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COSMOPOLITAN THEORY: EXAMINING THE (DIS-)LOCATION OF IMAGOLOGY

Abstract: Being interdisciplinary, reflexive and analytical, theory has practical effects, questioning assumptions such as those related to discourse, meaning or identity, and exploring the circumstances in which texts are produced. It offers new conceptual tools and provides an argumentative method. Fields such as imagology have benefitted from the outset from the variety of theories reflecting the intellectual progress of their times, in particular in connection with the study of the relationship between Self and Other, thus providing new perspectives on the uses of preconceived ideas in artistic, written and visual, representations. In view of the current context of migratory flows and societal upheavals, it seems topical to examine the theories feeding the field of imagology today. Traditionally, history, psychology and sociology have proved instrumental in the building of essential notions pertaining to the sphere. More recently, studies have drawn on new approaches connected to reception, translation, gender and education studies, widening the imagological scope and its range of methodological tools. This article examines the nature of the imagological undertaking, its current spread worldwide, and shows how this comparative literary field upholds a cosmopolitan ethos.

Keywords: imagology, theory, location, interdisciplinarity, cosmopolitanism

According to Jonathan Culler, theory involves "complex relations of a systematic kind" that challenge and reorient thinking "in fields other than those to which they apparently belong" (3). Hence the presence of various types of theory in literary

criticism, and hence also the use of literary theory in other domains, such as art history. Arguments used in theories pertaining to certain fields can be, and have proved to be, mind-opening and therefore productive for people who are not studying those fields. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope is a well-known example of this transfer:

> We will give the name chronotope (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor... (84)

Many theorists have over time delivered works that are pivotal to literary researchers: be they philosophers, like Walter Benjamin or Judith Butler, or psychoanalysts, like Sigmund Freud or Jacques Lacan, semioticians like Julia Kristeva or Umberto Eco, or anthropologists, like Claude Lévi-Strauss or Arjun Appadurai, all had a major impact on the new and varied directions literary criticism took over several generations. Their thinking helped ours to progress, although their approach was not necessarily a literary one, because they challenged common perceptions and emphasised aspects that had been neglected until they brought them to light and we deemed them relevant to our own discipline.

Theory gives us the conceptual tools with which to organise our thoughts on subjects under examination. It allows a refined understanding of the various elements composing a given narrative and it provides an argumentative method. The definition of methods in fact goes with the identification of specific theories helping to provide goals and standards. Being interdisciplinary, analytical and exploratory, theory indeed has practical effects, allowing us in particular, as comparatists, to approach literary matters from fresh perspectives, questioning assumptions related to discourse, meaning, identity, etc., and exploring the circumstances in which texts are produced. As historically defined, theory also reflects on the intellectual progress of its time.

Originating from linguistic and disciplinary responses to 19th-century political stresses on national unity, comparative literature theories truly developed in the 20th

century after wars had raged not only between European neighbours on a regular basis, but also on a worldwide scale. Comparisons between different literatures were then conducted in a spirit of nations better understanding themselves and discovering others. Their aims were humanistic. Imagology was born of such constructive endeavours. Bringing to the fore the need to achieve a greater appreciation of the dynamics between the Self and the Other, imagology offered new possibilities for recognising the sources and consequences of preconceived ideas and of poor communication both inside and outside borders. In view of the current context of migratory flows and societal changes, with the recent upsurge of nationalisms and worldwide demands from women and minority groups for respect and justice, it seems topical to examine the theories feeding the field of imagology today.

This study will examine the nature of the imagological undertaking, highlighting the role of theory in its development, over time adding new concepts that not only continue to refine its aims and methods, but also allow it to spread geographically, beyond the essentially European framework of its beginnings, making it a truly cosmopolitan field, effectively extending outside its original borders and disciplinary scope.

