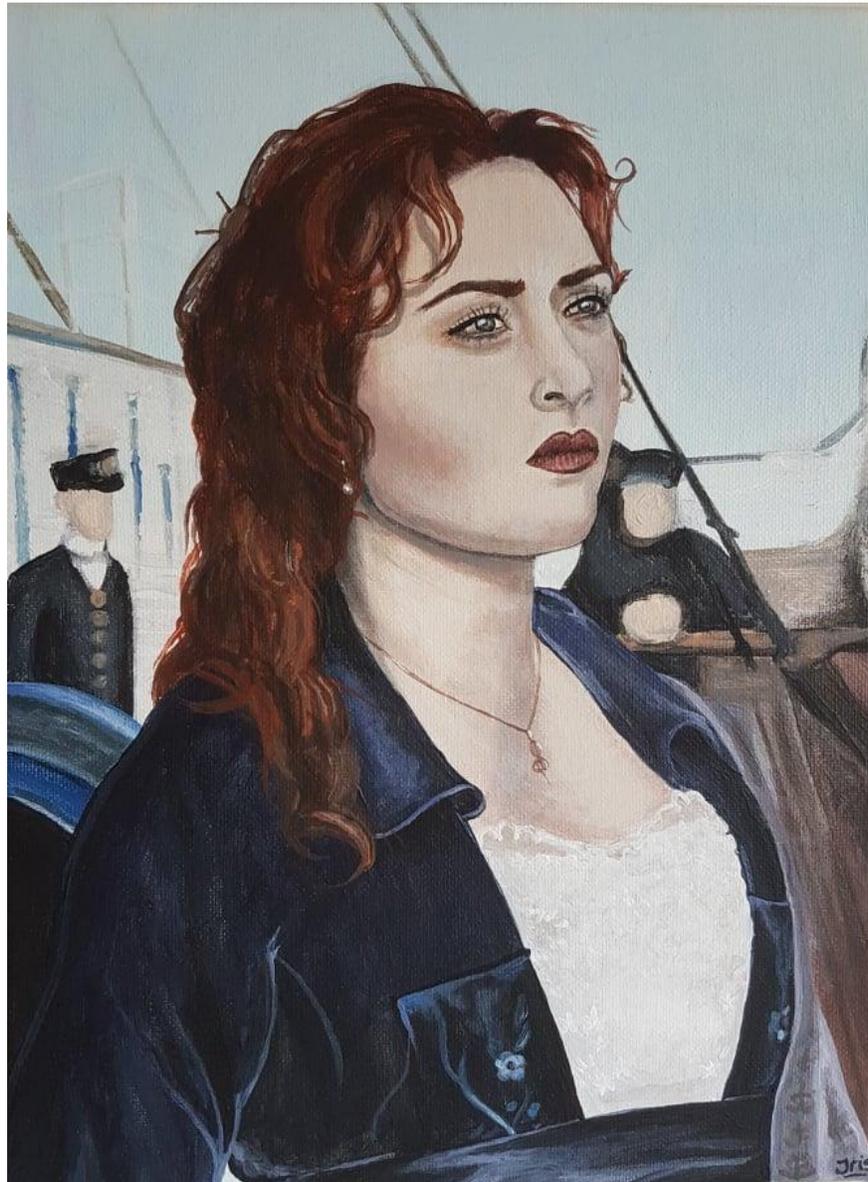


# National Stereotypes in Six Novels About Titanic

## *A Comparison Between Different Timeframes*



A picture I painted, in acrylics 18 x 24 cm, in honour of the 1997 film *Titanic*.

