Dan Brown versus John le Carré: An Imagological Approach to Literary Thrillers

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Abstract

De hoofdvraag van dit onderzoek is: "Op welke manieren komen de representaties van de Europese en Amerikaanse nationale identiteit in karakterbeschrijvingen, settings, en dialogen in de boeken van Dan Brown en John le Carré overeen met de tekstuele traditie van het stereotyperen van Europa en Amerika in relatie tot elkaar, en op welke manieren wijken deze representaties af van deze tekstuele traditie?" Het theoretisch kader dat toegepast wordt om deze vraag te beantwoorden is imagologie, zoals beschreven door Manfred Beller en Joep Leerssen in hun werk *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters.* In de inleiding van dit onderzoek wordt de tekstuele traditie van stereotypering en de theorie van Beller en Leerssen toegelicht. Vervolgens zullen de hoofdstukken 1, 2, en 3 zich richten op verschillende aspecten in de boeken (Brown's *Angels & Demons, The Da Vinci Code,* en *Inferno,* en le Carré's *The Tailor of Panama, Absolute Friends,* en *A Delicate Truth*) *waaruit* stereotypering naar voren komt. Hoofdstuk één zal gaan over de karakterisering van Europese en Amerikaanse karakters, hoofdstuk twee zal zich richten op stereotyperende opmerkingen in dialogen, en in hoofdstuk drie zal de setting besproken worden en hoe dit gebruikt wordt door de schrijvers om bepaalde stereotyperingen te opperen alsmede te versterken. Dit alles zal leiden tot een imagologische analyse van de genoemde literaire thrillers. De verwachting is dat uit het onderzoek naar voren zal komen dat bepaalde stereotyperingen die deel uitmaken van de tekstuele traditie nog steeds aanwezig zijn in hedendaagse populaire literatuur. Daarnaast wordt ook verwacht dat wellicht de boeken van Dan Brown op een uitgesprokenere manier gebruik maken van deze traditionele archetypes dan de boeken van John le Carré. Tot op heden is er nagenoeg nog geen imagologisch onderzoek gedaan naar Brown en le Carré, waardoor het kan worden vastgesteld dat dit onderzoek iets nieuws zal toevoegen aan het onderzoeksveld.

Keywords: *Imagologie, Dan Brown, John le Carré, literaire thrillers*

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Introduction

At a time when European alliances are questioned and countries are increasingly mindful of their own national identities it is interesting to examine these concepts in literature as well. Moreover, Europe's increasingly strained relationship with America begs the question of how this relationship has been perceived in the past, and how it is being portrayed in fiction today. How are we perceived? And what is our image of the other? Novels that have included this dynamic between Europeans and Americans have followed a textual tradition of stereotyping the European and American national identities that Beller and Leerssen describe in their study *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*. However, Imagological research into this dynamic between Europeans and Americans has thus far mainly focused on nineteenth and early twentieth century fiction. To investigate how this relationship and these national identities are stereotyped today, it is important to look at contemporary fiction instead. Popular literature, and more specifically the genre of the literary thriller, is a perfect object of study because it appears as though these types of fiction rely more heavily on stereotypes and tropes than other, more literary and experimental genres do.

In his text "Perception, Image, Imagology", Manfred Beller explains how the perception of concepts such as *image* and *imagination* can be traced back to great Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. It is, however, according to him, not until the age of the Enlightenment that these concepts are applied to nationality and national characterisations. He states that "[f]rom this moment onwards, the image of other countries and peoples has become an important argument, not only in political discussions between nations, but also in poetical representations" (3). Indeed, ever since the Age of Reason in the 18th century and the rise of Nationalism in the 19th century, more and more works of literature examine the dichotomy between two countries or continents through the lens of national characters and stereotypes. A good example of this is the novel *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James. The specific (national) stereotypes of Americans versus Europeans in relation to each other that James incorporated in his novel followed a textual tradition that pre-dates him, and that was maintained long after. This textual tradition presents Americans as innocent, honest, and naïve. Europeans, contrastingly, are displayed as knowledgeable, historically aware, conservative, and in some cases corrupt, deceitful, or just plain evil.

James' *The Portrait of a Lady* follows the story of the American Isabel Archer. Isabel

is portrayed as the stereotypical innocent and ignorant American girl, who wants to learn about history and culture on the European continent but instead encounters the characters of Madame Merle and Osmond who deceive her. In his article "The Portrait of a Lady as a Bildungsroman", Yu-ch'eng states the following: "The action of the novel concerns mainly the pilgrimage of Isabel Archer which leads her from ignorance and innocence to knowledge and maturity. […] The lessons of the world will put an end to her cloistered innocence, mark her, mature her, and finally form her, so that at the close of the novel, her vision will be drastically different from her previous conception" (89-91). He seems to suggest here that although she is naïve and tricked by deceitful and manipulative people, going to Europe has ultimately brought her maturity. In the novel, Europe is thus portrayed as a setting of danger and manipulation, but also as a place of maturity and culture.

These representations of America and Europe seem logical in hindsight as America was still a fairly young country in the 19th century. Representations of America and Europe as binary oppositions, with the US as innocent and progressive, are in line with the concept of America as "The New World", and Europe as "The Old World". However, the global and political landscape has changed significantly since James, and the relationship between the two continents may have somewhat shifted after the World Wars, with Europe often looking toward the US for help, but also regarding it as the birthplace of consumerism, capitalism, and even American imperialism. This study will examine if and how these national characterisations and national stereotypes are still perpetuated in popular contemporary literature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries or if they have changed and in that case, how they have changed. It will do so by answering the following research question:

How do the representations of the American and European national identities in character descriptions, setting, and dialogues in the works of Dan Brown and John le Carré interact with the textual tradition of stereotyping Europe and America in relation to each other?

The choice to focus on Dan Brown's novels was made because a parallel can be drawn between the plotlines of these novels and James' *The Portrait of a Lady*. Brown's *Angels and Demons* (2000), *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), and *Inferno* (2013) all revolve around the American protagonist professor Robert Langdon. In each book Langdon is transposed to Europe in order to solve a mystery rooted in European history. European cities function stereotypically as dark and gloomy settings of historical relevance, but the character of Robert

Langdon himself appears to be less stereotypical than Henry James' Isabel Archer. These three novels are therefore a good starting point to examine a contemporary perspective on the "American in Europe" plotline. The novels *The Tailor of Panama* (1996), *Absolute Friends* (2003), and *A Delicate Truth* (2013) by John le Carré function as appropriate counterparts to Brown's novels because they were written around the same time as Brown's, fall within the same genre of the literary thriller, and in turn examine the relationship between Europe and the US from a European perspective. Both authors have had their novels adapted to the screen and can be observed as having fallen into the realm of popular culture.

The theoretical framework that this study will be built upon is that of Imagology as described by Beller and Leerssen in their book *The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey*. In his chapter "Perception, Image, Imagology", Beller explains how stereotypes in literature are formed. He states that literature allows for its characters to be reduced to only a few, noticeable character traits. When these characters then become part of a larger group such as a national people or a race, they form national stereotypes. Moreover, Beller also states that these stereotyped representations of groups lead to prejudices that ultimately end up rationalising these stereotypes as well. He suggests that we are all subject to forming stereotypes when initially meeting someone from another culture or country, and that it is nearly impossible to distinguish which of these stereotypes are based on our own experiences or on socially and culturally constructed images of others (7). All in all, Beller paints a complex picture of how stereotypes are constructed. Are they based on our own perception and experiences, or are they something which we are unconsciously made to believe by society? Are we ourselves subject to a type of textual tradition, or do we make up our own mind?

It is precisely this which gives Imagology as part of critical comparative study its importance. National stereotypes in literature are often perceived as comical and entertaining, but they also hold the potential to spread more malignant and false prejudices as these stereotypes often become part of a wider canon of literature, and ultimately of culture itself. This is why Beller asserts that the goal of Imagology is to "describe the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them" (12).

That these national stereotypes are mainly upheld by literature is something which

Leerssen affirms as well when he states that "literature (as well as more recent poetically-ruled and fictional-narrative media, such as cinema or the comic strip) is a privileged genre

for the dissemination of stereotypes, because it often works on the presupposition of a 'suspension of disbelief' and some (at least aesthetic) appreciative credit among the audience. Such factors continue to give an imagologist specialism within literary studies its *raison d'etre*" ("History and Method", 27). Leerssen states that the goal of Imagology (as described by Beller) is attained by isolating the intertext of a representation of nationality as a trope and then by placing it into a textual tradition.

The chapter "History and Method" by Leerssen offers a comprehensive method on how to apply the theoretical framework of imagology to fictional writing. Leerssen first stresses how it is not up to an imagologist to determine whether a particular national stereotype is false or true. He states that "[t]he imagologist's frame of reference is a textual and intertextual one" (27). He also stresses the subjectivity of these representations. Leerssen argues that "[t]he nationality represented (the *spected*) is silhouetted in the perspectival context of the representing text or discourse (*spectant*)" (27). It is due to this, according to Leerssen, that imagologists are so keen to investigate texts or discourses that demonstrate both the characterisations of 'the Other', as well as the Self in relation to each other. Leerssen identifies four important steps in describing the methodology of Imagology (28):

1) Establishing the intertext of a national characterisation and or stereotyping as a trope and placing it in a tradition
2) Contextualising the trope (in what type of a text does it occur and what are the conventions of this particular genre of text?)
3) Historical contextualisation of the text itself
4) Understanding the text's target audience and the possible reception and/or impact of these national tropes on the target audience

In order to examine the six novels that have been selected, the methods of close reading and symptomatic reading will be applied. Initially, the novels will be read to get a general feel of the ways in which the stereotyping of the European and American national identities occur. After that, the novels will each be dissected and examined by isolating specific instances of stereotyping or the use of tropes. This will be achieved by colour-coding the passages accordingly to their method of stereotyping: either in dialogue, character description, or setting. These passages will subsequently be compared to the textual tradition of stereotyping the European and American national identities as described by Beller and Leerssen. By examining these passages and the way in which they stereotype these national identities it becomes possible to see how they follow the textual tradition of stereotyping or how they deviate from it.

As Leerssen states, literature (including film) is an effective medium to spread national stereotypes as it has the potential to reach immense audiences. This is part of the reason why this study examines six works of popular fiction (that in part has also been adapted to television or film). Brown's and Le Carré's works have reached millions of people across the world, therefore making these novels relevant works to research from an Imagologist perspective. National stereotypes that perhaps perpetuated by these novels can very easily become part of common discourse because they have such a widespread appeal. Moreover, imagologist research into these authors' works is scarce and it is non-existent in the case of Brown. Academic research into the works of Brown has been done, but it mainly focusses on the historical accuracy of some of the events that are described in the novels by the protagonist, the obvious intertext of Brown's *Inferno*, or on evidence that proves the real location of the Holy Grail is not actually the Louvre in Paris. Schneider-Mayerson's article "The Dan Brown Phenomenon" examines Brown's success and attributes it to a post-9/11 public preference for conspiracy theories. The article does touch upon the representation of a certain period in time that strongly relates to a nation (post-9/11 America) but does not include any Imagologist research. It appears as if no one as of yet has done research into the representation of national characterisation and stereotypes in the novels of Dan Brown.

Almost the same could be said for le Carré. Most of the research on his works focusses on Russian and American intelligence agencies during the Cold War. However, the essay "The One Great Hyperpower in the Sky, Anti-Americanism in Contemporary European Literature" by Gulddal explores post-9/11 anti-American sentiments in, amongst two other books by French and German authors, le Carré's *Absolute Friends*. The essay concludes that "although the literary strategies employed in these negative representations of the US are very different in each case, the three books share a deep disgust not only with American foreign policy, invariably interpreted as a reckless, deranged bid for global hegemony, but also with American culture and society in general. This article interprets this disgust as an expression of a deep-seated, irrational Americanophobia—that is, of 'anti-Americanism'" (667). This conclusion may perhaps suggest that the textual tradition of equating the American national identity to innocence and honesty no longer holds true. As stated earlier, popular literature like these novels enjoys a widespread audience and very clearly present specific national stereotypes. Imagology's aim to bring these stereotypes and prejudices to the surface is clearly applicable to these six novels that this paper will examine. It will do so by isolating three different instances in which national stereotyping may occur in fiction, namely by discussing them in three different chapters. Chapter one will examine dialogues, chapter two

character descriptions, and chapter three will focus on setting. The chapters have been limited to three in order to maintain a manageable scope but also because these three aspects of a novel together make up characterisation. Character descriptions are important because they provide a more superficial and initial perspective on specific characters, but their character traits and opinions, which become clear in dialogue, are important to examine in tandem with these descriptions in order to truly establish a clear picture of the way in which these national characters are stereotyped. Settings can in turn enhance and affirm these stereotypes (or deviations from the textual tradition) so they will be examined as well. A fourth concluding chapter will take stock of the various findings, discuss how they relate to the textual tradition or if they deviate from it.

