, Beller and Leerssen dedicate separate chapters to Central Europe (Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians), Eastern Europe (Poles, Russians), Scandinavia (Finns, Swedes), and others, but not to the Baltics. According to Laurušaitė, the Baltic states’ lack of representation “implies that they are attributed to the grand narrative of the USSR: they are denied a sovereign history, a distinctive cultural substrate, or an individual national character” (22). Although one of the main concerns of the volume is to identify Baltic literature as a rich source for imagological research, it also seeks to break out of traditional oppositional pairs such as East vs West, auto- vs hetero-image, (factual) reality vs (fictional) text, and collective vs individual images, and furthermore encourages an increased cooperation across disciplines (historians, sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists).

These aims largely coincide with Zrinka Blažević’s introductory demands for a post-poststructuralist imagology, which “is focused more attentively on the relationship between the literary/visual/performative text and its sociocultural context” (30) and therefore requires a redefinition of one of its key concepts: the image. According to Blažević, it is no longer adequate to define the image “as a literary representation of national characters” (31) in the sense of the Aachen School; instead, images must be understood as “patterns of thinking, discourse, and practice” (ibid.), comprising “a wide scope of variously ontologically and phenomenologically conceptualized manifestations of Otherness alongside social, cultural, religious, confessional, civilizational, generational, and gender lines” (32).

The four articles in the second section deal in the broadest sense with connections between national discourses and utopias. Pauls Daija studies the image of the ethnic, cultural, and religious ‘other’ in Latvian vernacular writings from the era of Enlightenment. The aim of this modern literature, which was written in Latvian by the elite ethnic minority of Baltic Germans, was to ‘civilize’ and enlighten the indigenous majority by conveying to them ideas about an ideal communication between those in power and their subjects. However, many of these paternalistic writings also criticize stereotypes in general and call for “a tolerant attitude towards the representatives of other ethnicities and religions” (49).

Zane Šiliņa’s article moves from the beginnings of modern Latvian literature in the 18th century to the literary development of national heroes in the 19th and 20th century. Andrejs Pumpurs, one of the most famous Latvian representatives of National Romanticism, created in his national epic *Lāčplēšis* (*Bearslayer*,

1888) a hero who as half bear and half man represented Latvian nature infiltrated by German culture. While Bearlayer embodied the strong Latvian nation and their collective experience, Rainis (pseud. of Jānis Pliekšāns) created much more complex characters in his early 20th century plays. His heroes in *Uguns un nakts* (*Fire and Night*, 1905) and in the drafts for the unfinished play alternatively called *Īliņš* or *Kurbads* (1900-1926) already had “an ambiguous relationship with tradition and ancestry” (60), transgressing national and cultural boundaries.

In his contribution, Maxim Shadurski not only deals with utopian texts, but also with the utopian method outlined by Ruth Levitas.²⁷ Shadurski highlights Levitas’ three functions – critique, compensation, and change – as productive for imagological research. He applies this method to expose defamiliarized images like that of England “as a society free from class conflict” (72) in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), in which neither elite education, nor sports are able to bridge the existing social hierarchies, but rather reinstate them.

With Ignas Šeinius, Jurgita Katkuvienė introduces not only a prominent Lithuanian author, journalist, and diplomat, but also an early comparative imagologist. In his satirical science-fiction novel *Siegfried Immerselbe atsijaunina* (*Rejuvenation of Siegfried Immerselbe*, 1934), Šeinius presents the phantasmagorical, hormonally induced transformation of his Nazi protagonist Siegfried into a Jew, while also criticizing Hitler’s racist concept of identity through the use of national images. Katkuvienė demonstrates that although “Šeinius was one of the most active designers of the Lithuanian self-image, [...] his comparative way of dealing with identity showed not only the differences between the Self and the Other but also the unavoidable dynamics of mutual influences, positive and negative” (86).

