



## **“ANALYSIS OF LITERARY TEXTS BASED ON IMAGOLOGICAL APPROACH”**

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**Abstract.** This study explores the application of the imagological approach in the analysis of literary texts, focusing on the representation of national and cultural images within fiction. Imagology, as a branch of comparative literature, examines how the “Other” is portrayed and how national stereotypes and cultural identities are constructed and interpreted in literary discourse. By analyzing selected works, this paper reveals how literary characters and settings reflect ideological, historical, and intercultural dynamics. The research highlights the importance of imagological analysis in understanding cross-cultural perceptions and the formation of hybrid identities in world literature.

**Key words:** perpetuate, colonial ideology, negotiations, exoticized images, globalized identities, postcolonial subjectivities, intercultural dialogue, national character.

Imagology, a subfield of comparative literature, has emerged as a significant tool for examining the literary representation of national, cultural, and ideological “Others.” Originating from the works of 20th-century scholars such as Hugo Dyserinck and Joep Leerssen, imagology focuses on how collective images of nations and cultures—known as *ethnotypes* or *imagotypes*—are formed, perpetuated, or challenged in literary texts<sup>1</sup>. It shifts the emphasis from actual national character to the discourse surrounding perceived national identity in literature.

One of the earliest and most influential works in this regard is Edward Said’s<sup>2</sup> *Orientalism*, which, although not imagological in the strict sense, laid the foundation for studying how Western literature often constructs reductive, exoticized images of

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<sup>1</sup> Leerssen, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* 1978



the East. Said's critique of the binary opposition between the "Occident" and the "Orient" parallels imagology's concern with cultural representation and ideological projections in literary works.

A significant application of imagological analysis is seen in the exploration of Eastern images in Western literature. For example, in Rudyard Kipling's<sup>3</sup> *Kim* 1901, British colonial ideology is embedded in the portrayal of India and its people, constructing a hierarchy between the colonizer and the colonized. Scholars have interpreted *Kim* through an imagological lens to reveal how national identity and superiority are inscribed in literary form.

Similarly, in Chinese-American literature, Pearl S. Buck's novels, such as *The Good Earth* and *Relatives*, are rich in imago types that juxtapose Chinese traditions with American modernity. Buck's characters often embody dual or hybrid identities, reflecting the tensions and negotiations between belonging and alienation. These texts serve as fertile ground for imagological interpretation, particularly in the way they represent cultural convergence and the struggle for identity.

In Russian literature, imagological analysis has been applied to works like Ivan Goncharov's *Frigate Pallada* and Nikolai Karamzin's travelogues, where Western Europe is often portrayed as the progressive "Other" to a perceived backward Russian self. Such representations not only reflect cultural anxieties but also contribute to the formation of Russian national consciousness through contrast and comparison.

More recently, postcolonial literature has offered a rich corpus for imagological study. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the traditional image of African societies is constructed in opposition to Western colonial narratives. Achebe challenges inherited imagotypes by offering an insider's view of Igbo culture, thereby subverting stereotypical representations imposed by colonial literature.

In contemporary comparative literature studies, imagology has expanded to include not only national stereotypes but also broader cultural and civilizational images. The works of Amitav Ghosh, Orhan Pamuk, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, for instance, interrogate globalized identities and postcolonial subjectivities, offering a nuanced view of intercultural contact and conflict.

To sum up, imagological analysis enables scholars to uncover the narrative and ideological structures behind cultural representations in literature. By examining how "Others" are constructed in literary texts, this approach not only enriches

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<sup>3</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* 1901

literary interpretation but also contributes to a broader understanding of intercultural dialogue, identity formation, and global literary dynamics.

The imagological approach, as applied to literary texts, reveals the complex interplay between literature and cultural perception. Through the study of national and cultural *imagotypes*—literary constructions of “Self” and “Other”—we gain insight into the ideological, historical, and psychological forces that shape cross-cultural representation in fiction. Literature becomes not only a reflection of individual experience but also a tool for constructing or deconstructing collective identity.

In analyzing literary texts through this lens, it becomes evident that *imagotypes* are not static; they are shaped by the author’s cultural background, intended audience, and the political or historical moment in which the text was written. For example, Pearl S. Buck’s representations of Chinese and American identities in *Relatives* and other works do not conform to rigid stereotypes but instead present transitional, hybrid characters who embody the tensions of diasporic and bicultural existence. These characters illustrate the dialectical relationship between belonging and exclusion, tradition and modernity—a central concern of imagological analysis.

Such representations serve as more than narrative devices; they reflect deeper cultural dialogues. In Buck’s work, the “East” is neither idealized nor demonized, but rather presented as a complex cultural space negotiating its identity in relation to the “West.” Her depiction of Chinese immigrants struggling to transmit traditional values to their American-born children exemplifies how *imagology* can illuminate generational and cultural conflicts that go beyond the surface of the plot. These fictional scenarios reflect real-world struggles for identity, continuity, and assimilation.

Similarly, works such as Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim* or Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* illustrate how *imagotypes* can function ideologically—to either reinforce or challenge dominant narratives. Kipling’s portrayal of colonial India, for instance, supports imperial ideologies by presenting India as a space in need of British order and guidance, whereas Achebe’s narrative rewrites such stereotypes from within, offering an indigenous counter-image that dismantles colonial myths.

An important aspect that emerges from such discussion is the role of the reader. *Imagotypes* are not simply created by authors; they are interpreted and sometimes internalized by readers who bring their own cultural frameworks to the text. Thus, *imagology* not only considers what is represented but also how and why these representations resonate with particular audiences. The success or failure of cultural



transmission in literature often hinges on the mutual intelligibility of imagotypes between author and reader.

Moreover, imagological analysis shows that cultural images in literature are relational rather than absolute. A culture is often defined by what it is *not*, with the “Other” serving as a necessary contrast. This binary model—while analytically useful—also risks reinforcing stereotypes if not critically examined. The imagological approach therefore requires a balance: to recognize patterns in cultural representation without reducing characters to mere symbols of national identity.

Finally, in the context of globalization and increasing intercultural contact, the imagological approach offers a timely and relevant method for literary criticism. As writers and readers become increasingly transnational, the need to understand how literature constructs and negotiates identity across borders becomes more urgent. Hybrid characters, multicultural settings, and themes of displacement and cultural conflict are no longer marginal—they are central to contemporary literature. Imagology provides the tools to analyze these developments with theoretical rigor and cultural sensitivity.

**Conclusion.** The imagological approach offers valuable insights into how literature constructs, negotiates, and critiques cultural and national identities. By analyzing imagotypes—textual representations of the “Self” and the “Other”—we can better understand the ideological forces and historical contexts that shape intercultural narratives. As seen in the works of authors like Pearl S. Buck, Rudyard Kipling, and Chinua Achebe, literature serves as both a mirror and a mediator of cultural perception. In an increasingly interconnected world, imagological analysis not only enriches literary interpretation but also deepens our awareness of the complexities of identity, belonging, and cultural dialogue.

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