Theory, Humanism and Imagology
a. The principles of imagology

Imagology, also known as image studies, analyses the literary, narrative and rhetorical cross-cultural representations of various nations and groups. It provides a critical analysis of images and stereotypes, also known in this field as *imagotypes*, in literature and other forms of cultural representation. The portrayal of the Other has been present in story-telling from ancient times and to various ends. Imagology proposes to explore how a group, generally through individuals within that group, may depict those they perceive as outsiders, what it reveals about the way the group views itself, where these images come from, whether they are recurrently used (and possibly mis-used) and to what effect.

The dominant stance of cultural interaction is ethnocentric, and aspects that differ from recognizable patterns encountered both inside and outside the domestic realm naturally seem odd. Misapprehensions regarding cultural difference often motivate the belief that nations and groups have their specific peculiarities and that

these are not equal in worth. Imagology proposes to examine the processes that lead to such character constructions. In order to study how group identities are perceived and recreated in a variety of literary genres, imagology delves into different theories, bringing in concepts pertaining to the fields mainly of history, psychology, sociology, ethnology and linguistics. It shows how imagotypes are created by being formulated out of conventions and constructs attached to societies and their languages. Imagology analyses the subjectivity at their root, as well as their variability. Joep Leerssen (2017, 8) defines imagotypes as referring to collective mentalities predisposing given societies to certain modes of behaviour.

Imagological principles were built up over time by thinkers from different cultural backgrounds, mostly based in Europe. Until the second half of the 20th century, simplistic beliefs in national characters had remained widespread, despite an abundance of travel writings – and in some cases, because of them. They dominated literary representations of cultural groups, sometimes embodied by a single character. This commonly accepted practice was occasionally questioned, notably by the Enlightenment philosophers, some of whom were also writers, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau,[1] and also over time, by non-literary figures, like Walter Lippman, the American reporter and essayist, who analysed this tendency in a book entitled *Public Opinion*, published in 1922, questioning the implications of perceptions that influence individual behaviour while preventing optimal social cohesion. In the sphere of literary criticism, some scholars also paved the way to a deep and synthetic understanding of national characterisation. Just before Lippman's book came out, in France, Fernand Baldensperger, Paul Van Tieghem and Paul Hazard founded the *Revue de Littérature Comparée* and introduced studies attached to the history of ideas, that focused on images between cultures.

However, it was really after World War II that a disavowal of national essentialism began in earnest. This was to lead to a deconstructive analysis of the rhetoric of national characterization as found in literary texts. From 1947, Jean-Marie Carré's studies of literary images of foreign countries highlighted the essential interactions between politics and literature. He was followed by Marius-François Guyard's whose essay "L'étranger tel qu'on le voit", in 1951, confirmed images of foreigners as subjective perceptions influenced by identifiable historical contexts.

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[1] For example, in *De la Suisse*, published in 1764, Rousseau intimates that impressions a country makes on its visitors reveal more about the travellers than their place of visit, more of what is felt than what actually is.

Drawing on other fields to examine literary representation, Carré and Guyard together had critically crossed a theoretical Rubicon.

Thus, from the start, image studies were in essence interdisciplinary. This approach was quickly and strongly rejected by such notorious figures as René Wellek who disapproved of socio-historical or political perspectives as "dissolving literary scholarship into social psychology and cultural history" (285). This disagreement was instrumental in the rift that then developed between comparative literature scholars in Europe and in the United States, where Welleck was at the time and where there was great resistance to introducing non-literary theories into literary criticism – which of course later changed with Cultural Studies. In the meantime, in European image studies, the importance of cultural history and social psychology would grow even further.