The third section, which Laurušaitė refers to in the introduction as “geo-imagological” (3), brings together four articles that deal with the links between actual and imagined borders and their transgression. In *Leišmalite* (2013), a “culturological, geo-anthropological and regional study” (95) of the 600 km long border between Latvia and Lithuania by the Latvian poets Imants and Rimants Ziedonis, Vigmantas Butkus observes a mostly localized national self-image. He further notes a positive shift in the hetero-image of several other nationalities, particularly the Lithuanians. The image the Latvians have of their neighbors changed from the “Lithuanian beggar” (103) of the first half of the 20th century to an almost idealized if sometimes ironic image of the diligent and wealthy Lithuanian.

Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn’s geographical scope is somewhat wider. His article establishes links between the Romantic movements in Britain, Lithuania, and Poland. The Lithuanians and Poles admired Scotland in particular, as they also longed for independence and their own national identity in the midst of Russian domination. Authors such as Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Ignacy Chodźko, and Adam Mickiewicz established a romantic aesthetics of the North in their

27 Ruth Levitas. *Utopia as Method. The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

landscape descriptions, reminiscent of those of James Macpherson, Walter Scott, and Lord Byron. During the nationalist revival at the turn of the 20th century, Lithuanian poets such as Oscar Milosz and Maironis reinvigorated this romantic auto-image, which connects smaller, less powerful nations in Northwestern and Northeastern Europe, suggesting not only geographical and linguistic flexibility but also a certain continuity in time.

In her contribution on the Estonian historical war novel Anneli Kõvamees draws attention to a political flexibility of images. In the novels published in the 1930s by Enn Koppel, one of the most famous Estonian representatives of this genre, the Russians are portrayed as evil torturers, uncivilized barbarians, or heavy drinkers, and the Estonians as blameless victims. This clear “us versus them” (131) opposition changed fundamentally during the period of Russification, however, when Koppel, e. g. in his novella *Meelis* (1941), rewrote the hetero-image of the enemy into that of “friendly allies” (132).

Taisija Oral deals with the transgression of borders on a primarily narratological level, distinguishing between the level of the implicit author, the narrator, and other characters in the *Scandinavian Trilogy* (2009-2014) by the Estonian-Russian author Andrei Ivanov. Oral was surprised to see that the novels had not yet been studied imagologically, despite providing a rich source “of contemporary national stereotypes from the point of view of an illegal post-Soviet immigrant facing neoliberal Europe” (135-136). She counts 117 different nationalities, ethnicities, and regional or religious identities in the trilogy, and finds that, although the implied author strives for cultural polyphony and does not seem to follow an “essentialist understanding of national identity, it turns out that it is almost impossible to narrate events taking place in the multicultural setting without defining the characters through their origin.” (143)

While national, cultural, and ethnic images have been the focus so far, the two articles in section IV concentrate on social and cultural constructions of gender as a further imagological resource. The authors share the view that gender images are discursively produced just like national characters, and that notions of how women and men should be are deeply rooted in the (sub-)consciousness of a nation.

In her close reading of Nick Hornby’s novel *About a Boy* (1998), Margarita Malykhina analyzes the representation of the two male protagonists, the 12-year-old outsider Marcus and the supposedly ‘cool’ 36-year-old Will. Marcus, whose single mother brings him up according to her own alternative principles, is teased at school because he wears unfashionable clothes and is unfamiliar with the popular culture consumed by most children his age. Will, on the other hand, largely corresponds to the selfish, anti-feminist, and hedonistic ‘new lad’ portrayed in British men’s magazines of the time. In the end, they both struggle with their entrenched roles, and support each other in a process of learning and self-discovery for which it is essential to question gender stereotypes.

While Malykhina analyzes socially and culturally constructed images of masculinity in analogy to national images, Natalia Isaieva is interested in the connection and intersections of nationality and femininity in contemporary Chinese literature by women. For this purpose, she analyzes the portrayal of the

modern Chinese woman in the novel *The Feathered Serpent* (1998) by Xu Xiaobin (*1953) who came of age during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Isaieva notes that the novel, which was written at a time when China was opening up to the world economically, politically, and culturally, deconstructs two national female stereotypes: on the one hand, the old stereotype of the “submissive, silent, restrained noble beauty” (180), as preserved in the canonical Confucian works; and on the other hand, the image of “the modern emancipated Western-style woman” (173), which is especially unappealing to Chinese women who experienced the period of ‘forced emancipation.’ The novel, which narrates the story of five generations of women, both traditional and modern, expresses above all the perplexity of the new generation with regard to (missing) national gender images.

