

Brigitte HEUER, Barbara KELLNER-HEINKELE, and Claus SCHÖNIG eds., *‘Die Wunder der Schöpfung’: Mensch und Natur in der türksprachigen Welt*. Istanbul: Texte und Studien 9. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2012. 332 pp. ISBN: 978-3-89913-887-0 (hbk.). €65.00.

The present book contains the proceedings of a symposium (2007), organized in honour of Prof. Barbara Kellner-Heinkele in occasion of her retirement from the Freie Universität Berlin, and has been published in an attractive hardback edition by the Orient-Institut Istanbul and Ergon Verlag in 2012. The three editors are related to each other as narrow research collaborators: Claus Schönig, former director of the Orient-Institut, succeeded Barbara Kellner-Heinkele as the chair of the Institute of Turkology of the Freie Universität in 2007, while Brigitte Heuer has been research associate at the same institution.

The carefully edited volume includes twenty contributions (seventeen in German, three in English) around the topic of nature and human contemplation of/interaction with nature in literature, language, history, and society, thus examining more than just ‘nature’ with its various aspects (landscape, botany, zoology, natural phenomena, seasons, and climate), but rather the cultural, political, and social interrelation between human life and aspects of nature in a very wide sense. It offers a broad panorama of stimulating approaches to a relatively new topic in Turkic studies, with the participation of a number of prestigious scholars in the fields of cultural and social studies, literature, history, and linguistics. The interdisciplinary contributions are divided into four subthemes: literature (‘Horizons of Literature’), language (‘Linguistic Assessment of Nature’), zoology and botany (‘(Mythical) Animals and Plants’), and society (‘Humans, Landscape and Environment’).

The first chapter of the literary subgroup (Catharina Dufft: “Natural Beauty” and Meeting Place: the Princes’ Islands Around 1900 in Selected Literary Texts’) deals with the description of the Princes’ Islands in the works of four authors, namely Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil, Sait Faik, Orhan Pamuk, and Shirin Devrim. The author argues on the theoretical grounds of Theodore Adorno’s newly formulated concept of ‘das Naturschöne’ as a human analytical approach to nature and urbanity, and the chronotopos according to Michail Bachtin as spatial and temporal experience in literature. Dufft individuates mainly three attributes for the chronotopos of the island, namely the island as a paradise, the island as a microcosmos of society, and the island as a prison.

Very similarly, Erika Glassen in her contribution ‘The Perception of Nature in the Early Turkish Novel About Istanbul’ selects four works among the earliest novels in Turkish literature in order to show the close interrelation between human psychology and perception of nature. Namık Kemal and Ahmet Mithat are presented as early examples where the description of the inner psychological state has not yet reached the differentiated expression as in later works at the turn of the century (Halid Ziya and Mehmet Ra’uf). The psychological processes in these novels, argues the author, are representable only by the subjective perception of natural phenomena. Her final argument, ‘Der Mensch bemächtigt sich in der Selbstreflexion der Natur und verleiht aus seinem Innern heraus dem Äußeren der Natur Bedeutung’ (36), could be the device for the whole volume and describes perfectly the cultural and counterpunctual interrelation between man and nature, between human perception of nature and the effect of nature on human psychology.

Karin Schweißgut (‘Beyond Civilization: Man and Nature in Anatolia on the Basis of Selected Works of Turkish Literature’) deals with the psychological stance on nature of a number of writers, choosing the so-called ‘village literatur’ (*köy edebiyatı*), a group of texts that describe (and criticize) rural society in the middle of the twentieth century. Using texts by Mahmut Makal, Yaşar Kemal, and Ferit Edgü (and thus consciously exceeding the proper framework of the genre), she shows that these authors give the image of a nature hostile to human life, far from ‘civilization and culture’, the individual being in a constant fight with nature and its adversities.

The short contribution by Jenny B. White (‘Creating Turks in Fiction and Ethnography’) talks about the author’s cultural expectations of ‘Turkishness’ and the difficulty to present it as an anthropologist, resolving the dilemma by ‘inventing’ Turkishness in the form of a fictional character in her own crime narratives.

After this deviation from the proper theme of the volume, the last chapter of the literary section (‘Atmosphere at the ‘Periphery’—Poetry in Uzbekistan After 1990’ by Sigrid Kleinmichel), actually an excellent introduction and anthology of poetry trends in Uzbekistan after the societal changes in the 1990s, shows the metaphorical use of natural phenomena, seasons, the four elements, and plants.