Chapter One: Dialogues Under Scrutiny

Dialogues make up a very important part of a story, because it allows its readers to understand the characters from their own perspective, rather than just by descriptions. They provide a greater, more detailed, and yet sometimes also more subtle comprehension of situations and motives behind characters' actions and traits and can thus supply interesting material to delve into in order to find out how certain identities are stereotyped.

This chapter will therefore examine how the American and European national identities are stereotyped in dialogues. The dialogues under scrutiny in this chapter may refer to (non-)fictional characters in the novel, as well as comment on more abstract institutions such as politics and the economy. The chapter will be divided into five sections, considering the three novels by Brown individually, but examining the le Carré novels as one, for all three novels follow the same type of sentiment and reasoning concerning American and European national identities and stereotypes. The chapter will end with a fifth section which will be a brief conclusion to the findings discussed in the previous sections.

§1.1. Dan Brown's Angels & Demons

The novel begins with Robert Langdon's visit to Geneva, where he is flown to by the director general of CERN; an international physics research facility. Langdon is a professor at one of the United States' most prestigious and internationally acclaimed universities, Harvard. However, when Langdon arrives at CERN and meets the German Maximilian Kohler, director general, and the Italian scientist Vittoria Vetra, he is confronted, on various occasions, with what the two Europeans perceive as "American scientific arrogance" (90). When Langdon first arrives at CERN and is introduced to the facility by Kohler, the following conversation ensues:

> 'I'm embarrassed to admit,' Langdon ventured, trying to make conversation,
> 'that I've never heard of CERN.'
> 'Not surprising,' Kohler replied, his clipped response sounding harshly
> efficient. 'Most Americans do not see Europe as the world leader in scientific
> research. They see us as nothing but a quaint shopping district – an odd
> perception if you consider the nationalities of men like Einstein, Galileo, and
> Newton.' […] 'CERN single-handedly employs more than half of the world's

particle physicists – the brightest minds on earth – Germans, Japanese, Italians, Dutch, you name it. Our physicists represent over five hundred universities and sixty nationalities.' (37-38, 42)

An interesting fact to note about Kohler's final remark is that he deliberately does not mention any American scientists who work at CERN. This perhaps suggests some antagonism towards American scholars, or perhaps a deliberate demonstration to Langdon that European scientists are in Kohler's opinion superior to American scientists.

The next topic of conversation between Kohler and Langdon is of a similar nature. Langdon is confronted with the fact that CERN invented the World Wide Web, which surprises him. When Langdon seems to be puzzled by this bit of trivia, Kohler states that:

'The Web […] began here as a network of in-house computer sites. It enabled scientists from different departments to share daily findings with one another. Of course, the entire world is under the impression the Web is U.S. technology.'
Langdon followed down the hall. 'Why not set the record straight?'
Kohler shrugged, apparently disinterested. 'A petty misconception over a petty technology. CERN is far greater than a global connection of computers. Our scientists produce miracles almost daily.'(38-39)

Again, Kohler confronts Langdon with his own prejudice. Moreover, as impressive as Langdon finds the invention, Kohler brushes it off as if the Web is nothing compared to the real miracles that European science produces. This way, he further asserts his own perceived intellectual superiority.

Finally, Langdon has the same type of conversation with Vittoria when she enlightens him on the origins of one of science's most famous contributions to the world, affirming the notion that it is a European (not a personal) opinion that Europe is intellectually greater than the US:

'When the Catholic Church first proposed the Big Bang Theory in 1927, the –'
'I'm sorry?' Langdon interrupted, before he could stop himself. 'You say the Big Bang was a *Catholic* idea?' Vittoria looked surprised by his question. 'Of course. Proposed by a Catholic monk, George Lemaître in 1927.'
'But, I thought…'' he hesitated. 'Wasn't the Big Bang proposed by Harvard astronomer Edwin Hubble?'

Kohler glowered. 'Again, American scientific arrogance. Hubble published in 1929, two years *after* Lemaître.'

Langdon scowled. *It's called the Hubble Telescope, sir – I've never heard of any Lemaître Telescope!*

'Mr Kohler is right,' Vittoria said, 'the idea belonged to Lemaître. Hubble only *confirmed* it by gathering the hard evidence that proved the Big Bang was scientifically probable.' (90)

These conversations demonstrate an interesting dynamic. On the one hand they follow the textual tradition of stereotyping America as naïve and innocent and Europe as knowledgeable because it clearly shows that Langdon, as an Ivy League university professor is not aware of an international research facility such as CERN and wrongly assumes that the US invented the Web and the Big Bang. This textual tradition of stereotyping the American as 'simple' and the European as 'intellectual' is addressed by Strout in his study *The American Image of the Old World.* By discussing the position of writer James Fenimore Cooper he states that "by contrast with Europe American culture and society were blighted by a 'vast expansion of mediocrity'. […] the only country in which he found it a social disadvantage to be a writer was his own, because 'blocks are not colder, or can have less real reverence for letters, arts, or indeed cultivation of any kind, than the great bulk of the American people'" (97). In Dan Brown's novel, Kohler places Americans in a group that is stereotyped by the assumption that *all* (or most) Americans are oblivious to the fact that Europe has provided such great scientific contributions. Langdon, and Americans as a group, are in this case stereotyped as naïve. Meanwhile, these conversations also establish that Europe remains to be the fountain of knowledge (from Kohler's European perspective). However, the conversations also demonstrate that, from an American perspective Europeans and Europe itself, are not considered to be more knowledgeable than Americans are. The opposing perspectives unveil a compelling contrast. Langdon assumes America is more scientifically advanced than Europe, but finds he is mistaken. On the other hand, Kohler feels that Americans are inferior to Europeans and their cultural and intellectual prowess. The way in which Brown, by allowing Kohler to 'teach' Langdon, demonstrates this dynamic clearly follows an American textual tradition that dates back to James Fenimore Cooper's writing. Peter Firchow comments on this particular textual tradition by referring to a poem by Goethe. In this poem, Goethe expresses that he feels as if America is somehow better off than Europe for not being burdened with the weight of history. America does not have to deal with "ruined castles,

useless memories, and pointless feuds", unlike Europe which apparently cannot seem to disconnect itself from its past in order to look ahead to the future. According to Firchow this view was shared by the American people, but not necessarily by America's most revered writers. Firchow also cites James Fenimore Cooper as well as Nathaniel Hawthorne when he explains that American writers of the time felt that America lacked "obscure fictions ... [and] rich, artificial auxiliaries of poetry". America suffered from a "poverty of materials" and turned out to be an impossible country to write in because it had "no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, not anything but commonplace prosperity". Firchow goes on to suggest that although the image that Europeans had of America had become marginally better after the Civil War and the subsequent release of thousands of slaves, Europeans "by this time … had come to see the United States more in the light of a dystopia than a utopia" (91). This clearly suggests that the American textual tradition of portraying Europe included the sentiment that, although Europe was also a place of doom and gloom, it had more to offer culturally, historically, and intellectually than the United States. The scenes in which Langdon, Kohler, and Vittoria discuss scientific innovations clearly demonstrate that Brown fits within this textual tradition of stereotyping Americans as simple and innocent and Europeans as more complex and intellectual.

All three of the novels in the Langdon series feature Langdon dressing fairly conservatively. The novel also uses Langdon's physical appearance as a type of 'running-gag' in conversations. A particular section of the novel takes place inside the Pantheon in Rome, and a guide wrongly assumes Langdon's nationality based on his appearance:

> 'You're English right?' The man's accent was thick Tuscan.
> Langdon blinked, confused. 'Actually, no. I'm American.'
> The man looked embarrassed. 'Oh, heavens, forgive me. You were so nicely
> dressed, I just figured … my apologies.' (276)

Langdon's appearance is addressed yet again in a similar way later on in the story when two BBC journalists are secretly following Langdon on his mission to save the abducted cardinals. They state that "[h]e's a little well-dressed to be playing Spiderman" (324). Comments along these lines confirm the observation that Langdon is perceived to be more conservative, or at least dresses more conservatively, than most Americans do. Langdon is even often confused for being non-American.

This concept of Europeans dressing more conservatively and Americans less is asserted even more when Langdon's appearance is overtly contrasted with Vittoria's

appearance as the guide at the Pantheon also wrongly assumes her nationality based on her physical appearance:

> 'Ah, your wife!' the docent exclaimed, clearly thrilled to have another guest. He motioned to her short pants and hiking boots. 'Now *you* I can tell are American!'
> Vittoria's eyes narrowed. 'I'm Italian.'
> The guide's smile dimmed. 'Oh, dear.' (279)

In this scene, the docent stereotypes Americans as a group by assuming they dress a certain way. Vittoria is wearing short pants, which is frowned upon in all European, but especially Italian, churches. The guide seems to want to infer that Vittoria's overt disregard for dress-codes in Italian churches must mean that she is American. This leads to the assumption that to the docent, Americans are less cultured and perhaps knowledgeable about certain European traditions and customs. The effect of these exchanges depends heavily on a shared assumption by the reader that conservative clothing equals non-American, and that only naïve Americans can make the mistake of wearing short trousers in a church, thus making the guide's mistake relatable and humorous. However, this way of portraying an American and European (Italian) character deviates from the textual tradition because it reverses the stereotype present within this textual tradition.

§1.2. Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code

This novel is the second novel in the Langdon series, and it has a different tone than *Angels & Demons* when it comes to stereotyping in conversations. Whilst *Angels & Demons* comments repeatedly on Langdon's American identity in contrast with a collective European identity in the dialogue, *The Da Vinci Code* seems to be much more interested in the individual European identities and incorporating elements regarding these identities in its conversations. Langdon's role is much more like that of an observer, a neutral, non-European perspective from which these individual – and often clashing – national stereotypes are examined. The novel largely takes place in Paris, and its female protagonist is French. The characters also visit the UK, and coincidentally find themselves faced with a English antagonist. The novel clearly wants to pit these French characters against the English ones, and it provides a battlefield for the ongoing love-hate relationship that the English and the French continue to have. A good example of stereotyping the French can already be found

very early on in the novel. When Langdon arrives in Paris to help the investigation of the death of Jacques Saunière, the policeman who picks up Langdon from the airport provides the first, and slightly comical, stereotype:

> Langdon thought of Vittoria, recalling their playful promise a year ago that every six months they would meet again at a different romantic spot on the globe. The Eiffel Tower, Langdon suspected, would have made their list. Sadly, he last kissed Vittoria in a noisy airport in Rome more than a year ago.
> 'Did you mount her?' the agent asked, looking over.
> Langdon glanced up, certain he had misunderstood. 'I beg your pardon?'
> 'She is lovely, no?' The agent motioned through the windshield toward the Eiffel Tower. 'Have you mounted her?'
> Langdon rolled his eyes. 'No, I haven't climbed the tower.'
> 'She's the symbol of France. I think she is perfect.'
> Langdon nodded absently. Symbolists often remarked that France – a country renowned for machismo, womanizing and diminutive insecure leaders like Napoleon and Pepin the Short – could not have chosen a more apt national emblem than a thousand-foot phallus. (28-29)

In this particular scene, the French are portrayed as proud, patriotic, and sensual. These particular French stereotypes are discussed by Ruth Florack. She states that the French are stereotyped as being "dogged by nationalism and an outmoded sense of superiority" (157) by other European nations in the early 20th century. This stereotype is applicable to the French agent driving Langdon, as he proudly shows Langdon the perfectly patriotic symbol of France: the Eiffel Tower. This conversation also includes another important stereotype attributed to the French, namely sensuality and sexual liberty. Florack also addresses this stereotype and even provides an historical explanation for it when she states that "from the moment the first case of syphilis crops up in the French army round and about 1500, it is defined as the 'morbus gallicus' in Europe; even Luther talks of 'the French' when he refers to the dreaded disease. This does not come as a surprise: anything French is often associated with sexual liberty […] the French appear as vain and garrulous, sensual, frivolous and immoral characters" (154-156). Florack even comments on the particular significance that Paris has within this stereotype of sexual liberty. According to her, Paris has been portrayed as a "place of sensuous pleasures and sins" (157) since the early Enlightenment. It is clear that this short exchange between Langdon and the agent is filled with French national stereotypes

that follow the lines of a textual tradition going as far back as almost three centuries.