The fifth and last section, which deals with continuities and changes in national images, can probably be described as the one closest to traditional imagology. As traditional as Gitana Vanagaitė’s understanding of an imagological analysis may be, her source material – the correspondence between the representatives of the Holy See at the Apostolic Nunciature in Lithuania and the Vatican (1922-1939) – can be described as rather exceptional. After Lithuania regained its independence in 1918, representatives of the Catholic Church were sent to Lithuania to monitor the resumption of religious life there. However, they were very skeptical about the status of religion in the young republic and generally found Polish culture more agreeable to their positions. Their correspondence with the Vatican conveys the hetero-image of an uncivilized and provincial Lithuania, whose inhabitants are portrayed as stubborn and savage.

Viktorija Šeina’s contribution is not about hetero-images of Lithuanians, but the Lithuanian images of Poles. While they were perceived as a “brother by fate” (210) during the Russian domination, their image later transformed into that “of the fiercest enemy” (ibid.) after Poland annexed the Vilnius region. In Lithuanian literature of the interwar period, the idealism and patriotism of their own nation was portrayed against the background of “the treacherous Pole” (202), with national, ethnic, and social images often overlapping: Poles were frequently depicted as degenerate landlords, “outdated and doomed to extinction” (209), and Lithuanians as honest and simple peasants, modern and promising.

On the other hand, Scandinavian hetero-images in Lithuanian interwar poetry were much more positive, as Manfredas Žvirgždas points out in his article. The newly created Lithuanian Republic admired the free Scandinavian spirit, as expressed in the impressionistic style of especially Knut Hamsun. Only Soviet Lithuania began to regard the Scandinavians as foreign and hostile. The neurotically depressive atmosphere in the plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, and others came to be interpreted as a “reflection of the terminally ill Western society” (218). While non-conformist avant-garde poets used archaic Nordic motifs symbolizing freedom to distinguish their art from the trivial Soviet reality, Lithuanian poets in emigration transfigured the image of the North into nostalgia. Žvirgždas concludes that contemporary postmodern poetry “is still based on the traditional stereotypes of Scandinavia as the ‘distant neighbour’: familiar enough, attractive and seductive, but at the same time hermetic” (229).

Algis Kalėda moves away from national characters and focuses on the cultural stereotypes of Vilnius in the modern poetry of Lithuanian Poles. Images of the city have a long literary tradition and can be traced back to the era of Romanticism, especially to Adam Mickiewicz. This tradition was continued in the 20th century by authors such as the Nobel laureate Czesław Miłosz. While in contemporary poetry the representation of buildings, streets, and other spaces of Vilnius can have the function of resurrecting “the imago-myth of ‘majestic and dear’ Lithuania” (5), such topographical representations of the city also serve to transform, disrupt, and desecrate what once was.

Of the three overarching objectives of the edited volume – first to identify the literature of the Baltic countries as a rich source for imagological research, second to break out of the traditional binary logic of imagology (e.g. East/West, auto-/hetero-image), and third to work with an interdisciplinary focus – the first two have certainly been achieved. With its Baltic focus, *Imagology Profiles* fills a research gap in comparative imagology and complements the national and ethnic lemmas previously catalogued in Beller and Leerssen’s handbook *Imagology* (2007). The four thematically oriented sections (sec. II-V) also fulfill the claim of dealing critically with binary oppositions. In their contributions, the authors show many ambiguities between ‘real’ and fictional or even utopian images, between auto-images and hetero-images, and in fact between their continuity and changeability.