The linguistic section includes very divergent contributions: the first chapter, by Yukiyo Kasai (‘Old Turkic Words About Nature and Society in Chinese Sources [6th and 9th Centuries]’) is a compilation of Old Turkic words in Chinese transcription with an excellent analysis of the

implied phonetic and graphematic aspects, and a discussion on the ethnonym *tū jué* (*Türküt*). Helga Anetshofer presents 'New Findings on the Old Anatolian Turkish Horse Terminology', with as main source the relevant chapter in the *Qābusnāme* (composed in Persian in 1082, Turkish translations 14th and 15th centuries), showing many hitherto unknown terms on this important part of Altaic culture. Ablet Semet's 'Nature and Man as Measurements in Turkic Languages' is an interesting analysis of human and nature-related lexemes, such as 'tree', 'migration', or 'eye', 'foot', 'arm', and other body parts, for the measurement of time and space, while Ayşe Tetik examines the semantic concepts of "Human", "Man", "Woman" in Modern Turkic Languages', providing extensive and useful word lists of the relevant notions.

The third section (about zoology and botany, but actually much more than this) starts with the chapter 'On the Iconography of the *dābbat al-ard*' by Joachim Gierlich with a typological analysis of this apocalyptic 'beast of the earth', a mythical animal depicted as an aliferous giraffe, mixed with elements of a horse, leopard, and human, or as a dragon, in Ottoman manuscripts around 1600, and reproduced also on the cover of the present book. György Hazai in 'Nature and Fauna in Two Early Ottoman Works', provides text passages from the Turkish translations of Farīduddīn Attār's biography of saints, *Tazkharatu'l-Awliyā*, and of the collection of fairy tales *Ferec ba'd eṣ-ṣidde*, in manuscripts from 1341 and 1451. Peter Zieme ('About Wish-Trees, Snakes and an Old Uyghur Tale') publishes Old Uyghur text fragments on the Jīmutavāhana tale, showing the intercultural character and mobility of Buddhist literature. Ingeborg Hauenschield and Claus Schönig ('Drugs in the *Bābur-nāme*') present a very interesting aspect of this noteworthy work written by Babur (d. 1530), the Timurid who laid the foundations for the later Mughal Empire. On the base of the reported bacchanals and drunken orgies regularly organized by Babur, the authors list and comment a number of inebriating, but also medical drugs mentioned in the *Bābur-nāme*. Richard Wittmann's stimulating chapter "'Since they cannot speak...': An Early Example of Legal Pathocentric Animal Welfare in the Islamic World' shows some instances of Ottoman animal protection. Besides travel reports from the eighteenth century describing how Istanbul's population cared for animals, the author quotes interesting excerpts from market regulation laws concerning the protection of pack animals (early 16th century).

The last section of the book comprises six contributions on the social and historical contexts of nature and man. Mária Ivanics ('Famine in the

Steppe') examines mainly English sources on the Great Famine 1555-1560 in the Nogay steppe around Astrakhan, highlighting the social and political reasons and contexts of dearth in the Volga region. The chapter 'Man and Nature at the South-Eastern Border of Turkey' by Barbara Flemming leads us into the Şemdinli district in the border region of Hakkâri, analyzing the political, environmental, linguistic, and social problems of a war-ridden population in an arduous mountain area. Adolat Rakhmankulova ('The Agricultural Success of the Korean Deportees in Uzbekistan') uses archive documents to show the successful cultivation of virgin soil in Uzbekistan by Koreans after their deportation from the Far East in 1937. Important issues of 'nature' are nature protection, ecosystems, and sustainability. Thus, Brigitte Heuer ('From a Salt Marsh to a Bird Paradise—The Planned "Nuratau-Kyzylkum" Biospheric Reserve in Uzbekistan') describes the formation and history of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum biosphere reserve, which is being implemented by the government of Uzbekistan and the UN Development Program in the framework of the UNESCO program 'Man and Biosphere'. Elena V. Boykova in her contribution about 'The Interrelation of Nature and Man in the Spiritual Tradition of the Mongols' makes clear that the Mongol attitude to nature is adaptive, rather than destructive, due to their ecological tradition, which acknowledges the sacrality of the territory. From an ethnographic point of view, Rufat Sattarov describes the (most of them now extinct) beliefs and rituals connected with childbirth in Azerbaijan ('The "Rites of Passage" Among the Azerbaijani Turks: Traditional Beliefs and Rituals Linked to the Birth of a Child').

Summing up, the reading of the volume is not always easy, due to the highly divergent character of the contributions, but, on the other hand, the underlining feature of the book—interdisciplinarity around a common denominator—could also be considered as a desideratum in academic production in general, especially if edited as carefully and successfully as in the present case.

Matthias Kappler
Ca' Foscari University of Venice
mkappler@unive.it