With the work of Hugo Dyserinck (and his Aachen School of Imagological Studies, from the late 1960s), what Carré and Guyard had started was actively pursued, and imagology developed toward a socio-historical examination of the intellectual, political and social dimensions relevant to the way literary works are created. National images were found to be discursive constructs, reflecting the subjectivities in play at a given time – subjectivities that generate the moral tensions addressed in literary works. Interestingly, the first instance of the term "imagologie" is to be found, not in a literary theoretical study but in a scientific periodical, the French *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples*. In a 1962 issue, an article by a Hungarian psychologist, Oliver Brachfeld, entitled "Note sur l'imagologie ethnique", had announced: "A new science is being born: the science of images".[2] In 1964, the review began offering a section entitled "Imagologie". That year, Pierre Chaunu, in his book *Imagologie : la légende noire antihispanique : des Marranes aux Lumières : de la Méditérranée à l'Amérique*, published by the related Centre de recherches et d'études de psychologie des peuples et de sociologie économique, integrated new dimensions, affect and the imaginary, to his field of research, ethno-psychology.

These aspects would prove of key interest to a major figure of imagological studies in the 1980s, Daniel-Henri Pageaux, who advocated studying the image of the Other specifically through the social imaginary, defined as "the creative and symbolic dimension of the social world, the dimension through which human beings create

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[2] "Une nouvelle science est en train de naître: celle des images" (my translation). The *Revue* that started in 1946 changed its title in 1965 to *Ethno-Psychologie*.

their ways of living together and their ways of representing their collective life" (Thompson 6). According to Pageaux (135), all images arise from an awareness of one Self in relation to an Other, and of a Here in relation to an Elsewhere. They demonstrate a significant discrepancy between two types of cultural reality, and cultural imagery is therefore posited as based on a bipolar premise: identity vs alterity.

Pageaux championed the history of ideas as the tool allowing the recognition of both public opinions, from which images are developed and legitimised, and their role in channelling their affective and ideological resonances. Studying an image therefore means establishing its conformity (or non-conformity) to an existing model in the culture of the group examining another. It also implies understanding what makes it identical or different from other images of the same group. These steps lead to an analysis of the discourse about the Other, which ultimately reveals the Self. Indeed, the value system of the culture from which the image originates transpires through the language used to speak about the Other, revealing a specific posture in relation to the world; it constitutes a "second language" that coexists with the language used to convey that image, saying something different from the assertion intended to reach the members of a community who shares that "first" language (Pageaux 136-137).

An additional consideration comes into play, that of the reader's identity, their horizon of expectations and their response regarding certain images. Pageaux proposes that imagologists ask themselves who the target readers of specific works may be, and if images were deliberately introduced in them and to what purpose. So, there is now a triangular relationship between the referent, the image and its receiver, and imagologists study how the referent, through a reflexive motion, is revealed by what the image reflects back from the receiver's response. The semiotic quality of images therefore offers referential meanings which are indicative of historical moments. For Pageaux, images are elements of a symbolic language, and one of imagology's objectives is to study this system of meaning that is cultural imagery (Pageaux 138-139).

With this approach, the aesthetic value of a text is secondary to the ideological impact on a specific readership and in order to establish this historical impact, Pageaux proposes that a stock of images be based on listings of lexical recurrences, and distinguished between keywords and "fantasy" words – the latter virtual semes

operating a symbolic form of communication, exemplified by exotic literature. The number of such repeated occurrences determines received ideas and clichés, including the reiterated names of characters, and spatial and temporal references situating images (Pageaux 143-145). This approach is best illustrated at a broad level by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen in their seminal *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*, and at a more focused level by Pádraic Frehan's *Education and Celtic Myth: National Self-Image and Schoolbooks in 20th-Century Ireland*.

Since the 1980s, in various European countries, many articles and volumes of essays have regularly appeared, that synthetize the history of imagology and either favour an existing methodology or propose new approaches – such as Waldemar Zacharasiewicz's *Imagology Revisited* and Laura Laurušaitė's *Imagology Profiles: The Dynamics of National Imagery in Literature*. They demonstrate a continued interest and theoretical development in imagological studies. Collections in English often involve Leerssen's pioneering work. Its constructivist method has successfully inspired the study of representations of national character as discursive objects, narrative tropes and rhetorical figures, emphasising their practice in artistic production.