The novel also addresses the English national identity and the stereotypes that are part and parcel of the literary tradition of portraying the English. Menno Spiering addresses the stereotype of the English gentleman by stating that "[i]n literature two well-known personifications of Englishness are 'the gentleman' and his uncultivated counterpart 'John Bull' […] Verne calls Fogg 'the English gentleman' dozens of times and characterizes him as morally upright, honest" (145). According to him, being a gentleman comes with the awareness of a particular code of conduct and a sense of duty (146). This English stereotype is personified in the character of Leigh Teabing. When Langdon and Sophie are on the run from the French authorities after having taken a mysterious artifact from a safety deposit box, they turn to Teabing for refuge and help. In various conversations, Teabing is established as the quintessential English gentleman:

> 'Robert,' Sophie asked, you're *certain* we can trust this man?'
> 'Absolutely. We're colleagues, he doesn't need money, and I happen to know
> he despises the French authorities.'
> Sophie stared out at the dark roadway. 'If we go to him, how much do you
> want to tell him?'
> Langdon looked unconcerned. 'Believe me, Leigh Teabing knows more about
> the Priory of Sion and the Holy Grail than anyone on earth.' (292)

This conversation touches upon Teabing's honesty and sense of duty because Langdon is absolutely sure that Teabing will help them. It also, again, refers to Teabing (a European) as being a source of information and knowledge. As the conversation continues, Teabing is portrayed in such a stereotypical way that he almost becomes a caricature:

> 'Let's hope Leigh doesn't mind late-night visitors.'
> 'For the record, it's *Sir* Leigh.' Langdon had made that mistake only
> once. 'Teabing is quite a character. He was knighted by the Queen several
> years back after composing an extensive history of the House of York.'
> Sophie looked over. 'You're kidding, right? We're going to visit a *knight*?'
> Langdon gave an awkward smile. 'We're on a Grail quest, Sophie. Who better
> to help us than a knight?' (294)

What better example is there of a gentleman who upholds a code of conduct and who has a sense of duty than a knight? As Spiering asserts, the concept of the gentle-man can be traced

back to "Chaucer's discussions of 'gentilnesse' in the fourteenth century" (145). At that time, this concept in literature was indeed most often applied to actual knights. As historical literature teaches us, medieval English stories featuring knights by default also featured tests that those knights have to pass in order to show their honesty and trustworthiness. This is used in the novel as well by Teabing when Langdon rings Teabing's doorbell:

> 'Any chance you'd open the gate for an old friend?'
>
> 'Those who seek the truth are more than friends. They are brothers.'
>
> Langdon rolled his eyes at Sophie, well accustomed to Teabing's predilection for dramatic antics.
>
> 'Indeed I will open the gate,' Teabing proclaimed, 'but first I must confirm your heart is true. A test of your honour. You will answer three questions.'
>
> Langdon groaned, whispering at Sophie. 'Bear with me here. As I mentioned, he's something of a character.'
>
> 'Your first question,' Teabing declared, his tone Herculean. 'Shall I serve you coffee, or tea?'
>
> Langdon knew Teabing's feelings about the American phenomenon of coffee.
>
> 'Tea,' he replied. 'Earl Grey.'
>
> 'Excellent. Your second question. Milk or sugar?' […]
>
> '*Milk,*' Sophie whispered in his ear. 'I think the English take milk.'
>
> 'Milk,' Langdon said. Silence. 'Sugar?'
>
> Teabing made no reply. […]
>
> '*Lemon!*' [Langdon] declared. 'Earl Grey with *lemon*.'
>
> 'Indeed.' Teabing sounded deeply amused now. (297)

This conversation not only portrays Teabing in a way reminiscent of Chaucer's knights, but the question and the answer to it also demonstrate that Teabing equates 'honour' with knowing how to do things the English way. The English are often perceived by other European nations as quirky, and particular in the sense that they do not feel entirely 'European'. While the discussion of what it means to feel European is definitely an intriguing one, this study will not elaborate on it. However, the discussion of what it means to be English in Europe is one that is applicable to Teabing. According to Spiering, the English are masters in the concept of 'Othering' not only continental European nations, but even their other British neighbours and he attributes this trait to the "Protestant core of English national identity" (148). The feeling of religious superiority very easily leads to a fundamental belief

that the English way is the right way. This concept of religious superiority comes back in the novel as well, because Teabing eventually turns out to be the one who murdered Saunière. Teabing claims that the motive behind his crime is the fact that Saunière "sold out to the Church" (531). Teabing insists that the Church pressured Saunière to keep the truth about the Grail a secret, thus revealing his deep hatred for the Catholic institution. Spiering concludes that "[a]fter the Second World War, with the advent of European integration, the role of the Other has increasingly been assigned to 'the Europeans' […] Euroscepticism sees a pre-programmed concomitant of the English self-image" (149). Brown incorporates this concept by making Teabing the quintessential anglophile. Another telling but short example of this love for all that is English shows itself when Langdon and Sophie arrive at the estate of Teabing, lovingly nicknamed "*la Petite Versailles*" (295). Sophie is at first confused with the right-hand sided placement of the intercom at the front-gate:

> Sophie gave the misplaced intercom an odd look. 'And if someone arrives
> without a passenger?'
> 'Don't ask.' Langdon had already been through that with Teabing. 'He prefers
> things the way they are at home.' (295)

Brown's choice of placing the stereotypical English gentleman in France is perhaps also deliberate because the French are one of the most 'other-ed' people. Spiering states that "John Bull-like characters show their Englishness through their […] dislike of all things French" (147). Teabing comments on how he despises the French government and its politics (292, 305), and this combined with his refusal to give up any English custom in all his years in France clearly indicate a dislike of many French things. By stereotyping Teabing in this very particular and overt way (incorporating elements of both the gentleman and the John Bull character), Brown very clearly follows the textual tradition of stereotyping the English, as well as the English tendency towards 'Othering'.

§ 1.3. Dan Brown's Inferno

As shown in the two previous sections, Brown has included many overt stereotypical representations of national characters in the dialogues of the first two novels in the Langdon series. However, the third Langdon novel *Inferno* only includes very few of these stereotypes, and they are also much a great deal more subtle. The first stereotype that is mentioned in conversation refers again to Langdon's style of clothing:

> 'What is your name?'
>
> It took him a moment. 'Robert … Langdon.'
>
> She shone a penlight in Langdon's eyes.
>
> 'Occupation?'
>
> 'Professor. Art history … and symbology. Harvard University.'
>
> Dr. Brooks lowered the light, looking startled. The doctor with the bushy
> eyebrows looked equally surprised.
>
> 'You're … an American?'
>
> Langdon gave her a confused look.
>
> 'It's just …' She hesitated. 'You had no identification when you arrived
> tonight. You were wearing Harris Tweed and Somerset loafers, so we guessed
> British.'
>
> 'I'm American,' Langdon assured her, too exhausted to explain his preference
> for well-tailored clothing. (26-27)

Again, this conversation shows that Europeans do not expect Americans to be dressed conservatively. Firchow addresses this too when he quotes D.H. Lawrence as he states that "[t]his is the new great thing […] the clue, the inception of a new humanity" (90). America is continuously equated with 'the new', and Langdon's dress style certainly is not that. Again, this shows that Brown does not follow the textual tradition of stereotyping the American as fresh and new. Langdon is a professor of *history* and dresses himself very 'Old World-like'.

Finally, the stereotype of the intellectually superior European is upheld in this novel perhaps even more than in the other two. As the first chapter concerning national stereotyping in character descriptions demonstrated, it is this novel's British female protagonist Sienna who boasts the most impressive mind in all of the three Langdon books. Her incredible intellect is also addressed in conversations:

> '"I am death"?' Sienna asked, looking troubled.
>
> 'That's what it said, yes.'
>
> 'Okay … I guess that beats "I am Vishnu, destroyer of the worlds."'
>
> The young woman had just quoted Robert Oppenheimer at the moment he
> tested the first atomic bomb. (68-69)

The fact that Sienna is able to quote Robert Oppenheimer shows that she has a particular knack for general knowledge. She is also partly the accomplice of the novel's big antagonist;

the Swiss genius Bertrand Zobrist. Together the conspired to find a way to fight overpopulation. After his true motives are discovered at the end of the novel, she explains their relationship and work:

> 'My entire childhood,' Sienna said, 'I wanted to save the world. And all I was ever told was: "You can't save the world, so don't sacrifice your happiness trying."'
>
> She paused, her face taut, holding back tears.
>
> 'Then I met Bertrand – a beautiful, brilliant man who told me not only that saving the world was *possible* … but that doing so was a moral imperative. He introduced me to an entire circle of like-minded individuals – people of staggering abilities and intellect … people who really *could* change the future. For the first time in my life, I no longer felt all alone, Robert. […] Bertrand had boundless hope for humankind. He was a Transhumanist who believed we are living on the threshold of a glittering "post-human"-age – an era of true transformation. He had the mind of a futurist, eyes that could see down the road in ways few others could even imagine. He understood the astonishing powers of technology and believed that in the span of several generations, our species would become a different animal entirely – genetically enhanced to be healthier, smarter, stronger, even more compassionate.' She paused. 'Except for one problem. He didn't think we'd live long enough as a species to realize that possibility.' (584-585)

This conversation very clearly shows that the British Sienna and the Swiss Bertrand are not just immensely intelligent, but also incredibly innovative and concerned with a 'new' type of human species. In this respect, Brown takes the textual tradition of stereotyping Europeans as more knowledgeable and runs with it. He bends this concept to such a degree that this 'Old World intellect' leads not to conservatism or knowledge about the past, but instead to a vast interest and investment in the innovation and continuation of the human race by means of technology and science.

§1.4. The Novels by John le Carré

The previous three sections have shown that Dan Brown very overtly and consciously includes and plays with the textual traditions of stereotyping national identities in the

conversations that his characters have. Le Carré, however, appears to be much less concerned with engaging with national stereotypes in the dialogues that his characters have. Chapter Two will demonstrate that le Carré incorporates some stereotypes when he describes his characters but when these characters engage in dialogues their main topic of conversation appears to be international politics, and in particular the political relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. What almost all characters have in common is a distrust of their governments, whether that is the American government, or the British government. Moreover, the characters that appear to be the least at odds with their governments are the ones that are on the proverbial 'bad side'. Characters also appear to verbalize fewer prejudices against other characters that are based on national stereotypes (in contrast to Brown's characters) but rather appear to stereotype governments as corrupt or otherwise immoral. The vast majority of the novels' characters are non-American and all deliver very harsh critiques on the American government. When the British government is critiqued this is almost always because it is accused of working too much *with* or even *for* the American government. This image of the American as corrupt and greedy appears at first to be a departure from the textual tradition of stereotyping the American national identity. However, this is not true. Firchow states:

> Nietzsche, with many other European intellectuals, believed that Americans were hopelessly given over to the dubious satisfactions of money grubbing. […] Although the European image of the US as a bulwark of liberty was bolstered by the American stance in the Second World War and during the Cold War, the so-called 'coca-colonization' of the world by American popular culture in the years after World War II still causes resentment abroad and no doubt contributes to the negative view of the United States in France and elsewhere around the world. (92)

This stereotype of the greedy American is something that can be isolated very clearly in the novel *Absolute Friends*. In the novel, the British Mundy joins a West-Berlin student activist group in the 1960s that is entirely opposed to the role that the American government plays on the world stage, especially regarding the Cold War and the Vietnam war. The first time that Mundy encounters the group they explain their purpose as follows:

> What is the purpose of our revolution, comrade? […]
> To oppose the Vietnam War by all means … To arrest the spread of military

imperialism … To reject the consumer state… To challenge the nostrums of the bourgeoisie … To awaken it, and educate it. To create a new and fair society … and to oppose all irrational authority. (72)

Mundy becomes more and more intrigued with this plot to put a stop to the spread of American capitalism and right-wing politics across Europe, and one of the most important influences on him is his *absolute friend* Sasha, who is entirely enamoured with the communist agenda:

Perhaps you did not know that we nog have a law which officially bars from public life all who do not pledge allegiance to the *basic principles of liberal democracy?* One-fifth of West German employees, from train drivers to professors to myself, are to be considered non-persons by the fascists! Think, Teddy! I am not allowed to drive a train unless I agree to drink Coca-Cola, bomb the Red River dam and napalm Vietnamese children! Soon I shall be forced to wear a yellow S declaring me a socialist! (125)

His stance is that American capitalism and warmongering has ruined Europe and West Germany in particular. He even equates the United States to Fascism, and his unconcealed reference to the Star of David makes this even more clear. This follows Finchow's explanation of the stereotypical image that Europeans had of Americans after the Second World War. Sasha is also very clear on how he feels about Britain, and the way the British government is too close with the American Administration. Later on in the novel, after it has moved on several decades, Sasha talks to Mundy about the role that the British played in the attack on Iraq:

'Your little prime minister is not the American president's *poodle*, he is his *blind dog*, I hear.' Sasha is saying, as if he has been looking on in Mundy's thoughts. 'Supported by Britain's *servile corporate media*, he has given *spurious respectability to American imperialism*. Some even say that it was you British who led the dance. […] And since the so-called coalition, by making an unprovoked attack on Iraq, has already broken *half of the rules in the international law books, and intends by its continued occupation of Iraq to break the other half,* should we not be insisting that the principal instigators be forced to account for themselves before the international Court of Justice in The Hague?' (303-304)

These themes of anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism, and anti-corruption are repeated in le Carré's novel *A Delicate Truth* as well. Toby works as a private secretary to Foreign Officer minister Quinn. Toby's friend Horst comments on the position that Quinn takes on economic affairs:

> 'Your minister Quinn is Karl Marx in reverse, we hear. Who needs the state, when private enterprise will do the job for us?' […] You don't know that you minister and his talented business associate are urging my boss to invest informally in a private corporation that specializes in certain precious commodity? You don't know that the commodity on offer is supposedly of higher quality than anything available on the open market?'" (81-82)

The reader later learns that this 'boss' is, in fact, the illustrious Jay Crispin, whom Quinn has been working together with for years. Toby is becoming suspicious but his only lead on what Quinn and Crispin are up to is Quinn's relationship with the assistant cultural attaché at the US Embassy in London, Bradley Hester. Toby's longtime friend and confidant Oakley has more information on the people that Toby thinks are involved and he reveals Hester's background and involvement in what they now assume is becoming a corrupt plot:

> 'He's a discredited freelance intelligence pedlar of the far-right persuasion, born again, not to his advantage, and grafted on to the Agency's station in London at the behest of a caucus of wealthy American conservative evangelicals convinced that the Central Intelligence Agency is overrun with red-toothed Islamic sympathizers and liberal faggots, a view your nice new master is disposed to share. He is notionally employed by the United States Government, but in practice by a fly-by-night company of defence contractors trading under the name of Ethical Outcomes Incorporated, of Texas and elsewhere. The sole shareholder and chief executive officer of this company is Maisie Spencer Hardy. She, however, has devolved her duties to one Jay Crispin […] (97)

Once again, the involvement of American officials and undercover agents in British politics is a large point of criticism. It seems that in le Carré's novels, the Americans are always at the base of some corrupt government plot that needs uncovering. Neither one of these novels by le Carré feature an American character that is shown in a favourable light. Furthermore, any British government official that is up to something shady is by default influenced or financed

by Americans.