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### **Abstract**

Het onderzoek in deze scriptie gaat over literatuur rondom Titanic. Het historische fenomeen is vastgelegd in de film *Titanic* uit 1997 en heeft een enorme invloed gehad op hoe mensen er tegenaan kijken. De film wordt vaak zelfs geassocieerd met de historische waarheid. Dit onderzoek kijkt naar de potentiële invloed van de film op literatuur rondom Titanic. Drie boeken gepubliceerd tussen 1995 en 1996 worden vergeleken met drie boeken uit 2012, geschreven voor het honderdjarig jubileum van de ramp. Het onderzoek heeft nationale stereotypen als uitgangspunt voor de vergelijking tussen de twee groepen. Wanneer personages met een bepaalde nationale identiteit worden gekarakteriseerd in een tekst, wordt hiervoor vaak gebruikt gemaakt van stereotypische eigenschappen. De theorie van Imagologie is daarbij belangrijk omdat deze kijkt naar hoe nationale stereotypes worden geconstrueerd in literatuur en de tradities die hierbij zijn ontstaan. De vergelijking tussen de zes boeken suggereert dat de film *Titanic* invloed heeft gehad op de drie boeken uit 2012, doordat het positieve beeld van de lagere klasse en een negatief beeld van de rijke eerste klas passagiers uit de film overeenkomt met het beeld in deze boeken, terwijl de groep teksten uit 1995-1996 deze concepten niet laten zien.

*Keywords:* Titanic, intertextuality, Imagology, national identity, national stereotypes, the Other.

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## Introduction

James Cameron's 1997 film *Titanic* shows the American Jack Dawson and his Italian friend Fabrizio De Rossi having to run to the ship Titanic after winning two tickets playing poker. The ship is meant to take them from Ireland to America and they barely make it on time. When they step into the ship at the very last second before departure a British officer asks them if they have been through the health inspection and Jack bluntly tells him: "Of course! Anyway, we don't have any lice, we're Americans, both of us."<sup>1</sup> The officer and the two boys are in a hurry and he answers them with: "Right, come aboard."<sup>2</sup> This minor detail in the film shows a British officer who has a certain image of Americans. He apparently associates the nation with wealth and health, otherwise he would have forced the two passengers to undergo the health inspection.

*Titanic* (1997) shows a historically accurate account of the sinking of Titanic. James Cameron was obsessed with getting all the visual details in the film as accurate as possible down to the time on the clock behind the officer who receives the news that the ship is approaching an unavoidable iceberg. Alongside this historical account, the film portrays the love story of Jack Dawson, a poor American guy and Rose Dewitt Bukater, an American upper class girl engaged to a horrible, but rich American man. The love story was invented by Cameron and slaloms "between immovable pylons of historical fact."<sup>3</sup> The different classes on the ship were kept separate as much as possible, but the sinking caused inevitable clashes between cultures and therefore makes for a great study of national stereotypes. There are two more instances in which characters of the film make a remark that reveals the image they have of a certain nation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Titanic*, dir. by James Cameron (1997; Twentieth Century Fox, 2005 DVD).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Richard Howells, "One Hundred Years of the Titanic on Film," *Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 32, no. 1 (2012): 75.

The first is when Jack Dawson meets Tommy Ryan, a fellow steerage passenger and an Irishman. Fabrizio ponders on whether the English built the ship and Tommy answers; “No it was built in Ireland. 15.000 Irishmen built this ship. Solid as a rock. Big Irish hands.”<sup>4</sup> Tommy’s utterance shows the image which he has of his own nation. He sees the Irish as capable builders and reliable ones, too, who deserve credit for their hard labour. A third example of a national stereotype can be found when the ship has been hit by an iceberg and English stewards are directing the first class passengers to put on their life jackets. Caledon Hockley, Rose’s fiancé, is annoyed at the disturbance and exclaims; “God damn the English for doing everything by the book.”<sup>5</sup> At this point he still thinks the whole ship evacuation is a matter of exercise, rather than a necessity and he associates the English with strictness and being unyielding when it comes to following rules. Hockley’s opinion on the English which comes across in this scene conveys a rather negative image.

Throughout *Titanic* there are three main national stereotypes which are present. The first are the Irish who are mainly represented by Tommy Ryan and his fellow steerage passengers. His role in the film conveys the idea that the Irish and other steerage passengers were trampled on by first class passengers. Tommy is also killed due to someone else who pushes him, making it appear as though he steps forward when waiting for a lifeboat at which an officer shoots him. There is a great deal of misery which Tommy has to go through, yet most of it is not caused by his own doing. The steerage passengers furthermore convey a sense of pursuing happiness and joy in the form of drink and dancing. Jack takes Rose to ‘a real party’ with the steerage passengers at one point and she has the time of her life drinking beer and dancing without any

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<sup>4</sup> *Titanic*, dir. by James Cameron (1997; Twentieth Century Fox, 2005 DVD).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

rules or fixed steps. The party is driven by Irish dance music and the scene looks rather wild and free compared to the stiff dinners of the first class passengers.