As imagotypes are related to questions of identity, new theories are regularly brought into the imagological analysis. In this respect Leerssen figures prominently too, alongside Barfoot and Beller, whose works have ensured the development of imagology's multidisciplinary range, welcoming the work of social psychologists – such as Marco Cinnirella's social identity perspective on ethnic stereotypes and Henri Tajfel's study of cognitive aspects of prejudice – thus inspiring scholars in postcolonial studies, like Marga Munkelt, Markus Schmitz, Mark Stein, Silke Stroh, and William Chew.

At the same time, new critics have emerged, among whom Emer O'Sullivan who has opened imagology to the field of children's literature with, for example, *Friend and Foe: the Image of Germany and the Germans in British Children's Literature from 1870 to the Present*, *Imagining Sameness and Difference in Children's Literature: From the Enlightenment to the Present Day*, co-edited with Andrea Immel, and her influential article "Imagology Meets Children's Literature". The genre typically includes picture books which, belonging to visual arts, constitute a privileged field for the dissemination of imagotypes and are specifically valuable as

discursive strategies. O'Sullivan's work has created a real dynamic in this domain and others have added new insights to it, like Lydia Kokkola and Sara Van den Bossche who very recently published a study on cognitive approaches to children's literature, which proposes to expand on imagology through cognitive science.

b.   Imagology's lexicon

Alongside the appearance and refinement of concepts, a dedicated vocabulary has emerged over time. We have already seen how multi-faceted the term "image" is; equally, "stereotype" has proved a multi-layered issue. While the term generally denotes negative perceptions, stereotypes seem necessary to many critics despite their limitations and dangers, because they reveal both groups' values and beliefs, and the wider process by which human societies make sense of themselves through typification. Stereotypes present a deceptive simplicity that, under analysis, unveils complex social structures. Homi Bhabha considers that stereotypes are "ambivalent modes of knowledge and power" (Bhabha 95). And indeed, as we have seen in real events lately, they can allow differentiation between groups in order to ensure self-affirmation in opposition to the Other, thus legitimating negative actions.

Bringing topical accuracy to these specific notions, a precise vocabulary has built up over time. Manfred S. Fischer proposed that the terms "image" and "stereotype" be combined under the literary term *imagotype* (Beller and Leerssen 9), which later inspired *ethnotype*, specifically describing a national character. Manuel Sánchez Romero adds the idea of prejudice to the definition of the imagotype, thus emphasising the significance of images firmly established through repetitions in a variety of contexts. Recently, related terms have emerged, such as *visiotype*, referring to television and film productions.

Literary images of one's own group are described as *auto-images* (or *self-images* and *autotypes*) and images of other groups as *hetero-images* (or *hetero-imagotypes*). However, whether images are "auto" or "hetero" is a matter of perspective, so two more terms were added, those of *spected* for the group being described, and *spectant* (or *spector*) for the onlooker. When characterizations and attributes are presented without any connection to a tested cultural reality, they are said to be *imaginated*. *Imagemes* (a word combining the notions of semes and memes with that of image) are recurrent, clichés-like, elements of representations whose intertextual frequency and "implicit, compounded polarities" (Leerssen,

Imagology, 344) that can be found in translations and adaptations. They depend on what O'Sullivan calls the *extra-textual sphere*, i.e. the author's deliberate influence on the readers' perceptions, reflecting an ideological or social environment. In the *intra-textual* or *immanent sphere*, on the other hand, the aesthetic and rhetorical effect of images is analysed in accordance to the author's stance, i.e. on whether s/he is aiming to conform or contradict expectations (O'Sullivan, *Friend and Foe*, 37-45).