The final novel by le Carré that will be discussed is *The Tailor of Panama*. This novel, however, never comments in dialogues on any American involvement in European or British politics. The only instance of stereotyping a national character comes in the shape of the novel's protagonist British Harry Pendel. Harry owns an exclusive tailoring shop in Panama and he lets slip that he even makes suits for a certain member of the British royal family:

> 'So, who are these royals you've been dressing? 'Tailors to Royalty.' Saw it on your sign. Busting to ask.' […]
> Well, sir, I'll put it this way, and I'm afraid that's as far as I'm allowed to go, owing to laze majesty. Certain gentlemen *not* a great distance from a certain royal throne *have* seen fit to honour us in the past, and up to the present day. Alas, we are not at liberty to divulge further details.'
> 'Why not?'
> 'Partly by reason of the Guild of Tailors' code of conduct, which guarantees *every* customer his confidentiality, be he high or low. And partly I'm afraid these days for reasons of security. (29-30)

Pendel fits the stereotype of the English gentleman in this respect, as he values a certain code to conduct. He also appears to be a royalist, as he hung the sign of the Prince of Wales outside of his shop (30). In this case, le Carré does follow the textual tradition of stereotyping the English Harry Pendel as 'Old World-like' and as a gentleman. This image of Pendel as the old-fashioned knowledgeable European is something that he himself seems to refer to as well when he is taking the measurements of Osnard at the beginning of the novel. Osnard is surprised that Pendel, as the owner of the tailoring shop, takes measurements himself rather than employing somebody else to do that. Pendel response by saying that he is "your old-fashioned sort" (18). He goes on to state that he takes care of the suits from start to finish and not a single suit leaves his shop without having been approved by him personally. When Osnard starts to slightly complain about the price of the suits, the following conversation ensues:

> "Thought the going rate was two grand a pop."
> "And so it was, sir, until three years ago. Since when, alas, the dollar's gone through the floor, while we at P & B have been obliged to continue buying the very finest materials, which I need hardly tell you is what we use throughout,

irregardless of costs, many of them from Europe, and all of them –" He was
going to come out with something fancy, like "hard-currency-related", but
changed his mind. "Though I am *told*, sir, that your top-class off-the-peg these
days – I'll take Ralph Lauren as a benchmark – is pushing the two thousands
and in some cases going beyond even that. May I also point out that we provide
aftercare, sir? I don't think you can go back to your average haberdasher and
tell him you're a bit tight round the shoulders, can you? Not for free you
can't." (19)

This conversation highlights the craftsmanship that goes into making Pendel's suits. He makes a point of it to emphasise that his materials, which he feels are the best, are sourced in Europe, and his assistants in the shop are mostly Italians. This emphasis on European expertise is contrasted to American consumerism by Pendel himself as well. As established by Firchow, the American identity is also mentioned in relation to consumerism and greediness. When Pendel very overtly references Ralph Lauren, one of America's most beloved, home-grown, clothing brands, he contrasts the greedy and capitalist American fashion industry to, in his mind, European artistry and proficiency. He implies that if you want a good suit, you should not buy an American suit but instead trust European talent and know-how.

Aside from the knowledgeable and 'Old-World-esque' European, Pendel also fits another European stereotype. As Firchow demonstrated by discussing Hawthorne's views, Europe is also a place of mystery, deceit, and wickedness. Aside from the fact that Pendel appears to be a friendly and unassuming British craftsman, he is also a gargantuan conman. On their first meeting Osnard already reveals why he has come to Pendel for a suit. Osnard is aware of Pendel's history of crime and conviction. He is also aware of the fact that Pendel's marketing strategy for his company is based on nothing but lies. Pendel claims that the tailoring shop has existed for decades, and was owned by the legendary Arthur Braithwaite whom imparted all his old-world tailoring-wisdom to Pendel before his death. However, Osnard reveals that he knows all of it is an utter sham, and uses this information to extort Pendel into helping him putting his own very questionable plans into action (48). The fact that the novel's two main characters are British and both are criminals fits the textual tradition of stereotyping Europeans as evil and deceitful.

§1.5. Chapter Conclusion

Dan Brown's novels *Angels & Demons*, *The Da Vinci Code*, and *Inferno* appear to be, in their dialogues, more engaged with the textual traditions of stereotyping the American and European national identities. At times these novels seem to deliberately deviate from certain stereotypes, such as the young and innovative American. At other times he seems to want to assert them, for instance in the case of the English gentleman, the Anglo-French rivalry, Othering, and specifically the intellectual superior European. In dialogues, Dan Brown very overtly plays with these stereotypes and even trusts that these stereotypes are universal enough that they can be used in order to achieve a comedic effect.

Le Carré, on the other hand, is really only concerned with one particular stereotype: the greedy, capitalist American government. He takes this outside of the textual tradition by including America's global political influence and political corruption. His novels are not meant to be at all comedic, unlike Brown's, but rather as a social and political commentary on the capitalist and imperialist agenda of the US government and the way it manages to influence the British government especially. He does not really seem to be interested in actively engaging with a textual tradition, nor are his novels merely meant for entertainment. In this regard, the two writers are worlds apart. The only novel in which le Carré truly interacts with the textual traditions of stereotyping the European and American national identities is *The Tailor of Panama*. In this novel he lets Pendel fulfill the role of the knowledgeable and old-fashioned European while all the while also referring to the European stereotype of deceitfulness and mystery by letting his two main (European) characters both be criminals.

Chapter Two: A Closer Look at Character Descriptions

It is rumoured that it takes as little time as seven seconds for somebody to make a first impression on somebody else. Whether we like to admit it or not, we are all subject to the reflex of thinking in patterns and in stereotypes, because it is simply how our brains are wired. Despite the fact that we are often told not to judge a book by its cover alone, it is important to consider the superficial when trying to understand how a certain stereotype is created in fiction. The previous chapter explored the ways in which the American and European national identities were stereotyped in dialogues, but to fully grasp the way in which characterisation is established, one also has to delve into the way characters are described. The insights that may be gained from examining dialogue in tandem with character description will provide a clearer picture of the stereotypes that are employed in characterisation. This chapter will therefore focus specifically on the way in which American and European characters in the novels under scrutiny are described in isolation, but also in relation to each other. The three novels by le Carré are three entirely separate stories and will therefore be discussed in separate sections. However, the three novels by Brown that have been selected are part of the same series of books, include the same protagonist, and follow the same blueprint. All three books revolve around the American professor Robert Langdon, and in each of the novels he encounters a female European counterpart that he has to work together with. Due to the fact that the novels follow the same premise and the same protagonist, Brown's novels will not be treated as separate stories in this chapter, but rather as three parts of the same and will thus be discussed in one paragraph.

§2.1. The Novels by Dan Brown

Angels & Demons is the first of Brown's novels in the series following the character of Robert Langdon. It is therefore that this particular novel provides the most detailed description of Langdon himself. The two other selected novels (*The Da Vinci Code* and *Inferno*) also feature some insights to the character of Langdon. However, they mostly repeat what has already been established in the first book. There are certain qualities to Langdon that appear to be conservative and more "Old World"-like, and other elements of European characters that evoke images of innovation and progression (which are concepts that are usually more associated with the American identity rather than the European identity as

asserted by Firchow in the previous chapter). This section will argue that the character descriptions of both the American Robert Langdon and the European characters interact and play with the textual tradition (as explained in the introduction to this study) of stereotyping American and European national identities but never fully commit to fitting in with this textual tradition. It appears as though Brown is aware of this way of stereotyping but also aims to challenge it by reversing the concepts of conservative and innovative, knowledge and naivety, and morality and immorality.

There are ways in which Langdon is described as a more conservative character. At the beginning of *Angels & Demons* the reader learns that Langdon is a professor of religious iconology at Harvard (20). His interest in (ancient) religious artifacts and icons indicates that Langdon is perhaps slightly more conservative than the American stereotype, because he is interested in the old, and not in the new. Moreover, his tenure and expertise as a Harvard professor entirely negates the stereotype of Americans as being less knowledgeable than Europeans. It is also noted that "Langdon's friends had always viewed him as a bit of an enigma – a man caught between the centuries" (21). Furthermore, throughout the three novels Robert Langdon becomes synonymous with his Harris Tweed jacket, which is a hand-woven fabric made on the islands of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland and associated with senior members of the British upper-classes and aristocracy. The jacket is mentioned several times in *Angels & Demons* (pages 22, 26, 47, 131, 137, 335, and 563) as well as in the other two books, and it hardly perpetuates the stereotype of the youthful American.

The amount of knowledge that Langdon has about not just religious artifacts and iconology but also on European art and architecture is presented in the novels as well. They feature many internal monologues by Langdon that give the reader very specific information on topics related to art, history, and architecture. These monologues are meant to allow readers to understand as much of the situation as Langdon does, and they assert his position as a uniquely knowledgeable man, as well as describing his character and interests. A good example of one of these internal monologues can be found in *Angels & Demons*, when Langdon and his sidekick Vittoria have to follow the ancient Path of Illumination in order to save four kidnapped cardinals. Langdon and Vittoria have to find the tomb of the painter Raphael, but the clues they follow speak only of a painter named Santi. Langdon states that

> [h]e was amazed how few people knew *Santi*, the last name of one of the most
> famous Renaissance artists ever to live. His first name was world renowned…
> the child prodigy who at the age of twenty-five was already doing commissions

for Pope Julius II, and when he died at only thirty-eight, left behind the greatest

collection of frescoes the world had ever seen. Santi was a behemoth in the art

world, and being known solely by one's first name was a level of fame

achieved only by an elite few… people like Napoleon, Galileo, and Jesus.

(253)

The novels are scattered with similar internalisations, and they attest to Langdon's enormous intellect.

Furthermore, in all three novels it is Robert Langdon who is enlisted to salvage the situation, whether that entails ensuring that Rome continues to exist, keeping the last living descendant of Jesus Christ safe, or even defend the entire human race from a dangerous virus. The textual tradition of stereotyping the American and European national identities does not include the portrayal of the American as the hero. However, as has been established above, Robert Langdon is portrayed as such in all three novels by Brown. Another interesting clue to this is the reaction that Vittoria has when she first sees Langdon: "Vittoria looked at Robert Langdon standing there across the room. Everything began falling into place … Kohler had called the authorities after all. *The* authorities. Now it seemed obvious. Robert Langdon was American, clean-cut, conservative, obviously very sharp. Who else could it be? Vittoria should have guessed from the start. She felt a newfound hope as she turned to him" (121). Vittoria obviously thinks that Langdon is part of some special American agency to help solve the murder of her father, and it appears as though she has more faith in American authorities than in European ones. Also, it is interesting to note that in the same quote Vittoria also describes Langdon as conservative. All these characteristics challenge the way in which the American national identity has been stereotyped within the textual tradition that, for example, Henry James belonged to. Langdon clearly does not fit the bill of the innocent, young, and progressive American.