America is a second significant nation which is present in *Titanic*. Americans make up most of the first class passengers and cannot really be found among the steerage passengers, with the exception of Jack Dawson. The rich American passengers in the film are mostly portrayed as stuck-up, spoiled and mainly chattering away about nothing of importance as a way of entertainment. Rose captures the essence of her first class life when she says; “I saw my whole life as if I had already lived it. An endless parade of parties and cotillions, yachts and polo matches. Always the same narrow people, the same mindless chatter. I felt like I was standing at a great precipice, with no one to pull me back, no one who cared, or even noticed.”<sup>6</sup> The superficial world of the rich Americans is very much criticized in the film and Jack is portrayed as a kind of hero, freeing Rose from her confined life. A final national stereotype which is shown in the film are the British. They make up most of the crew on the ship and are usually shown busying themselves with serious tasks and performing their work duties.

This research will be concerned with looking into national stereotypes in novels about Titanic. James Cameron’s film presents an important marker in the history of Titanic. Richard Howells establishes the importance of the film by claiming that the historical phenomenon of Titanic and Cameron’s *Titanic* are considered the same thing by many people which would make any serious historian flinch. The film’s influence was to such an extent that “many people today draw their knowledge of the history of Titanic from the 1997 film which won 11 Academy Awards, proved an enduring commercial success and shaped the social memory of the Titanic.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Howells, “One Hundred Years of the Titanic on Film,” *Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 32, no. 1 (2012): 73.

Fiona Terry-Chandler adds to the discussion of why *Titanic* was so immensely popular by defining it as a heritage film. Its historical accuracy, besides the central love story, and the idea of being inside a ‘time capsule’ are two important arguments for this claim.<sup>8</sup> James Kendrick explains *Titanic* as a film which “fits comfortably into a revolutionary Marxist paradigm that condemns capitalistic excess and celebrates the heroism and humanism of the underclass.”<sup>9</sup> The film is critical of the idea that there was no American class system and celebrates the lower class through the character of Jack. This claim and the analysis of national stereotypes in the paragraphs above are vital to understand the possible influence of the film on later fiction.

### 1. Historical Context

Research into national stereotypes around cultural manifestations of Titanic requires a brief look into some of the facts about the ship and its passengers. Richard Davenport Hines provides a historical account of the Titanic disaster and recognizes how James Cameron is a big name when it comes to the cultural representation of Titanic. His film *Titanic* “diabolized the rich Americans and educated English, anathematizing their emotional restraint, good tailoring, punctilious manners, and grammatical training, while it made romantic heroes of the poor Irish and the unlettered.”<sup>10</sup> Supporters of Marxism claim that the film focussed on how the difference in class determined who got to escape in the life boats and live. Richard Davenport Hines explains how modern ocean liners at the start of the twentieth century had rigid barriers keeping the classes apart, more artificial and obtrusive than in any other place. Twenty dollars could make a

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<sup>8</sup> Fiona Terry-Chandler, “Vanished Circumstance: Titanic, Heritage and Film,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 6, no. 1 (2000): 67.

<sup>9</sup> James Kendrick, “Marxist Overtones in Three Films by James Cameron,” *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 27, no. 2 (1999): 38.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Davenport-Hines, *Voyagers of the Titanic: Passengers, Sailors, Shipbuilders, Aristocrats, and the Worlds They Came From* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 2013), 10.

difference for a man between being a cabin passenger or being condemned to the steerage with no clean air, soap or water.<sup>11</sup> There was a U.S. immigration law which stated that “passengers of different classes must be separated on liners by locked metal barriers to limit their supposed power to spread contagion.”<sup>12</sup> The destruction of this very separation when a disaster strikes all who are on Titanic was the cause of an interesting clash between cultures.