Regarding the author's stance, Pageaux proposes three terms: *philia,* relating to positive, unprejudiced images not only of another culture or group but also of one's own, reflecting both mutual and self-esteem, while *phobia* instead relates to negative, biased perceptions of another culture or group, and *mania* denotes an author's overevaluation of a foreign culture or group to the detriment of his or her own, turning the created image into a *mirage* (152). Following Pageaux, Maria João Simões proposes a concept in-between those of *philia* and *mania* that she calls *allophilia*. It can be used, on the one hand, to study the creative inspiration that comes to authors from their admiration for specific predecessors and their cultures (Simões, Transcultural and Imagological Figures). On the other, it helps to establish and analyse what remains of historically recurrent hetero-images of a cultural group in a nation's imagination, thus to critically re-examine texts that conveyed negative views of a specific Other in order to obtain an updated and fairer view (Simões, Imagology and transnationalism). Like her predecessors, Simões went outside literary theory to find a term to suit her purpose. This one was coined by Todd Pittinsky, a professor of psychology specialised in organizational behaviour. It describes a positive attitude towards outgroups. Meant as an antonym of prejudice, *allophilia* adds new nuances to the study of hetero-images.

In the meantime, Jean-Marc Moura's distinction between two complementary Others in *L'Europe littéraire et l'ailleurs* – the *alter*, integrated in a conception of the world whose centre is the group, and the *alius* who is remote from it, wandering at the periphery (Moura 53)– has recently been further explored in the works of Małgorzata Świderska and Paula Eduarda Moreira Figueiredo. The development and spread of the imagological lexicon constitute a stimulating sign that there is ongoing theoretical, interdisciplinary and international innovation in the field, which is in keeping with the imagological ethos.

c.   Methods of analysis

According to Leerssen's "Stranger/Europe" study, the main objective of imagology is to establish the intertext of a given group representation as trope, and to demonstrate that "Image formation is, then, a dynamic of cultural production, transfer, and exchange rather than a straightforward reflection of social reality" (8). For Moura, in "Imagologie / Social images", while analysing the elements that compose an imagotype, image studies determine what properly belongs to the author's creation. When literature reproduces stereotypical images to self-serving or even propagandic ends, for example, the imagologist's work is crucially to distinguish fact from fiction in order to query these images, and to do so dispassionately. While a group's imaging of another can be used to preserve and spread its own prejudices about it, conversely, authors may subvert conventional images in their work in different ways, satire being one of them.

All the while, imagotypes are researched in parallel with the records of political actions or historical events indicative of the provenance, spread and/or possible change of groups' beliefs, attitudes and mentalities – as demonstrated, for instance, in Róbert Gáfrik's article, "The image of India in 19th-century Slovak literature". Such records show that images become familiar tropes due to both repetition and similarities between them – a mimetic strategy demonstrated, among other studies, in Tatiana Krol's recent doctoral thesis on a comparison between the literatures of the Ukrainian and Irish Great Famines.

Birgit Neumann's working framework is Krol's chosen method. It is built on a relatively consensual view among current imagologists and based on four central premises: 1) images don't describe but construct a fictitious reality; 2) their dissemination depends on the intermedial strategies that create a normative structure of beliefs; 3) auto- and hetero-images are historically variable forms of signification; 4) group images fulfil diverse functions depending on their contexts (276). Neumann also emphasises the importance of the choice of narrative forms in the construction of images and, depending on the author's aims, in the reduction or development of character complexity.

To such frameworks, different emphases are applied. Moura, for one, identifies three types of imagological foci: 1) hetero-images of referents, analysing descriptions of the Other as historical document; 2) auto-images issued by nations or groups, bringing complex networks of social and cultural attitudes into literary analysis; 3)

images created by the personal sensitivities of authors, examining the myths found in individual writers that reflect the imaginary horizons of particular eras (*L'Europe littéraire et l'ailleurs*, 43).

Imagological studies indeed aim to distinguish between subjective and objective identities. The former is relevant to groups who identify with characteristics they value. The latter refers to the fact that individuals can be forced to belong to a group (Bilgrami). The standpoint of and on narrators or characters, in a written or visual text, changes according to the applicable type of identity. Identity is where different types of theories come most into play as useful to imagology, such as those pertaining to social psychology, politics, philosophy, semiotics and history. In narratives, as Clemens Ruthner stresses, collective identity constructs are subject to both circumstantial conditions and the rhetoric underpinning those circumstances.