Although primarily oriented towards literary and cultural studies, the edited volume also partially accomplishes the third goal: interdisciplinary cooperation. It involves not only a variety of philologies (especially Lithuanian, Latvian, English, Estonian, Polish, and Chinese), but also different disciplines such as geography, history, and gender studies. For a more fundamentally interdisciplinary approach beyond just individual contributions, however, the volume would have required more in-depth theoretical reflections. The various disciplines involved, each with their own theoretical and methodological approaches, are given very little space. The only two theoretically oriented contributions by Laura Laurušaitė and Zrinka Blažević in the first section remain relatively abstract and hardly enter into dialogue with the main arguments of the book. It might have been worthwhile, for example, not only to label imagology as “Image Geology” (8), but to trace the historical and theoretical connections between imagologically oriented literary and cultural studies and geography.

Similarly, gender is simply included as yet another imagological category (sec. IV), without reflecting on the theoretical or (inter-)disciplinary implications of categorical intersections of, for example, nation, ethnicity, gender, and class. Such an approach can be found in Joep Leerssen’s article “Imagology: On Using Ethnicity to Make Sense of the World”,²⁸ which surprisingly is not quoted even once in the volume. Moreover, Laurušaitė’s characterization of imagology as “ideologically more moderate”, “more ethical”, and also more “multidirectional” than postcolonial studies, which is said to follow a “binary logic” (12), is not entirely

28 Joep Leerssen. “Imagology: On Using Ethnicity to Make Sense of the World”. *Iberic@l – Revue d’études ibériques et ibéro-américaines* 10 (2016): pp. 13-31.

comprehensible. Neither is her definition of the ‘image’ as “the smallest unit of imagological analysis” (13). In fact, unlike Manfred Beller (who is extensively quoted in the volume), she does not distinguish between clichés, prejudices, and stereotypes, but defines them all equally as “prefabricated images” (ibid.).

However, some of this confusion may be due to language barriers. The individual contributions show varying levels of English proficiency and would have benefited from more thorough editing. For greater ease of use, it would have been helpful to include cross-references or a subject index in addition to the very carefully compiled name index. This would have made it easier for the reader to make meaningful connections between articles from different sections and with different emphases. For example, a reader interested in Vilnius will most certainly read Algis Kalėda’s contribution about the cultural stereotypes of this city, but may never discover that Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn’s article about Scottish traces in the Lithuanian landscape also contains several interesting imagological reflections on Vilnius.

Despite some shortcomings, the edited volume makes an important contribution to comparative imagology. Overall, its strength lies on a practical-analytical rather than a theoretical level. The authors examine national, cultural, ethnic, and gender images in many fascinating case studies, enter new thematic and geographical imagological territory, and make some very interesting comparisons both between distant nations (Scotland – Lithuania) or ‘distant neighbors’ (Scandinavia – Baltics).

Sandra Folie

Ehestand und Ehesachen. Literarische Aneignungen einer frühneuzeitlichen Institution. Hg. Joachim Harst/Christian Meierhofer. Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2018 (= Zeitsprünge. Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit; Bd. 22, Heft 1/2). 212 S.

Die Ehe ist kompliziert. Dies begann in der Frühen Neuzeit schon bei der Partnerwahl, handelte es sich dabei doch keineswegs nur um eine private Angelegenheit zwischen zwei Individuen, sondern um einen ganz wesentlich von religiösen bzw. konfessionellen, ökonomischen, politischen, gesellschaftlichen und familiären Vorgaben und Motiven bestimmten Vorgang. Und auch nach der Eheschließung war der Ehealltag bis hin zur Auflösung der Ehe durch Tod oder Scheidung aufgrund interner und externer Normierungen nicht immer konfliktfrei, wenn etwa unterschiedliche Erwartungshaltungen in Bezug auf die Rollenverteilung und Machtstruktur innerhalb der Beziehung aufeinandertrafen, es zu außerehelichem Begehren oder Ehebruch kam oder das Ehepaar kinderlos blieb. Gleichwohl war eine glückliche und friedvolle Ehe als Abbild göttlicher Ordnung unbestritten das angestrebte Ideal und so widmete sich eine kaum überschaubare Zahl von Texten aus der Feder von Theologen, Juristen, Literaten und anderen Gelehrten dem Zusammenleben von Mann und Frau und verständigte sich über den Ehestand. Dass dabei in literarischen Texten bei aller Vielfalt und Heterogenität der Entwürfe vor allem das hohe Krisen- und