Having said this, there are also ways in which Robert Langdon very clearly does fit that description. The concept of the American as the young and innocent character is perpetuated in the novels as well. Aside from his Harris Tweed jackets, Langdon has one other prized possession: a Mickey Mouse watch. In the beginning of *Inferno* Langdon loses it, and explains the following: "Langdon found himself distracted by something he had just noticed – something deeply upsetting to him. For nearly four decades, Langdon had worn an antique collector's edition Mickey Mouse timepiece, a gift from his parents. Mickey's smiling face and wildly waving arms had always served as his daily reminder to smile more often an take

life a little less seriously" (52). Moreover, the first time the reader is introduced to Langdon, in *Angels & Demons*, his choice of beverage is "a mug of steaming Nestlé's Quik" (21). This particular drink is usually only drunk by young children. Both of these characteristics function as a clues to the fact that Langdon is still, despite his age and aristocratic jackets, very young at heart. A passage on the same page corroborates this: "As Langdon sat on his brass Maharishi's chest and savored the warmth of the chocolate, the bay window caught his reflection. The image was distorted and pale… like a ghost. *An aging ghost*, he thought, cruelly reminded that his youthful spirit was living in a mortal shell" (21).

Finally, Langdon is often classified as 'the American', but it is only used in an overtly negative way by a French character in *The Da Vinci Code*. The character Fache (a high-ranking police official) resents Americans in general. He states that "[a]lmost daily, DCPJ arrested American exchange students in possession of drugs, US businessmen for soliciting underage prostitutes, American tourists for shoplifting or destruction of property" (89). His perception of Americans has become so negatively stereotyped that he needs no proof to believe that Langdon is involved in the murder of Saunière. He has only been confronted with negative images of Americans, and thus assumes that criminal behaviour and immorality is part and parcel to the American national identity. Interestingly enough, all three novels include a plotline where Langdon's intentions are (for valid reasons) questioned, but he manages to redeem himself in all three cases. In the end, the American remains innocent. This fits within the textual tradition of stereotyping the American national identity as described in the previous chapter by Firchow. Firchow explains that after the Civil War in the United States, Europe's image of the innocent American started to change. Americans were viewed in a much more negative way by Europeans from that point on (91). This particular aspect of the novel, where Fache has this preconceived negative image of the American as the criminal rather than the innocent fits that more contemporary view that Firchow describes. Nonetheless, Langdon is redeemed in the end and Fache has to face the reality that the American is not only innocent but also responsible for solving the murder of Saunière. In this case, Brown does appear to be aware of the changing opinion of the American national identity from a European perspective. However, rather than affirming this negative image, he returns to the earlier textual tradition of stereotyping the American as innocent.

When the way in which the female European characters are described in the novels is examined, a similar pattern may be observed. Again, these characters are at times characterised according to the textual traditions of stereotyping European identities, but they also challenge these concepts at other times.

The female protagonist in *Angels & Demons*¸ physicist Vittoria Vetra, will be examined first. She is introduced to the reader through the eyes of Langdon, who describes her as follows:

> Descending from the chopper in her khaki shorts and white sleeveless top, Vittoria Vetra looked nothing like the bookish physicist he had expected. Lithe and graceful, she was tall with chestnut skin and long black hair that swirled in the backwind of the rotors. Her face was unmistakably Italian – not overtly beautiful, but possessing full, earthy features that even at twenty yards seemed to exude a raw sensuality. As the air currents buffeted het body, her clothes clung, accentuating her slender torso and small breasts … Her limbs were strong and toned, radiating the healthy luminescence of Mediterranean flesh that had enjoyed long hours in the sun. (69-70)

Vittoria is described as sensual and exotic, but she is also described as an independent woman who does not rely on men to help her: "Langdon descended from the craft and turned to help Vittoria, but she had already dropped effortlessly to the ground. Every muscle in her body seemed tuned to one objective – finding the antimatter before it left a horrific legacy" (148). Describing European women as independent and sensual in the way that Brown does is similar to the way European women were described in relation to American women in the textual tradition of stereotyping American versus European identities. However, this perception of European women as being "independent and free" often led to the assumption that European women were amoral. Although this particular feature is not discussed by Beller and Leerssen due to the fact that their work is a more generalised summary of the textual tradition of stereotyping specific identities, this trope of stereotyping the American versus the European woman can be found in novels such as James's *The Portrait of a Lady* where young and innocent American women, like James' Isabel Archer, travel to Europe to learn about history and art and as a consequence are confronted by older, mysterious, sensual, and sometimes downright criminal European women. Again, this fits the stereotype that Firchow describes when he notes that Europe is a place of mystery, criminal activity, and general immorality. This concept is challenged by Vittoria. She is an utterly moral person, as is described in the following passage: "Vittoria knew there was logic somewhere in Kohler's argument, but she also knew that logic, by definition, was bereft of moral responsibility. Her father had *lived* for moral responsibility – careful science, accountability, faith in man's inherent goodness. Vittoria believed in those things too" (117). She wanted her invention to

be used to do good things with, and she will not stand for it being hijacked and used for evil. She feels she has a moral responsibility to not only save the city of Rome from imminent danger, but also to ensure that her invention does not fall into the wrong hands in the future. Moreover, the fact that she, a European woman, is as intelligent as she is and discovered something of such importance challenges the notion of Europeans as conservative and Americans as progressive.

The prominent female character in *The Da Vinci Code* is the French cryptologist Sophie Neveu. Again, the reader is introduced to her by Langdon, who comments on her clothing, her hair colour, and most importantly, how much she differs from her American counterparts. Langdon states that: "[u]nlike the waifish, cookie-cutter blondes that adorned Harvard dorm room walls, this woman was healthy with an unembellished beauty and genuineness that radiated a striking personal confidence" (75). This woman is again described as sensual and different, but also as intensely independent, intelligent, and cultured. Her field of expertise is cryptology, and she was raised by her grandfather who was part of an ancient European secret society. Although Langdon's intelligence and knowledge is asserted many times in the novel, Sophie's innate genius mostly overshadows this. Where Vittoria clearly functions as a helper to Langdon in *Angels & Demons*, Langdon appears to be a guide for Sophie in *The Da Vinci Code*. This also demonstrates that the textual tradition of portraying Europeans as more knowledgeable is perpetuated in this particular novel.

The female protagonist in the third novel *Inferno* is English-born doctor Sienna Brooks. Again, Langdon introduces the reader to her in the following passage:

> Tall and lissome, Dr. Brooks moved with the assertive gait of an athlete. Even in shapeless scrubs, she had a willowy elegance about her. Despite the absence of any makeup that Langdon could see, her complexion appeared unusually smooth, the only blemish a tiny beauty mark just above her lips. Her eyes, though a gentle brown, seemed unusually penetrating, as if they had witnessed a profundity of experience rarely encountered by a person her age. (26)

Sienna Brooks is very similar to Vittoria and Sophie. She too is physically beautiful and nothing short of a genius. Not only is she described as genius, but she also seems to have a "profundity of experience" about her. This fits the textual tradition of stereotyping Europeans as cultured, intelligent, and experienced. While Langdon is alone in her apartment he encounters some newspaper articles:

Langdon picked up another press clipping, a newspaper article with a photo of Sienna at age seven: CHILD GENIUS DISPLAYS 208 IQ. Langdon had been unaware that IQs even went that high. According to the article, Sienna Brooks was a virtuoso violinist, could master a new language in a month, and was teaching herself anatomy and physiology … [t]he article contained an interview with a doctor, who explained that PET scans of Sienna's cerebellum revealed that it was *physically* different from other cerebella, in her case a larger, more streamlined organ capable of manipulating visual-spatial content in ways that most human beings could not begin to fathom. (58)

Sienna represents in an almost exaggerated way the textual tradition of stereotyping Europeans as knowledgeable. She is perhaps the most intelligent character in the entire Langdon series. However, she also helped madman Bertrand Zobrist develop a virus that would affect the entire human population, which once again challenges the notion of Europeans as conservative. In the end of the story she is also revealed to be the one who tried to stop Zobrist's attempts at infecting humankind with the virus, despite the fact that she greatly admired and loved him. She clearly lets her moral responsibilities take precedence over her personal feelings.

It appears as though Brown is aware of the textual tradition of stereotyping the European and American national identities in relation to each other because he very clearly opts to pit Americans and European characters against each other. Nevertheless, he challenges many of the stereotypes that have been perpetuated by this literary tradition, and he comes to very different conclusions in the way he describes his characters. Europeans are far less conservative in Brown's novels, and Americans can be incredibly knowledgeable.

§2.2. Le Carré's A Delicate Truth

Two of *A Delicate Truth*'s most important European (British) characters are Paul Anderson/Kit/Probyn, Fergus Quinn. The novel starts out by giving a description of Kit/Probyn (who has assumed the pseudonym Paul Anderson during his secret mission on Gibraltar). He is described as an "agile man in his late fifties" and "[h]is very British features, though pleasant and plainly honourable, indicated a choleric nature rough to the limit of its endurance" (1). It is immediately established that he is loyal to the British Crown, as he often

refers with reverence to the monarchy and its institutions. He states that he works for "Her Majesty's Foreign and Commonwealth Office" (1), and has a picture of "our dear young Queen on a brown horse" in his hotel room (2). Anderson/Kit/Probyn is never characterised as evil or immoral, but he does not fit the stereotype of the knowledgeable European either. Where the textual tradition of stereotyping the American and European identities usually wants to portray the American as the naïve and easily fooled one, Anderson/Kit/Probyn fulfills that role in this novel. He is sent on a secret mission to liquidate an enemy of the British crown, but instead accidentally kills a harmless woman and her child. He is not aware of this and even later on when he confronts his superiors with his doubts about the results of the mission, he is easily convinced that it all went according to plan. The novel established Anderson/Kit/Probyn as a conservative British civil servant who supports the government and the Crown, but who also has a great sense of moral responsibility. He wants to right the wrongs that have been done and he wants to inform the British public about the corruption and wrongdoings of certain high ranking officials. However, he is immensely naïve.

Fergus Quinn's character description, on the other hand, appears to follow the textual tradition of stereotyping Europeans as conservative, knowledgeable, but also corrupt and dangerous. He is introduced by Anderson/Kit/Probyn in the following passage:

> The dynamic young minister's bulk is squeezed into a midnight-blue dinner jacket. He is poised with a cellphone to his ear before a marble fireplace stuffed with red paper foil for flames. As on television, so in the flesh, he is stocky and thick-necked with close-cropped ginger hair and quick greedy eyes set in a pugilist's face. Behind him rises a twelve-foot portrait of an eighteenth-century Empire-builder in tights. For a mischievous moment brought on by the tension, the comparison between the two such different men is irresistible. Though Quinn strenuously purports to be a man of the people, both have the pout of privileged discontent. Both have their body weight on one leg and the other knee cocked. Is the dynamic young minister about to launch a punitive raid on the hated French? (5-6)

This is an important description and comparison that Anderson/Kit/Probyn makes because it already sows the seed of doubt amongst the readers as to whether Quinn truly is who he pretends to be. This same distrust of Quinn is shared by the character of Toby (who will ultimately reveal the truth about the mission to Anderson/Kit/Probyn). He ends up having to

travel around the world with Quinn and he becomes increasingly aware of Quinn's clandestine meetings with an obscure figure. Toby states that "it's on their trips abroad that Quinn's secretiveness assumes in Toby's eyes a darker hue. Spurning the hospitality offered by local British ambassadors, Quinn the People's Choice prefers to take up residence in grand hotels" (75). Fergus Quinn wants to portray himself as a man of the people, but becomes increasingly more corrupt and elitist.

It is later revealed that Quinn is in cahoots with the American Mrs Spencer Hardy (Miss Maisie) and Jay Crispin. Crispin is revealed to be the man with whom Quinn had several secret meetings across the world, and who acts as a private defense contractor (a modern-day mercenary) that will help Miss Maisie and Quinn with their secret and ethically questionable enterprise. Crispin is described as being "a trim, regular-featured, rather obvious pretty man of no depth. A man, in short to be seen through at a glance … Crispin drawls in upper-end English of the very best sort, taking Toby's had in a kinsman's grasp and, without releasing it, vouchsafing him the sort of sturdy look that says: We're the men who run the world" (85-86). The description of Crispin as having no depth can also be interpreted in a more stereotypical sense. The textual tradition of stereotyping Americans as being uncultured is applicable here, but it seems that le Carré does not follow any of the textual traditions when it comes to the other American character of Miss Maisie. Toby conducts a Google search on Miss Maisie and describes her as follows:

> Mrs Spencer Hardy of Houston, Texas, widow and sole heiress of the late
> Spencer K. Hardy III, founder of Spencer Hardy Incorporated, a Texas-based
> multinational corporation trading in pretty well everything. Under her preferred
> sobriquet of Miss Maisie voted Republican Benefactress of the Year;
> Chairperson, the Americans for Christ Legion; Honorary President of a cluster
> of not-for-profit pro-life and family-value organizations; Chair of the American
> institute for Islamic Awareness. And, in what looked almost like a recent add-
> on: President and CEO of an otherwise undescribed body calling itself Ethical
> Outcomes Incorporated. Well, well, he thought: a red-hot evangelist and ethical
> to boot. Not a given. Not by any means. (88-89)

Miss Maisie is thus described as a duplicitous and conservative American woman. This does not seem to fit in with the textual tradition of stereotyping the American identity as innocent, young, and progressive.