This is why a history of related imagotypes, as championed by Pageaux, Beller and Leerssen, is useful to examine the evolution of mentalities. A table or database (which can work diachronically and synchronically) of the opinions of societies or regions over time is established, based on instances found in literary and non-literary texts. In this way, one can observe how particular perceptions are either enshrined or exposed, depending on the authors' contexts. To this end, imagology may take into account the means of production and distribution of literary works, allowing researchers to further establish the economic and ideological environments of imagotypical formation. This brings us to discuss imagology's own environment, its location both in geographical and theoretical terms.

(Dis)Location of imagology

a. Geographical reach

Imagology was born, as mentioned previously, after World War 2 in Europe, and the two dominant schools studying national characterisation then were located in France and Germany. Today, the field is vibrantly represented in publications coming from an increasing number of European countries, beside France and Germany, among which Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Great-Britain, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine. While imagology clearly remains an essential comparative literary field in Europe, it is worth noticing that it has expanded well beyond its geographical roots

as far as Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Korea, Iran, Japan, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and the United States.

Some scholars continue to work with the principles highlighted earlier, especially regarding national characterisation. A dedicated series, "Studia Imagologica", published by Brill and run by Dyserinck and Leerssen, has been in place for some time now. Its 24th volume, by Dagmar Lorenz, deals with *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* (2018). Peter Lang also have a series called "Identities / Identités / Identidades" whose editor is Flocel Sabaté. Imagological studies are regularly offered in it, generally within collections of essays, as in their most recent and topical entry, *The Catalan Nation and Identity Throughout History* (2020), edited by Àngel Casals Martínez and Giovanni Cattini. Such examples denote a national self-observation due to contemporary issues with nationalism, bringing the history of imagology full circle and showing the continued relevance of the field's early criteria.

Indeed, in areas of the world where political and ethnic turmoil has been rife and national issues remain important, studies of works denoting both *philia* and *phobia* remain relevant. As Flynn, Leerssen and van Doorslaer have recently underlined: "National ideologies and cultural borders (…) are part of a heritage, which is still an informing and self-replicating presence in our present-day cultural ambience. A sense of nationality and ethnicity, with its attendant stereotyping, still inform our daily lives" (1). This is reflected in literary texts. From the Balkans, for example, Sofija Košničar writes about aspects of Otherness in the early Miloš Crnjanski's travel discourse about Banat Swabians, through "potestary imagology". This new lens is a fresh take on objective identity as it focuses here on a specific cultural group, the German Swabians, settled in Banat who, after the First World War, due to the shifting of borders, found that they now belonged to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (the future Yugoslavia), and had thus become an "Inner Other".[3]

The study of the inner other is an obviously worthwhile pursuit for researchers around the globe, in particular through the literature of multicultural states and through diasporic literature. It can reap some fascinating results, especially when integrated within a comparison between two diametrically different cultures. A doctoral thesis, entitled *Invisible People: Literary Expressions of Marginalisation*

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[3] The study of Luso-Hispanic encounters reaps similar results, see Julie Dahl.

from the Gaeltacht to the Ghetto in 20th-Century Literature by Zara Blake, compares the similar experience of Irish-speaking and African-Americans writers in their respective countries' history, as they deconstruct the negative hetero-images attached to them, and create new, positive, auto-images. The common stance here stems from an analogous debasement imposed by the actions of colonising forces whose consequences lasted several centuries and are still felt today.