Davenport Hines states how “at one thirty the Titanic cast off from its Queenstown moorings and steamed out into the Atlantic carrying 1,320 passengers, a total of 2,235 souls including crew; 3,435 bags of mail, 6,000 tons of coal, 900 tons of baggage and freight.”<sup>13</sup> The Titanic was certified and allowed to carry 3,547 people including crew, but had a lifeboat capacity for only 1,178. About 1,500 people died because of the collision with an iceberg. The ship was said to be unsinkable, yet its maiden voyage turned into a tremendous disaster. The image which Davenport-Hines describes concerning the first class on Titanic is in line with the aforementioned quote from Rose about her upper class life. The vagrancy of the upper classes “was as aimless as that of tramps. They chattered about new motors, new fashions, new restaurants, new health fads, and new marriages in a stifling, airtight atmosphere.”<sup>14</sup> Davenport-Hines expresses a critical view on the way of life of these people. Their luxuries and business were always the same no matter where they were and this made for a great lack of individuality.

A keynote of the Edwardian mood was immediacy. The rich would cancel or confirm their reservations for *Titanic* in the last days before the voyage because the power to suddenly change travel plans was a sign of wealth, “it proved one’s power to have sudden impulses as

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 76.

suddenly fulfilled.”<sup>15</sup> Another characteristic of the rich Edwardian world was one of contempt. It seemed as though everywhere “people were loftily insistent on their superiority while disdainingly others’ inferiority.”<sup>16</sup> People did not care to notice the true value of others in what Davenport Hines calls ‘the *Titanic* era’. There was a fight for rank, “humanity’s version of the farmyard pecking order: the merchant despised the penny-pinching shopkeeper, who frowned on the sordid publican, who looked down on the crafty farmer, who exploited the labourer tied to his soil.”<sup>17</sup>

Third class accommodation on the *Titanic* existed of small cabins, lit by electricity, spartan but not squalid and equipped with washbasins. It was possible to preserve self-respect, unlike third-class journeys on most transatlantic voyages because “the *Titanic* represented the highest third-class standards reached before 1914.”<sup>18</sup> Davenport Hines states that reliable estimates show “there were 118 British third-class passengers, 113 Irish, 104 Swedes, 79 Lebanese, 55 Finns, 44 Austro-Hungarians, 43 Americans, 33 Bulgarians” and a couple of minor numbers representing other nations.<sup>19</sup> An interesting idea about the steerage passengers is that for many “the voyage seemed like a succession of saint’s festival days in which they had no burdensome task but every chance to enjoy themselves.”<sup>20</sup> This highlights the contrast between first class life and how remarkable the life on the ship was for the steerage passengers. The third class shipboard life was furthermore characterized by cheerful, amateurish music played on accordions, mouth organs and fiddles.<sup>21</sup> Many of the third-class passengers were making the transatlantic journey to seek better fortune in America. At the start of the twentieth century there

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

was a large amount of poor people migrating and emigrating from remote fastnesses to great cities.<sup>22</sup> Titanic also carried many migrants. One last important group which was present on Titanic was the crew, which “was overwhelmingly British. The chief exception was the restaurant staff, many of whom were Italian.”<sup>23</sup> An interesting stereotypical notion can be observed in the crew of Titanic: “Americans were reputed to be unsatisfactory as liner stewards.”<sup>24</sup> They are apparently generally seen as grudging in their service, as opposed to the dutiful British crew members.

## 2. Research Question

This research will look into three novels published between 1995 and 1996 and three novels from 2012, published after *Titanic* was released. The result of looking into three novels which were written before the 1997 film will likely show different national stereotypes than the ones which are constructed in the novels written for the sinking’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Firstly, because historical novels often reflect aspects from the time in which they were written and there is more than fifteen years between these two timeframes. Howell’s idea that many people today draw on *Titanic* for their knowledge of the historical event implies that the authors of the 2012 novels could have drawn from Cameron’s film and consciously or subconsciously have incorporated the film’s ideas about national stereotypes and the class system, whereas the authors of the novels published in 1995-1996 did not have such a big cultural phenomenon to draw from. Thus, the comparison through the different timeframes may show the impact of *Titanic* on novels about the subject. This idea has led to the following research question: How are national stereotypes

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 192.

constructed in three novels about Titanic published before and three novels published after the release of Cameron's 1997 film *Titanic*?