It is clear that le Carré turns the tables with these American characters in *A Delicate Truth*. They are the ones who are conservative instead of progressive, and corrupt and immoral instead of honest and naïve. However, he also includes European characters that fit this description, as well as European characters that do not, but rather follow the American identity stereotypes of honesty and naivety. Le Carré is clearly interested in the dynamics between Americans and Europeans, but the question remains whether this novel tries to uncover the differences between the American and European identities, or if the novel simply functions as a critique on the corruption and duplicity of high ranking government officials and the increasing reliability of European governments on American institutions and concepts.

§2.3. *Le Carré's* Absolute Friends

The main character in Le Carré's *Absolute Friends* is Ted Mundy. Mundy is the son of a British major of infantry stationed in Pakistan, and he thus enjoys a culturally rich upbringing. Although he grows up in Pakistan, he attends colonial schools and is taught in the Anglican tradition (40). However, he grows up with the awareness of the horrors of colonialism due to his close relationship with his nanny Ayah and becomes increasingly critical of the British establishment. While he is at boarding school in England he makes the following observation of his himself:

> He hunts for signs of darkening skin and shading round the eyes that will
> confirm him in his secret conviction that he is a twelve-annas-in-the-rupee
> half-caste rather than the inheritor of his aristocratic mother's dignity. No such
> luck: he is a Despised One, sentenced to life imprisonment as a snow-white
> guilty British gentleman of tomorrow's ruling class. (45)

Mundy eventually becomes so fed up with his British heritage of imperialism and colonialism that he travels to America, which he names as the "the Land of Opportunity" (132). However, he soon realises that he has idealised America and has chosen to overlook certain aspects of American foreign policy that he can no longer ignore. The novel paints Mundy as a naïve idealist who does not really belong anywhere. The characterisation of Mundy follows in no way the textual tradition of European vs American national identity. Mundy has had a multicultural upbringing and has a hard time accepting his European heritage. He has strong

grievances about European imperialism and colonialism and struggles to unite this part of his heritage with his progressive ideologies. It can therefore be stated that Le Carré does not follow the textual tradition of stereotyping the European identity when it comes to the character of Mundy. Despite the fact that Mundy is a character that is not easily classified, it can be argued that Mundy's characteristics are more in line with some of the stereotypical American features such as youth and naivety, which means that rather than following the textual tradition of stereotyping the European national identity as knowledgeable and cunning, Mundy's character deviates from this tradition by showing features that are more closely associated with the American national identity as described by Firchow.

Mundy's friend Sasha is a similar character. Sasha is from West-Germany and despises the spread of American consumerism and the consequences of its violent foreign policies. It is stated that:

> [h]e has called for the Nuremburg Tribunal to be reconvened, and the fascist-imperialist American leadership arraigned before it on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. He has accused the morally degenerate American lackeys of the so-called government in Bonn of sanitizing Germany's Nazi past with consumerism, and turning the Auschwitz generation into a flock of fat sheep with nothing in their heads but new refrigerators, TV sets and Mercedes cars. (104)

Sasha eventually becomes enamored by Communism and defects to East Germany, but he too, like Mundy, realises that he idealised certain aspects of the ideology. He feels that East Germany has betrayed "the sacred socialist dream" (269) and vows to use their own methods against them: "To strike at the very source of their unlawful power, he would steal what they loved most: their secrets" (270). He and Mundy end up working together, spying for M16, and their efforts contribute to bringing down the German Democratic Republic. Like Mundy, Sasha cannot very easily be categorised, but his naivety and interest in ideological issues does not fit the textual tradition of the conservative and knowledgeable European.

The American character of Orville J. Rourke does not follow the textual tradition of stereotyping the American national identity either. He is described by Mundy as being a

> spare, civilized, traveled, and good-looking, a black-haired Celt with a widow's peak. He is a patrician, in a lazy sort of way, with a droll brand of curiosity that

invites you in … when he discovers that one of the team is half French, he talks

good French with her. His German turns out to be equally efficient … [h]e has

his suits made in Dublin and wears Harvard shoes … [t]o Mundy's horror, he

served with the Agency in Vietnam, a crime to which he cheerfully confesses at their

first encounter in Amory's office. (254)

Again, Le Carré portrays the American character as the opposite of how the American national identity is stereotyped traditionally. Rourke is worldly, and in the eyes of Mundy and Sasha, evil. This is a far cry from innocent and naïve.

It appears as though Le Carré is less interested in stereotyping individual characters in his novel. Instead, he critiques both the British and the American government and their corruption. However, it appears as though the American government is portrayed as the most corrupt and immoral. This is corroborated by the fact that the American government has Mundy and Sasha liquidated for their attempts to stifle the American pressure on European governments to support their war on terror.

§2.4. Le Carré's The Tailor of Panama

As chapter one established, *The Tailor of Panama*'s main character Harry Pendel is stereotyped in dialogue as being a multi-faceted deceitful, skillful, criminal craftsman . The way in which his character is described seems to confirm these stereotypes, except for the way he looks. His looks are described as "unexpectedly physical" (8). According to his initial description he is tall, strong, disciplined, and "[a]n unrepentant innocence shone from his baby-blue eyes" (8). This mention of 'innocent' eyes might just be to through the reader off later when it is revealed that he is not so trustworthy after all, but it might also be an indicator as to how he has been able to deceive everybody so easily. This description plays with the perception and stereotyping of characters, even *in* fiction itself. Since he is a professional tailor, he is often spotted in beautifully fitted suits, frequently accessorised with a tie from one formidable British brand or another. He likes classical music such as Mozart and Mahler (4, 8, 14), and he describes his workplace as "his sanctuary" (14). Descriptions about the setting of the novel will be discussed in the third and final chapter as well, but this description of his shop can also be analysed as revealing something specific about the character and the way he is characterised, and even stereotyped. Pendel reveres his office, and it is revealed that he performs an almost sacred ritual whenever he enters it:

> The cutting room was his sanctuary, and he shared it with no man. The key
> lived in his waistcoat pocket. Sometimes, for the luxury of what the key meant
> to him, he would slip it in the lock and turn it against the world as proof he was
> his own master. And sometimes before unlocking the door again he would
> stand for a second with his head bowed and his feet together in an attitude of
> submission before resuming his good day. Nobody say him do this except the
> part of him that played spectator to his more theatrical actions. (14)

This tendency towards theatrics addressed again right before his first meeting with Osnard. The reader is given the feeling that Pendel is very aware of how people perceive him, and how he perceives himself. He is a Brit who owns and runs a British tailoring shop in Panama, and he works incredibly hard to suggest authentic, old-world class to his customers. When Pendel is about to welcome Osnard into his office he makes the conscious decision to sit down in his porter's chair. This type of chair is known for having been used frequently in medieval England by servants who had to greet visitors at the door. This in and of itself is already incredibly stereotypical, but Pendel takes it another step further:

> And he didn't mind at all if there was a tray of tea on the table in front of him,
> as there was now, perched among old copies of *Illustrated London News* and
> *Country Life*, with a real silver teapot on it, and some nice fresh cucumber
> sandwiches (25)

This image is almost comically stereotypical: a British tailor, sitting in an old medieval chair, awaiting his guest with tea and sandwiches whilst reading the most quintessential British magazines and newspapers. This description fits perfectly with the way Firchow describes Europe and Europeans are stereotyped: burdened with history and tradition. Moreover, this tendency of Pendel to overindulge in theatrics fits with the other, more negative stereotype that is present in the textual tradition of stereotyping Europeans: deceitfulness. Pendel uses these props in order to make his show more legitimate, meaning that he is fully aware of these stereotypes himself. Le Carré manages to achieve something quite interesting here, and it is something that is not present with any other character that has been discussed. Pendel himself is interacting with this textual tradition in order to play tricks on everybody. Deep down he is

the stereotypical deceitful criminal, but he uses another, more 'picturesque' (in the words of Nathanial Hawthorne) and traditional image of the European to disguise his true self.

§2.5. Chapter Conclusion

The insight that may be gained from the results discussed in this chapter is that dialogue and character descriptions are nearly inseparable when it comes to characterisation and stereotyping. In order to make a character coherent, despite the fact if a character is portrayed as being stereotypical or not, both these elements have to yield to similar results. Not one character description was incongruous with the way they are characterised in dialogues. It also appears that the function of the character description is to confirm and even assert the stereotypes that have been established in dialogues (and vice versa). This is especially the case with Brown, considering that in conversations characters are often even confronted with these (and often physical) stereotypes that have been mentioned in descriptions earlier. Brown very clearly and overtly links these descriptions and dialogues, at times even to create a comical effect. Le Carré is less overt in connecting the two, but it nonetheless becomes very obvious after closely examining the text.

Chapter Three: Setting the Stage for Stereotypes

The setting of a particular scene in a novel can be of importance for various reasons. A dark, deserted medieval castle can indicate mystery or danger and has become a staple in Gothic literature. Likewise, gloomy weather is often used to mirror the protagonist's melancholy or sadness. Surreal surroundings like an enchanted forest or an underwater city may enhance the story's fantastical plot or emphasise the unexpected. In academic literary research, setting or place are usually connected to fields such as eco-criticism and post-colonial studies, or research into the way that setting is used to increase drama or suspense (in Victorian Sensation Fiction or Gothic Fiction for instance). Settings can also be significant in a much broader sense; the general setting of a novel can say something about the social commentary that the novel perhaps wants to make. Also, settings can be used to enhance or emphasise certain (national) stereotypes that are also explored in character descriptions and dialogues. These last two points are of particular importance when examining the three novels by Dan Brown and the three novels by John le Carré. This chapter will examine the ways in which the novels of Dan Brown and John le Carré are using setting and how they may relate this to the textual tradition of the stereotyping of the European and American national identities. This chapter will continue to build upon the theory in the sources that have been presented and discussed in previous chapters. The chapter will be divided into two sections, the first discussing the novels by Brown, and the second discussing the novels by le Carré.

§3.1. The Novels by Dan Brown

Dan Brown employs certain settings in his novels in order to (subtly) emphasise particular national stereotypes (or deviations thereof) that his novels explores more overtly in his character descriptions and dialogues. These stereotypes in character descriptions and dialogues and their relation to the textual tradition have already been discussed in chapters one and two respectively. This paragraph's aim is to demonstrate exactly how Brown's novels use these settings to give even more weight to already established stereotypes. The novels *Angels & Demons, The Da Vinci Code,* and *Inferno* all do this in the same way and for the same reasons, which is why they will be discussed in this paragraph as a group rather than as three separate novels.

The novel *Angels & Demons* takes place mostly in Rome. However, the novel is the first in the Langdon series, and Brown uses the first few sections of the book to establish the

character of Robert Langdon (as has also been observed in chapter one). It is therefore not surprising that Brown chooses to set the beginning of the novel in the home of Langdon. Chapter one already established that Langdon is presented as a conservative character, which is a deviation from the stereotypical young and naïve American. This equation of the American with 'the new' has also been observed by Firchow and has been discussed in chapter two as well. This deviation from the textual tradition is perpetuated and emphasised by Brown by combining this character description of the intellectual American with a particular setting. Langdon's home is presented to the reader within the first few pages of the novel, and is described as follows:

> Robert Langdon wandered barefoot through his deserted Massachusetts
> Victorian home and nursed his ritual insomnia remedy – a mug of steaming
> Nestlé's Quik. The April moon filtered through the bay windows and played on
> the oriental carpets. Langdon's colleagues often joked that his place looked
> more like an anthropology museum than a home. His shelves were packed with
> religious artifacts from around the world – an *ekuaba* from Ghana, a gold cross
> from Spain, a Cycladic idol from the Aegean, and even a rare woven *boccus*
> from Borneo, a young warrior's symbol of perpetual youth. As Langdon sat on
> his brass Maharishi's chest and savored the warmth of the chocolate, the bay
> window caught his reflection. (21)

Rather than placing Langdon in a modern penthouse, Brown creates a setting around Langdon that exudes age, antiquity, knowledge, and class. By stating that the house is a "Victorian home" (21) Brown clearly refers to an Old World era, rather than allowing Langdon to fit into the stereotype of American modernity and youth. Brown uses the setting in this particular case to illustrate and emphasise Langdon's personality and the way in which this clearly deviates from the stereotypical representation of the young and naïve American.

