

REVIEW

Interconnecting translation studies and imagology. Luc van Doorslaer, Peter Flynn, Joep Leerssen (eds.). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016. Pp. vii, 333.

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Interconnecting translation studies and imagology was released in February of 2016 as the 119th volume of the Benjamins Translation Library, the mission of which is to promote research in Translation and Interpreting Studies. Edited by scholars working in the field of translatology and imagology, the volume is a collection of sixteen chapters, covering various periods, languages, genres and media, which show that both titular disciplines can meet and benefit from each other's methodologies and insights.

Imagology, an approach within literary studies which focuses on cross-national perceptions and images, is by no means a matter of the past, but a vibrant discipline capable of inspiring other fields of research. Even in the era of globalization, which seems to blur boundaries between people of different cultural backgrounds, critical reflection on the representation of national characters has not lost its validity – on the contrary, its role in understanding attitudes, stereotypes, and prejudices shaping the discursive representation of both one's own and others' cultural identity should not be underestimated, as it ultimately determines international relations. The potential of this branch of research becomes evident in the twenty three volumes that make up the *Studia Imagologica* series published by Brill between the years 1992–2014. In particular, *Imagology. The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters*, edited by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, deserves attention as a critical compendium which may serve as an introduction to the discipline.

It is perhaps obvious that the national and cultural representations imagology is interested in may be shaped by translation, a form of cross-cultural communication itself. As Bassnett and Lefevere assert in *Translation, history and culture*, “like all (re)writings, [translation] is never innocent. There is always a context in

which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed. ... [T]ranslation as an activity is always doubly contextualized, since the text has a place in two cultures” (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 11). This lack of neutrality is visible already on the level of what Gideon Toury calls preliminary norms, which are connected with translation policy and which specify the choice of text types or individual texts for translation, and becomes even more evident on the level of operational norms, that is, the actual decisions made in the process of translation (Toury 1995). It is no wonder that these selection and transfer procedures, an inherent part of translation, may play a crucial (though more or less covert) role in shaping national images. This is the place where translation studies and imagology meet, and this field of cooperation seems to invite more explicit scholarly reflection.

The volume under scrutiny in this review provides an extensive presentation of possible interconnections between both disciplines, arranged into four main content-based parts, which refer, respectively, to the historical development of images, the construction of hetero-images, the reconstruction of hetero-images and, finally, to auto-images, all of them seen in the light of translation. It comprises an introduction, sixteen chapters, and an envoi, and is appendicized with name and subject index. In the introduction, the editors describe the growing interest of translation studies in imagology, pointing to the similarities between both disciplines and specifying how they may benefit from each other. For example, it is argued that imagological insights (such as the concepts of auto- and hetero-images, that is, the attitudes towards one’s own culture and the attitudes towards the other), can enrich the methodological framework of translation studies scholars, while imagology may benefit from the experience of translatology in broadening its scope of inquiry beyond literary texts to other media, and incorporate its methodological tools, such as contrastive analyses of translated and original texts.

The first part, “Translation and historical trajectories of images”, takes the reader on a journey through the world of translated prose. It shows how, at different periods, national images were constructed in translations from English and Spanish into French and Dutch. The section opens with Simon McKinnon’s chapter, which focuses on the English translation of *Débat des hérauts d’armes*, anonymously written in the 1420s as a work comparing France and England to the disadvantage of the latter. McKinnon discusses its 1549 rendition by John Coke in terms of Lefevere’s “translation as rewriting” concept and proves that despite appropriations, manipulations, and extensive additions to the source material, both texts are very similar, as they have the same purpose: “the positive definition and promotion of collective self-identity against a largely negative representation of the cultural and political other” (34). Constructing the image of an archenemy is also the subject of Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez’s chapter, in which she explores Dutch pseudo-translations by G. De Bay, the aim of which was to propagate a

negative image of the Spanish. Raphaël Ingelbien's contribution examines the transformations of hetero-images into auto-images in Thomas Colley Grattan's *The Heiress of Bruges* and its Belgian and Dutch translations. The author leads his reflection at the intersection of translation studies and imagology, successfully combining methodologies of both disciplines in a way that makes his contribution stand out in this section. The image of Spain is also at the centre of Lieve Behiel's chapter on Flemish translations of Jozef Simons, which were based on stereotypes which permeated nineteenth-century French and English travel literature on Spain, and which were carried over well into the twentieth century.