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The theory of Imagology is important in making an attempt at answering the main question in this research, because its prime purpose is to study national stereotypes in literary texts. The main theorists of this field are Joep Leerssen and Manfred Beller. Their book *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters* covers many aspects of the theory including how it commenced and its main focus points. The theory came into being halfway through the twentieth century. It was based on the idea that the French revolution stimulated the need in many countries for a national history.<sup>25</sup> The way in which a country deals with its own national history has influence on the creation of its national stereotype. History is always told from a certain perspective and inevitably leaves out information in order to form a narrative. Intertextuality in this context plays an important role in the sense that patterns can apparently be found in the representation of a certain nation, and primarily in its national stereotype. An imagologist's task is to see in which way or whether a text makes use of these national stereotypes and what function they have within a work.<sup>26</sup> This theory can be applied to texts written within a nation about itself or texts in which another nation features.

Imagology aims to understand a discourse, which is imagined and "singles out a nation from the rest of humanity as being somehow different or 'typical', and articulates or suggests a moral, characterological, collective-psychological motivation for given social or national

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<sup>25</sup> Joep Leerssen and Manfred Beller, *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007) 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

features.”<sup>27</sup> Manfred Beller explains the concept of Imagology as a method with which to look for national images in literature. The most important type of image within this theory is the one formed in the mental imagination, also labelled as *Vorstellungsbilder*. These exist of inner pictures, in the mind or in the soul. These inner pictures determine the perception which someone has of the other. They consist of the imagined characteristics belonging to the other’s family, tribe, group race or people.<sup>28</sup> Such an “image rules our opinion of others and controls our behaviour towards them. Cultural discontinuities and differences (resulting from languages, mentalities, everyday habits, and religions) trigger positive or negative judgements and images.(4)”<sup>29</sup>

Next to that, Beller explains this notion of pre-existing images through modern social psychology when he points to the idea that “our way of seeing and judging is conditioned by preconceived notions, prejudice and stereotypes.”<sup>30</sup> Different nations or people can have distinctive perspectives on foreign countries, peoples and cultures which are made up of selective judgements through selective observations. What Imagology thereby tries to understand is the discourse around the representation or stereotyping of a nation: how the mental images about one’s own nation and in relation to others has been constructed in literature. The cultural confrontation between the self and other, inside and outside can create clichés.<sup>31</sup> This interaction can lead to the creation of a semiotic system in which specific instances are expressed as single stereotypes. In other words, it creates generalizations out of details, basing the essence of a single nation on a single attribute.<sup>32</sup> Stereotypes is a key concept in this theory. It can concern people as

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., xiv.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 8.

well as places and landscapes. The ‘characteristic’ qualities which are attributed to these stereotypes can be studied by analysing their function within a literary text. This type of analysis will be used to look at how national stereotypes are constructed in the novels about Titanic.

Tone Smolej discusses the practical side of Imagology in his observation of how historians carry out research in the field using literary texts as their primary sources.<sup>33</sup> An important aspect which he highlights is the idea that one must consider national stereotypes from a historical standpoint because the literary texts were produced at a certain point in time and plausibly influenced by society and culture at the time. This research will take this statement into account by looking for the possible influence of *Titanic* in novels which were published fifteen years after the film was released. Smolej also highlights the idea that minor literary works, as opposed to canonical texts, are particularly useful in the context of Imagology.<sup>34</sup> Out of the six novels considered in this research, merely one has won a significant prize, which shows that the corpus of primary texts will be particularly useful according to Smolej’s statement.

The relevance of this research can be found in the idea of analysing the impact of an immensely popular film on the production of novels on the same topic, because such research appears to be lacking for *Titanic*. Imagology is also a relatively new theory which has mostly focussed on colonial writing, whereas *Titanic* was not a matter of a clash between the colonizer and the colonized, but between social classes. The upper class consisted mostly out of rich Americans on *Titanic*, whereas the lower class was made up of a large variety of nationalities. If these two groups mix in a way, whether it be through a love story or a collective traumatic experience, images about the ‘other’ nation will inevitably surface, which is precisely what I want to analyse in this research to see if patterns can be observed.