With the current flows of global migration, due to economic, political, and now environmental circumstances (Bronen), the inner other has become a recurrent figure in cultural representations, mainly in novels, TV series and films. Through cinema enters also the possibility to adapt texts whose imagotypes can either be updated or transferred to another culture. Among recent studies on the subject, "Translating the North-South imagological feature in a movie: *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* and its Italian versions", by Paola Gentile and Luc van Doorslaer, examines the adaptation of a popular French comedy based on the regional prejudices that can exist within one nation. The authors analyse the transfer of settings, characters, and cultural practices from the north of France to the south of Italy, through a comparative history of the stereotypes nationally attached to these regions. However, the films being comedies, the negative images are presented as ultimately good-natured and harmless, while reality may be very different considering that the north of France and the south of Italy are both underprivileged regions.

Negative hetero-images may not only be offensively misleading in their contemporaneity, but they can also resurface after years of being suppressed, depending on political circumstances. The plight of migrants and refugees, for example, is a recurring topic in current newsreel, and it becomes problematic when only identified as a crisis for receiving states, and when "illegal" is the most common adjective attached to people on the move (Ruz). Such observations point at the continuing relevance of imagological studies, especially when applied to recent novels, such as Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017), and graphic novels such as Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir* (also 2017).

Translation and transcultural studies are among the new foci of imagological studies. In their introduction to *Interconnecting Translation Studies and Imagology*, van Doorslaer, Flynn and Leerssen suggest that imagology offers translation studies a useful methodological apparatus allowing the deconstruction of ethnotypes through textual, contextual and intertextual analyses. They study the role

of translation in the historical trajectories of images, in the (re)construction of hetero-images and auto-images. Illustrating this approach, Xiu Gao in "The Image of Jews as Constructed by Lexical Items: Translations of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* as a Case in Point" looks at the work of a Chinese translator who, by inserting lexical items derived from Chinese, changes a Jewish negative ethnotype into a sympathetic image representing the psychology of oppressed people. Hetero-images can thus reflect and equally affect auto-images. In "The Analysis on Theoretical Predicament for the Transcultural Studies of Imagology", for example, Zhong Fan finds that the image of China as presented in Western cultural discourse has become the mirror image for China's cultural identity in its modernization.

b.   Theoretical reach

Imagological studies are thus increasingly embracing other literary theories with similar interests in history and sociology, whose approaches are different, such as reception studies. Pageaux's proposal in this regard, as discussed earlier, to examine the triangular relationship between the referent, the image and its receiver, has developed gradually. Recently, Moura has explored, for instance, how various francophone literary representations of the U.S. illustrate the desire to signify prevailing concerns. In this process, French writers influenced by their American counterparts use elements of the dominant culture to either denounce it, satirise it or celebrate it (Moura, Migrations littéraires).

Reception studies developed in North America as reader-response studies that, combined with imagology, have recently formed the basis of an educative experiment in Ireland. After immigration took place on a large scale at the turn of the 21st century, the demographics of the country changed dramatically. The Irish, historically an emigrant nation, were in the position where their strong economic success attracted less fortunate populations. Unprecedented cultural diversity was now found in the workplace and in schools. Laura Dooley's research investigated second-level students' reactions to the change using an imagological approach in her English class, focusing on national stereotypes in Irish literature (Roddy Doyle's short story "Black Hoodie", and novels by Sarah Crossan, *The Weight of Water,* and Aubrey Flegg, *The Cinnamon Tree*). Among other analytic tools, a survey was conducted at both the beginning and the end of the module. The findings revealed

that the students' perceptions of foreigners and interculturalism had improved as a result of discussing texts through an imagological lens.

Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, depicts a nation as a socially constructed group imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group and as attached to a common geographical space. This brings us to consider the possible links between geocriticism and imagology. Interestingly, Arujun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large* questions the link between geographic space and nationhood. Certainly, the various identities that exist within state boundaries are fluid and they don't stop at a nation's borders, despite taxonomies produced and encouraged by official discourses. In a similar vein, Laurušaitė has called "geo-imagology" studies that explore physical and imaginary border crossings (3). This approach finds an echo in Pauls Daija's and Benedikts Kalnačs' study that uses literary mapping to analyse a period of extensive migration and growing awareness of global events in Latvian 20th-century society and the variety of representations of foreign places it provided, denoting both actual mobility and the building of ethnotypes. This underdeveloped connection between the study of constructed identities and their locations may well serve other fields such as Heritage and Memory studies, auto- and hetero-images being inseparable of both the times and places in which they are first formed and later revisited.