Modern hetero- and auto-images in literature, news, and films feature in the remaining three parts of the collection. Part II, titled "Translation and the construction of hetero-images", houses three chapters. Emer O'Sullivan's analysis of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* translations presents German constructions of Englishness and their development in a period that spans over one hundred years (the first translation under scrutiny comes from 1869, the last one – from 2012). Pieter Boulogne's study reveals how Dostoyevski's fiction, often involving a mockery of the Germans, was rendered into German and, using German translations as intermediary texts, into Dutch. The first contribution in the volume that focuses on media other than literature comes from Carla Mereu and examines images of Italianness in British and American films rendered for an Italian audience.

Part III, "Translation and the reconstruction of hetero-images", opens with a chapter devoted to the representations of Americans, Germans, Norwegians and wizards in Slovene translations of popular fiction. Two further contributions tackle the images of Italy and Algeria in Dutch translations of, respectively, contemporary Italian fiction and postcolonial Francophone Algerian novels. The concluding chapter of this part, of a more general nature, contributed by Rodica Dimitriu, lays emphasis on the role of translation in blocking, propagating and recreating ethnic images in communist states, as exemplified by Russia and Romania.

Three of the five essays in the collection's final section ("Translation and auto-images") address news translation. Their focus is on, respectively, the images of Spain the English version of the leading Spanish daily *El País*, projecting the British image of Italy on the Italian self-image in the press of the 1970s ("strategia della tensione"), and on ideological use of translation in the representations of Silvio Berlusconi's politically incorrect words in the British press. They are followed by Daniele Monticelli's contribution on the early twentieth century "Young Estonia" movement and its translational attitude, and the final essay compares early modern Croatian and Serbian distinctive political mythologies.

The volume concludes with an envoi written by Raymond van den Broeck, who shares with the reader his insider's perspective of a first-generation translation studies scholar in "Sundry remarks about a discipline in the making by an eye-witness."

The volume seems to be an important contribution to the scholarly discussion of national images and translation, reflecting a variety of critical approaches, from the translational to the imagological. It shows the dual perspective of translation studies and imagology as a promising line of inquiry and study, “highlighting previously obscure areas of overlap between translation and image construction” (van Doorslaer et al. 2016: 9). Undoubtedly, the collection succeeds in exploring the intersection of both disciplines from a wide range of perspectives, showing that there is an abundant field for exchange to carry out research explaining the history and nature of cultural contacts building up today’s globalized world. As the editors emphasize, “The work in this volume can hopefully serve as an initial attempt at an ‘archaeology’ [of cultural exchanges], previously conducted in depth in imagology, but now extended to images in and through translation and thereby set in motion a re-articulation of or differentiation in types of network and forms of “globalization” in relation to the translation of cultural images over time” (van Doorslaer et al. 2016: 9). However, despite the strong, thought-provoking case studies, the book does not offer a discussion of larger themes (perhaps with the exception of Rodica Dimitriu’s contribution). If the volume is meant to serve as “an initial attempt” at an archaeology of cultural exchanges over time, the reader would find more extensive theoretical considerations useful, especially in the introduction. It is also a pity that the editors did not decide to include a more critical closing piece, a kind of postscript which would form a coda to the chapters and identify space for further inquiries. Also, there is no list of contributors – in a volume that studies the overarching ideas of two disciplines, information about the background of each author would shed more light on their work. Despite minor shortcomings, however, this multi-dimensional book serves to generate more interest in the intersection of translation studies and imagology, providing a rich overview of potential interconnections. It is certainly a valuable resource for students, textual critics, and all those who are interested in comparative literature, the formation of cultural images and translation.

REFERENCES

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