The novel also seems to follow a pattern in which Langdon visits important European sites and museums, and upon arrival informs the reader on the history and significance of the place. A good example of this is the scene in *Angels & Demons* where Langdon and Vittoria arrive at the Pantheon, one of Europe's oldest buildings, and they start looking for "the demons' hole":

> Around the perimeter, interspersed with the tombs, a series of semicircular
> niches were hewn in the wall. The niches, although not enormous, were big

enough to hide someone in the shadows. Sadly, Langdon knew they once
contained statues of the Olympian Gods, but the pagan sculptures had been
destroyed when the Vatican converted the Pantheon to a Christian church. (272)

In this passage, Langdon clearly demonstrates a more extensive knowledge of the Pantheon's history – Later on Langdon actually one-ups the official guide of the Church. The novels are strewn with passages similar to this, where Langdon lectures the reader on the history and cultural significance of a place. Another example of this is the passage in *The Da Vinci* Code where Langdon passes by the Bois de Boulogne in Paris by night:

The heavily forested park known as the Bois de Boulogne was called many
things, but the Parisian cognoscenti knew it as 'the Garden of Earthly
Delights'. The epithet despite sounding flattering, was quite to the contrary.
Anyone who had seen the lurid Bosch painting of the same name understood
the jab; the painting, like the forest, was dark and twisted, a purgatory for
freaks and fetishists. At night, the forest's winding lanes were lined with
hundreds of glistening bodies for hire, earthly delights to satisfy one's deepest
unspoken desires – male, female, and everything in between.(212)

This passage not only demonstrates that Langdon has knowledge of a European city in the way that the inhabitants do, but also that he very easily relates seemingly trivial information to his extensive knowledge of European art. Again, Langdon seems to be 'lecturing' the reader, asserting his position as a person of immense capability of the mind. A final example of this particular way of presenting Langdon and his intellect can be found in *Inferno*. Langdon and Sienna are running for their lives while at the same time trying to save day, and they need to find a way to get to the other side of Florence unnoticed. Langdon is aware of a secret passage designed by Vasari for the Medici family, and again lectures the reader on its origins. Langdon explains how "Il Corridoio Vasariano" is a "quintessential secret passageway" built for Grand Duke Cosimo I, and how it stretches from the Boboli Gardens at the Medici Pitti Palace to their administrative offices across the river Arno by means of the Ponte Vecchio. He then goes on to compare it to the secret passageway that leads from the Castel Sant'Angelo into the Vatican (194). By employing this pattern, Brown achieves two things: he asserts Langdon's intelligence and knowledge, and thus affirms the way in which the character of Langdon is a clear deviation from the textual tradition of stereotyping Americans, and it stresses Europe's cultural heritage because passages like the ones

mentioned above demonstrate how deeply Europe's identity is rooted in its ancient history and art.

Finally, *Angels & Demons*'s more abstract and general setting is Rome, and in particular the fictional 'Path of Illumination' that Langdon is forced to follow in order to save the kidnapped cardinals. The Path of Illumination is a type of quest that aspiring members of the medieval scholarly group called the Illuminati had to follow in order to prove they were worthy and enlightened intellectuals. The path would eventually lead to the secret hiding place of the illuminati and the clues that aspirants had to follow could be found in Galileo's *Diagramma*. The fact that Langdon is able, as a contemporary American scholar, to decipher and follow this path that has been set out by the greatest European minds in history is a very clear assertion on Brown's part that Langdon is the true intellectual that he is described to be, and thus deviates from the textual tradition of stereotyping Americans as less intellectual than Europeans. The same can be said for *The Da Vinci Code*, in which Langdon has to solve puzzles and riddles designed by the ancient institution of the Priory of Sion in order to safeguard the secret of the Holy Grail. This general setting of 'the quest' is an effective way to illustrate Langdon's knowledge.

Another important setting in the novel *Angels & Demons* is the research facility CERN, in Switzerland. When Langdon arrives, the first thing he notices about the building is its innovativeness. The building is described as "an ultramodern structure" (35) made out of glass, steel and marble. However, Langdon is also surprised by how scholarly the place seems:

> A grassy slope cascaded downward onto expansive lowlands where clusters of sugar maples dotted quadrangles bordered by brick dormitories and footpaths. Scholarly looking individuals with stacks of books hustled in and out of buildings. As it to accentuate the collegiate atmosphere, two longhaired hippies hurled a Frisbee back and forth while enjoying Mahler's Fourth Symphony blaring from a dorm window. (41-42)

This setting once again suggests 'Old World knowledge' as described by Cooper and Firchow in chapter two. A European setting is presented as a place of knowledge and innovation, which seems to follow the textual tradition that Firchow describes. On the one hand, Europe is the old world with historical and cultural significance and knowledge, but apparently also the place for innovation and a contemporary continuation of knowledge. The same can be said for the way that the Louvre is described by Langdon in *The Da Vinci Code*:

> The new entrance to the Paris Louvre had become almost as famous as the
> museum itself. The controversial, neomodern glass pyramid designed by
> Chinese-born American architect I.M. Pei still evoked scorn from
> traditionalists who felt it destroyed the dignity of the Renaissance courtyard.
> Goethe had described architecture as frozen music, and Pei's critics described
> this pyramid as fingernails on a chalkboard. Progressive admirers, though,
> hailed Pei's seventy-one-foot-tall transparent pyramid as a dazzling synergy of
> ancient structure and modern method – a symbolic link between old and new –
> helping usher the Louvre into the next millennium. (31-32)

This excerpt demonstrates the European balancing-act between old and new, tradition and progression, while also combining more concrete things such as a museum of fine art and antique with modern architecture. It seems as though Brown added this particular scene to do just that: assert Europe's position as intellectually and historically superior. It reaffirms this stereotype within the textual tradition as described by Firchow.

Brown also makes a clear comparison between European/Italian and American students in *Inferno* in order to establish the same point. Whilst Langdon and Sienna are making their escape, they hide in a portable toilet. In this scene, Langdon makes the following observation:

> Langdon shifted his tall frame, trying to get comfortable in the cramped
> surroundings. He found himself face-to-face with a collage of elegantly styled
> graffiti scrawled on the back of the Porta-Potty.
> *Leave it to the Italians.*
> Most American Porta-Potties were covered with sophomoric cartoons that
> vaguely resembled huge breasts or penises. The graffiti on this one, however,
> looked more like an art student's sketchbook – a human eye, a well-rendered
> hand, a man in profile, and a fantastical dragon. (129)

It is passages like these that make it clear that the Brown novels follow the textual tradition of stereotyping Europe as intellectually superior. This passage not only equates Europe with culture, but in the same breath compares it to a, to Brown, less cultured American stereotype.

The final observation that can be made concerning Dan Brown's novels in relation to national stereotypes is the fact that all three novels are set in various European cities. This is, of course, a fairly obvious observation that in itself is not particularly telling. However, when

combining this European setting with the particular genre in which Dan Brown writes, the choice of setting becomes more significant. All three novels follow a storyline where Langdon is swallowed up in a plot designed by an evil and mysterious antagonist, and where Langdon needs to save the day. In all three novels this means that Langdon has to employ all his knowledge and intellect in order to fulfil a type of quest. In all three novels Europe is portrayed as the continent of knowledge and art, but also the continent of continuous danger and mystery. This relates directly to Nathaniel Hawthorne's comments that although Europe is a place of "picturesque" and "antiquity", it is also the place of "shadow … mystery … and gloomy wrong" (Firchow 91). Brown's choice to set these novels in Europe rather than the US may indicate that he is trying to fit in the textual tradition of stereotyping Europe as a more complex and dangerous, and less naïve continent. This issue is addressed by Ascari as well in the chapter "The Mysteries of the Vatican: From Nineteenth-century Anti-clerical Propaganda to Dan Brown's Religious Thrillers" from his book *Crime Fiction in the City*. Ascari suggests that Brown chose to set his first novel *Angels & Demons* in Vatican City in order to establish a sense of reality to the storyline. Ascari states that this novel's setting (Rome and the Vatican) is in fact explicitly foregrounded to enhance the plotline. According to him this is done by using a nifty editorial trick, namely to put a map of both Rome and Vatican City at the start of the novel. According to Ascari this is done in order to establish these places as "repositories of cultural memories whose correct understanding is vital to eradicate present evil, which is either rooted in the past or utilizes the past to create a smoke screen" (116). Indeed, it is Langdon's correct understanding and interpretation of the clues that the murderer leaves him that allows him to save the city of Rome and the fourth cardinal. Ascari goes on to discuss the novel's themes of duality and interconnectedness by explaining that the novel's setting represents the complexity of both the themes:

> [T]he urban space of Rome is likewise inhabited both by the church and by its opponents, the Illuminati, and moreover these two antithetic entities actually share the same buildings and symbols. The 'path of light' that the sect utilized as a ritual of initiation to attract the right sort of adepts, showing them the way to the 'church of Illumination', where the society's meeting took place, involves a pilgrimage through four Roman churches, where Bernini's masterpieces acquire an alternative meaning as symbols of the four elements. The 'church of Illumination' itself is housed in Castel Sant'Angelo, a Catholic fortress that is linked to the Vatican by means of a private passage, the so-called Passetto." (118)

This representation of Rome as a place where good and evil, mystery and clarity, and dark and light, meet seems to hint to a larger and more general comment on Europe as a place of immense complexity and diversity. This diversity can relate to culture and religion, but also to more abstract concepts such as morality and immorality. This very specific setting of Rome and Vatican City seems to be chosen by Brown to emphasise the complexities of European society and by extension the European identity. In this case, the European identity can be seen as being stereotyped according to the textual tradition as discussed by Firchow. Europe remains to be a place of mystery and intricacy.

§3.2. The Novels by John le Carré

Whilst Brown very overtly and effectively uses settings to emphasise already established American and European national stereotypes or deviations thereof, le Carré seems to be doing something entirely different. Le Carré's novels appear to not be very interested in placing their characters in a particular scene, and when this does occur, any description of the setting is mostly omitted. However, having said this, le Carré does employ setting in one very specific way. He places his novels in general settings that allow him to socially, culturally, and politically critique the American and British governments.

The novel that most clearly does this is *Absolute Friends*, in which the Pakistani-born English Mundy meets the anarchic Sasha in West-Germany. Sasha and his friends are immensely critical of the western-European way of life and political system (in terms of consumerism and warfare in particular). Mundy, although the son of a British officer, was born in Pakistan, and is aware of the British imperialism and the effects it has on the native people. Instead of becoming close with his father after his mother passes, Mundy instead relies on his nanny Ayah. Later in life, Mundy has trouble finding his place in both England and West-Germany. He then very clearly states that at times like that, he tends to gravitate towards areas of town that are more culturally diverse:

> Arriving in Munich with the dawn, he leaves the Volkswagen with its
> Heidelberg registration in a discreet corner of a parking garage in case his
> creditors have served an order on it. Then he does what he always does when
> life is closing in on him: he walks.
> And because all his life, for reasons far back in his childhood, he has had a
> natural leaning towards ethnic diversity, his feet lead him almost of their own

accord to a street full of Turkish shops and cafés that are just beginning to

wake up. (8)

This culturally diverse background that Mundy has enjoyed makes him stand out from his surroundings and not really fit in with any nationality or group. Despite his British heritage, he also does not feel like he belongs in England either. Upon Mundy's arrival in England, le Carré employs a rather cliché tactic of showing Mundy's melancholy by letting it rain:

The England that awaits young Mundy is a rain-swept cemetery for the living

dead powered by a forty-watt bulb. A gray stone medieval boarding school

reeks of disinfectant and is ruled by boy quislings and adult despots … flighty

Mrs. McKechnie never strokes Mundy's cheek the way Ayah did … (43)

From these passages it is clear that Mundy does not belong in this Western European world that later in the story becomes so heavily influenced by America as well. What le Carré does, in this novel, is provide a backstory and a setting that places Mundy outside of a European or American identity and therefore allows for interesting plot developments that in their turn are a very harsh critique on European and American politics and consumerism.

One of the novel's most important settings is Germany. Although le Carré tends to want to critique the American administration and the British government, he places some his characters and the main events of this novel outside of either countries. In the novel, Germany is used as a type of battlefield where the great powers of the United States and the UK wreak havoc. The socio-historic background of Germany is known in all of the Western World, and it seems as though le Carré chose this location precisely for that reason. The story begins in the 1960s, when Germany was still divided into East and West, and this divided Germany appears to be the perfect choice for le Carré if his aim is to critique the US and the UK. Between 1945 and 1990, West Germany was, although independent, still allied and heavily reliant on the Western Zones for guidance. British and American military forces even remained in the area until the end of the Cold War. Le Carré seems to choose the settings of his novels very consciously. All novels take place in either occupied zones, or countries heavily reliant and involved with the American and British governments. In *Absolute Friends*, it is West Germany that first expels Mundy and Sasha, and eventually it is also West Germany and its American and British allies that betray them and ultimately are responsible for their deaths. In the novel, West Germany becomes the stage for European/British and American corruption and other types of wrong-doing. Sasha eventually defects to East-Germany but

becomes so disenchanted with it that he becomes a double spy for the West. He feels this is the right decision at the time, but it eventually turns out to be the decision that kills both him and his friend. West Germany and its allies are portrayed as back-stabbing and corrupt for betraying them, and also for falsely posthumously branding them as terrorists. Le Carré does not stereotype specific characters in this novel, but he does follow the textual tradition of stereotyping Europe as a whole. Europe is a place of corruption and crime, betrayal and painful history. However, instead of contrasting this type of Europe with an innocent America, le Carré in this novel appears to suggest that America is the root-cause of the corruption of European politics and society. Europe is a place of evil, but only because America made it so. This is made clear especially so in the conversations that Sasha and Mundy have (some of which have been discussed in chapter one).