Imagotypes shift according to societal transformation, and rather than focussing on national characteristics, they may focus on the undervalued plurality of defined groups. Topically, gender studies come into the imagological scope and add to its range of methodological tools. In a 1987 article on Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, Leerssen already argued that national and sexual stereotypes in literary discourse were analogous phenomena and could be approached from a single methodological point of view. More recently, Arnhilt Johanna Hoefle's project on "Images of Masculinity between East and West" delved into "gender-specific strategies of narration (...) able to construct but also destabilize power relations and hierarchies" (web). These views are shared in essays found in recent volumes: Laurušaitė's *Imagology Profiles* (2018) that includes a section on "Gender Identity as an Imagological Resource", and Onorina Botezat's and Mustafa Kirca's *Mapping Cultural Identities and Intersections. Imagological Readings* (2019) that investigates identity discourses and self-constructions/de-constructions in film, fiction and art. Imagology in this light is no longer just an awareness of one Self in

relation to an Other, and of a Here in relation to an Elsewhere, but an awareness of one gender-imposed self (involving social, psychological and biological factors) in relation to an assumed self in a given space. One may infer from such new foci that, in future, other fields such as feminist studies and myth-criticism will more prominently enter the imagological critical arena. Novel theorical combinations are indispensable to new styles of thinking, and to interdisciplinary fields such as imagology.

Conclusion

Considering the large number of fresh publications and research projects, one is inclined to agree with Laurušaitė who claims that "imagology [is] currently one of the most popular areas of research in contemporary comparative studies" (1). This popularity emanates from imagology's intrinsic topicality. To van Doorslaer, Flynn and Leerssen, imagology matters "urgently": nationalist ideologies and cultural borders, they write, "are still with us, and indeed play a far more prominent role in contemporary identity politics, exclusionism and xenophobia than avant-garde theorists and artists seem to realise." (1) However, while essentialist beliefs are still encountered today, mind shifts are increasingly taking place. As Richard Dyer notes: "This stems from the wholly justified objections of various groups – in recent years, blacks, women and gays, in particular – to the ways in which they find themselves stereotyped in the mass media and in everyday speech." (11) This is precisely what imagology continues to address through literary texts.

Wen-Chin Ouyang reminds us that "At the heart of comparative literature worldwide is the idea of cultural encounter." (web) Studying this encounter involves considering theories that do not *a priori* belong to literary disciplines. In the case of imagology, these provide critical elements that enable fresh approaches, some of which were highlighted here, refining the range of its aims and methods, thus widening its geographical spread. Imagology works in directions that are complementarily varied toward an objective goal. It belongs to the humanist endeavour at the heart of comparative literature which is, as Van Tieghem once declared, one of international understanding and sympathy. It also adheres to the cosmopolitan ethos, which originally perceived people as citizens of the cosmos, believing in the oneness of humanity. Early on, cosmopolites spoke of the obligation to understand those with whom we share the planet, and later of our duty to learn

from cultural differences. Kwame Anthony Appiah stresses that writers played a part in the development of such ideas: "Virginia Woolf once exhorted «freedom from unreal loyalties» – to nation, sex, school, neighborhood, and on and on. Leon Tolstoy, in the same spirit, inveighed against the «stupidity» of patriotism." (xvi) Appiah adds: "Cosmopolitanism is about intelligence and curiosity as well as engagement".(168) Imagology belongs to this cosmopolitan spirit and to the endeavour of removing forms of stifling orthodoxy through the exploration and elaboration of new theories.

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