

to put the same thing the other way around: from the great many possible individuals belonging to those nations, those will be selected, foregrounded and highlighted who are considered 'typical'. This 'typicality effect' or *effet de typique* (Leerssen 1997) is ambivalent. On the one hand it refers to an individual conforming to a type, on the other hand it refers to that individual and type thereby saliently standing out from the normal default value. To call a bullfight *corrida* 'typically Spanish' means both to stress its representativity of what is properly Spanish, and its unusual way of standing out from mundane normalcy.

As such, the typicality effect generates a mode of discourse which is proper to stereotyping, namely the "confusion between the attribute and the essence" (*la confusion de l'attribut et de l'essentiel*, Pageaux 1994: 67); in a similar vein, Foster (1982) has pointed out that the discourse of →exoticism will conflate "the distinct and the distinctive". The tendency will result in an overdetermined mode of characterizing nationalities by way of recognizable, salient aspects which are thereby constructed as representative, typical and characteristic. This overdetermination will in turn lead to the reductive recycling and foregrounding of formulaic attributes – indeed, →clichés – like Dutch windmills and clogs, German *Lederhosen*, French berets and *baguette* bread, English bowler hats. Typicality thus tends, inherently, towards the very definition of *caricature*, the "grotesque or ludicrous representation of persons or things by exaggeration of their most characteristic and striking features" (OED).

Joep Leerssen

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VISIOTYPE →Stereotype

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VISUAL ARTS

[See also: *National history visualized*]

The terms 'imagology' or 'image studies' are not used in historical or systematic studies of the visual arts, for the obvious reason that these

disciplines use the term 'image' in a number of meanings, both literal and abstract, that have nothing to do with the representation of national characteristics. More specifically, the term *imagology* is avoided for fear of confusion with 'iconology', an approach that studies artworks as signs that obtain their meaning from a broader intellectual background. Obviously, even without using the actual term 'imagology', the approach is valuable to the study of the visual arts. Two dimensions can be distinguished: national stereotypes expressed in art, and national stereotypes used by art historians. National stereotypes have, indeed, been more central to the development of art scholarship than to any of the other humanities. Even today, art historians and connoisseurs persist in organizing their material according to schools and national categories, even when such categories did not exist in the period they denote. Often these schools are characterized by stylistic constants that are by definition stereotypical.

The assumption that visual representations of people directly express their national characteristics is rooted in →physiognomic theory. Art treatises from the Renaissance onwards suppose, on the one hand, that the sight of specific objects may directly induce a change in character, and, on the other, that states of mind find their immediate reflection in one's body and gestures. Following Theophrastus' theory of →character, artistic theory explains the visualization of national characteristics through the four temperamental humours combining the →climatic opposites of cold/warm and moist/dry. Moreover, one's past and even one's future actions are deemed to find direct expression in one's body. The theory is ultimately based on animistic notions and is not limited to depictions of the human form: also in architecture, the column orders were given the names from the regions in Greece whose qualities they purportedly represent.

In the history of art ranging from tribal images to monumental sculpture and city planning, 'high art' has been regarded as pre-eminently expressive of a people or nation's own consummate achievements. Especially in the nineteenth century, history painting and architecture were motivated by the explicit intention to visualize perceived national qualities and →national history; but art historians have in hindsight also interpreted past masters and their works as reflections of their own national identity. By contrast, the task of making visual stereotypes of other peoples was relegated to 'low art': examples can be found in illustrations to →maps, travel accounts and guides, costume books and *Völkerspiegel*, as well as in propaganda graphic art and photography, in →comics and →caricature. The nineteenth century witnessed a surge in the stereotypical portrayal of others, triggered by the World Fairs that presented peoples from other continents to Europeans, usually in the context of 'orientalist' attitudes inspired by →colonial power relations. The ideology of the Fairs was reflected in the architecture of contemporary ethnographical museums.