The novels *The Tailor of Panama* and *A Delicate Truth* are much less explicit with the use of setting in relation to national stereotypes, but a few interesting insights can be gained nonetheless. Both novels are set in (semi) tropical locations (Panama and Gibraltar) and although it is rarely mentioned, the reader gets a sense that this is, again, done in order to comment and critique on the political relationship between the US and the UK. *A Delicate Truth* has almost no clear reference to national stereotypes in combination with setting other than the first two pages, in which the reader is introduced to the quintessential Brit Paul Anderson. In chapter one and two it has already been established that Paul Anderson is described both in descriptions as well as dialogue as a very British character, and in these first few introductory pages the setting is used to enhance this idea. The room in which he is staying is described as follows:

> As he paced, he determinedly acted out his feelings to himself without the
> restraints customary in his official life, his features one moment cramped in
> honest perplexity, the next glowering in the full-length mirror that was screwed
> to the tartan wallpaper … What was the difference when you banged up in an
> empty room with nobody to listen to you but a colour-tinted photograph of our
> dear young Queen on a brown horse? (1-2)

The tartan wallpaper and the picture of the Queen are things that make this room, and thus Paul Anderson for staying in it, appear more English. The hotel is located in Gibraltar so perhaps a Spanish-style room would have been more logical, but the choice for Scottish tartan and the ever-present eye of the Queen enhance Anderson's stereotypical British identity. Although Gibraltar is obviously occupied by the British and it is therefore not entirely

illogical to find these British features there, it can be said that the novel perhaps used this particular setting to affirm Anderson's loyalty to the British Crown and his clear and strong sense of national identity.

However, in an interview with the *Telegraph*, le Carré calls *A Delicate Truth* "an all-British kettle of fish", and aside from the occasional corrupt American character, the reader is indeed hard-pressed to find interaction between American and European national identities, let alone a conscious engagement with the textual tradition on the part of le Carré in terms of setting. What can be said, however, is that once again the British government is targeted by the novel as being the corrupt and deceitful institution. In the case of this novel, the setting of Gibraltar ensures that the focus stays on the United Kingdom, since there is no clear interference from the United States. This could be interpreted as a clear interaction with the textual tradition of stereotyping the European national identity as immoral and crooked.

The setting of the novel *The Tailor of Panama* does provide more opportunities for interaction and commentary upon the European and American national identities in relation to setting, due to the fact that Panama was very affected by the US invasion of 1989. Indeed, there are a few instances in which the novel uses setting to enhance the stereotyping of the European and American national identities. Pendel's shop is a good example of this emphasis on setting in order to establish an even stronger stereotype and le Carré employs the same type of technique in this case as he does with Anderson's hotel room in *A Delicate Truth*. Pendel's shop is described on the first page of the novel as having a "mahogany-cased clock by Samuel Collier of Eccles, one of the many historic features of the house of Pendel & Braithwaite Co. Limitada, Tailors to Royalty, formerly of Savile Row, London" (1). This already clearly establishes the shop as being very British, and very historic. This representation of the shop as almost a British oasis in a foreign country is incorporated again when Osnard enters the shop for the first time. In this case, Osnard describes his surroundings as follows:

> The curved mahogany staircase leading to the gents' boutique on the upper gallery: my goodness me, the dear old staircase… The foulards, dressing gowns, monogrammed house slippers … The library steps artfully converted to a tie rack … the counter with its turn-of-the-century shears and brass rule set along one edge … And finally the scuffed leather porter's chair, authenticated by local legend as Braithwaite's very own. (27)

Osnard describes the shop in such a way that one could almost image it in London in the early nineteen hundreds. This extravagant type of Britishness is even more conspicuous when contrasted to the general setting of Panama, a place where one would not necessarily expect a quintessential shop like Pendel's to be. The novel seems to use this type of setting to immediately establish Pendel as an utterly British character. Again, the setting is used to reinforce an already established interaction with the textual tradition of stereotyping the European as historically aware and cultured.

The notion of American consumerism and capitalist imperialism is also addressed in this novel, similarly to the way in which le Carré uses it in *Absolute Friends*. When Pendel is driving around Panama, he notices the "Charlie Pops and McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken and the fun fair where Mark had his arm broken by an enemy bumper car last Fourth of July" (5). A little while later on his drive he notices the United States Embassy which he describes as being "larger than the Presidential Palace, larger even than his bank" (7). American capitalism has spread everywhere, which is a theme that pops up in more of le Carré's novels. Again, it is imperative for the development of the plot to establish early on that the American interference with Panama is dangerous. Le Carré stereotypes the American national identity once again as greedy and superficial, and seems to refer to what Firchow named the 'coco-colonization'.

§3.3. Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, both Brown and le Carré use setting in order to emphasise and assert the American and European national stereotypes or the deviations thereof. The setting functions as a subtle affirmation of more overt stereotyping or deviations from culturally accepted American and European stereotypes. It is interesting to note though, that Brown makes use of setting far more often for this reason than le Carré. Due to the nature of the storylines, it is expected that setting may be used in a different way. Brown's novels are all about a hunt, a quest, and the setting continuously changes. One moment Langdon finds himself at home, the next in a foreign country without really knowing how he got there, and within the next hundred pages he has visited every single tourist site that that particular city has to offer. Brown uses the most minute and detailed aspects of setting to affirm a specific trope or national stereotype that has been established by dialogues and character descriptions. Le Carré, on the other hand, seems to be more interested in the wider and more general setting of his novels, such as countries or even continents. Even more so, these settings are used to

emphasise national stereotypes of governments as well, rather than just of individual characters. Nonetheless, it can be said that Brown and le Carré employ setting with the same goal: to affirm already established stereotypes of the European and American national identity.

Conclusion

The textual tradition of stereotyping the American and European national identities has been a feature of European and American literature of centuries, and this research into contemporary popular fiction demonstrates that this tradition is still around. The question that this research aimed to answer was:

> *How do the representations of the American and European national identities in character descriptions, setting, and dialogues in the works of Dan Brown and John le Carré interact with the textual tradition of stereotyping Europe and America in relation to each other?*

Some stereotypes have shifted or changed since Henry James wrote his *The Portrait of a Lady*, as Americans appear to be viewed as much less innocent than they were in James' time. The novels by le Carré show a strong dislike, not for the American individual, but for the American government, and he resents European, but mainly British, governments for colluding with the Americans. What has become clear in this research is that le Carré and Brown approach this textual tradition in astoundingly different ways.

Dan Brown's novels seem to be actively engaging with this textual tradition, and at times his novels overtly subvert these stereotypes. Chapter one and two showed that Brown very clearly pits American and European characters against each other, or he pairs them together, in order to show their difference. Langdon is always paired with beautiful and intelligent European woman (whether it is the Italian Vittoria, the French Sophie, or the English Sienna) in order to engage with these particular stereotypes. In *Angels & Demons,* Langdon is portrayed as slightly conservative and incredibly knowledgeable about European history and art, but he is also shown to be naïve in assuming that American technology and science has provided more to the world than European science and technology has. The European intellect is very quickly asserted by characters such as Kohler and Vittoria. It becomes clear that Brown is very aware of the textual tradition of stereotyping Americans as naïve, young, and innocent and Europeans as knowledgeable but mysterious and dangerous. However, his character of Langdon is often overtly confused for a European, or considered oddly conservative and intelligent for an American. In this respect, Brown clearly deviates from the textual tradition of stereotyping Americans as 'less-cultured'. Moreover, chapter three demonstrated that Brown purposefully employs the medium of setting to further

enhance, assert, or subvert these conventional ways of portraying 'the American' and 'the European'. To him, setting is a tool that can be put to use in order to convey an extra layer of meaning to the reader and to get his point across even more. Furthermore, as was explained by Ascari, Brown consciously choses these European settings (Rome, Vatican City, Paris, London, Roslyn, Florence, Venice, and Istanbul) to demonstrate and emphasis the duality within the textual tradition of stereotyping the European national identity. According to the textual tradition, European characters may be portrayed as historically aware, cultured, and intellectual, but also as immoral, deceitful, mysterious, and even evil. The locations that these novels by Brown are set in emphasise this duality of the dark and the light that is present in the textual tradition. Although the novels by Brown clearly interact and seems to subvert other stereotypes and tropes (such as the conservative and cultured Langdon), they also appear to adhere to the textual tradition in the end. In all three novels Langdon is first suspected of wrong-doing, but he always redeems himself. He is forever the innocent American that ends up in these dangerous European cities and finds himself at the centre of devious plots that have been orchestrated by evil European characters. Brown's novels may thus be regarded as fiction that overall follows the textual tradition of stereotyping the American and European national identities (very similar to the way that Henry James did in his novel *The Portrait of a Lady)* because although they sometimes seem to subvert tradition, they appear to come back to it in the end.

John le Carré also actively engages with this textual tradition in terms of character descriptions and dialogues. Certain characters such as Fergus Quinn in his novel *A Delicate Truth* are stereotypical Europeans (Quinn is cultured and intelligent, but also immensely corrupt and deceitful). Furthermore, the American characters in the novel are the masterminds behind Quinn's corruption and are portrayed as money-hungry and crooked. This also fits with the more contemporary textual tradition of stereotyping Americans as greedy and untrustworthy. This theme of the bad American influencing the already corrupt European government officials to do horrible things is something which is present in all of le Carré's novels. In *Absolute Friends* Mundy and his friend Sasha end up dead because of the corruption and betrayal of the European (British) and American governments. Le Carré includes the stereotype of the cultured European, but aside from that seems to only want to focus on the negative stereotypes for both the American and European national identities. This is an interesting find because it demonstrates that although he is working within the textual tradition as well, le Carré's novels choose to highlight different tropes that are part of that textual tradition. However, both writers establish stereotypes, or deviations thereof, by

using dialogues and descriptions. This research has shown that these two elements are used in tandem to establish a clear characterisation, both by Brown and le Carré, and that setting is used to emphasise and assert the stereotypes or deviations of from them.

Brown's novels are more traditional and include a wide variety of stereotypes that are described by Firchow, Florack, and Spiering, thus demonstrating that Brown willingly and overtly interacts and mostly adheres to this textual tradition of stereotyping the American and European national identities. Le Carré's novels interact and adhere to the textual tradition of stereotyping as well, but they do so far less conspicuously. Moreover, le Carré's novels appear to want to stereotype and thus criticise European (although mainly British) and American governments rather than individual characters. On the occasions that le Carré does engage with national stereotypes, he chooses to make the American the corrupt and morally deprived character. This is a much more critical stereotype that Europeans seem to have of Americans. The fact that these two contradicting stereotypes are found in literature and are used by authors in the same decades is an interesting insight that may be gained from this research. It is an interesting concept that could fuel further research into how it is possible that these two contradictory stereotypes of the greedy and corrupt American versus the innocent American can coexist.

This research also highlighted some difficulties concerning the theoretical framework of Imagology. Although Beller and Leerssen's work *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary representation of National characters. A Critical Survey* is very useful when it comes to finding certain stereotypes and tropes within the representation of national identities in character descriptions, it entirely omits any discussion on the use of setting and the role it can play in establishing national stereotypes. In fact, when collecting sources it was impossible to find any research that connected the use of setting to the stereotyping of national identities. It appears as if this particular type of research has not been looked into at all. This may be for the simple reason that researching setting alone may not yield enough interesting data, but this research has shown the importance of setting in establishing a national character. The novels by Brown especially put setting to great use and in these cases it truly adds something to the interaction of the novel with the textual tradition of stereotyping the American and European national identities. Having said this, Beller and Leerssen's method of conducting Imagological research turned out be comprehensive and easily applicable.

In terms of further Imagological research setting may be an interesting angle. If setting alone would not yield enough results on its own, then at least as part of a larger study where

setting is examined in tandem with character descriptions for instance. Furthermore, it may also be interesting to examine the way in which the British national identity is stereotyped in relation to a continental European national identity. The novel *The Da Vinci Code* by Brown clearly demonstrated that the stereotypically British character of Teabing 'others' other European nationalities, as if to say that the British national identity is not related to a European national identity. Especially in light of the recent political developements, it may be worthwhile to examine how this dynamic is represented in literature pre- and post-Brexit.

In conclusion, this research demonstrated the importance of continuing to do Imagological research because it uncovered interestingly different approaches to the interaction with the textual tradition of stereotyping the American and European national identities. It seems that the perceptions we have of others and of ourselves in relation to nationality are always changing, but somehow also manage to stay the same through the centuries. Some of the stereotypical representations that Henry James used in his 1880s novel *The Portrait of a Lady* are still maintained today, which begs the question if there may actually be some actual truth to them.

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