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<sup>33</sup> Tone Smolej, "Komparatistik in Europa - Teaching Imagology Today," *Arcadia* 34, no. 2 (1999): 313.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

One more important note about the use of Imagology in this research is that I intend to extend Leerssen and Beller's theories in a way. They focus on nations as a whole, but also look at different societies and races in their search for specific characteristics or even characters which can be attributed to these groups.<sup>35</sup> An example of looking into ethnic groups in relation to Imagology can be found in Pierre Tchoungui's research. Tchoungui looked at cultural elements and how they vary across different ethnic African groups.<sup>36</sup> This shows how Imagology can be applied to nations as well as smaller communities. One aspect which appears to be left out of Leerssen and Beller's theory is the opposition between the rich and the poor. This opposition, however, can be applied within Imagology in the sense that certain features are attributed in a text to the rich upper classes within a nation. Rich Americans on Titanic, for instance, who represent one of the most important groups for this research, do not represent all of America or all American people. The analysis in this research will therefore differentiate between different groups within a nation based on socio-economic classes, extending Leerssen and Beller's theory about nations, societies and races.

### 3.1 The Other

An important concept which is employed within Imagology and also significant for this research is the idea of Othering. Edward Said was the first to introduce the concept of the Other in his book *Orientalism*. His theory started out with the need to provide an instrument to think about Britain in its postcolonial time. Said's argument was that "European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient, politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically

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<sup>35</sup> Joep Leerssen and Manfred Beller, *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007) 17.

<sup>36</sup> Pierre Tchoungui, "Ethnic Survivals and the Modern Shift : Literary Imagology and Ethno-Psychology: Cameroon As Reflected by Its Writers," *Diogenes* 20, no. 80 (1972): 102.

and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.”<sup>37</sup> An opposition was created between Europeans and Orientals, “which always worked to the detriment of the latter.”<sup>38</sup> An orientalist discourse came into being, a regime of truth in Foucault’s terminology, in which writers and academics told stories of the Orient and claimed to be successful at conveying the truth in these representations. Joep Leerssen links Imagology to Said’s theory about the Other. When humans come into contact with different cultures they tend to label anything which deviates from their accustomed domestic patterns as an anomaly, a singularity, an oddity.<sup>39</sup> One nation could for instance define itself by setting its own people apart from negative traits which they attribute to the ‘other’ nation. If an American character in a book expresses an aversion against something which is stereotypically considered European, this implies that Americans as a national stereotype do not have this trait and Europeans are othered within this context. Othering also takes place in James Cameron’s *Titanic* in the sense that the rich upper-class Americans are othered by portraying them in a negative way and emphasizing the contrast between them and the more sympathetic characters.

### 3.2 Method

Janna Kantola used Imagology as a method in her research into the portrayal of the Finnish national stereotype in fiction. Her goal was to study, understand and reveal fictional constructions of national stereotypes in fiction. The idea in her research was “that by studying the features attributed to the Finns and Finland, it would, at the same time, be possible to suggest at least some mechanisms typically at work for stereotypes in fiction, and possibly even characteristics

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<sup>37</sup> Catherine Hall, "Edward Said," *History Workshop Journal* 57, no. 1 (2004): 236.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>39</sup> Joep Leerssen and Manfred Beller, *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007) 17.

typically ascribed to smaller nations, or peripheries.”<sup>40</sup> Additionally, she emphasizes the fact that Imagology focusses on “cultural stereotypes as expressed primarily in fiction, not the actual cultural or national identities.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, Kantola focusses on features attributed to certain nations. In this research, I will divide these features attributed to certain nations into a couple of sections. First, I will look at individual characters, their features, but also their perception of other nations, if applicable. Then I will look at features which are not necessarily concerned with specific characters, such as the use of religion and landscapes.

Finally, I will combine the features in the establishment of a broader conclusion about the novels concerning the concept of Othering and look into which nation or social group is othered within the different texts. In an article on the relation between the stranger and Europe, Joep Leerssen looks at the way in which a European self-image has taken shape through a contrast with two non-European Others; the Mediterranean and the New World. Leerssen considers the “dynamics and interaction between various images from various perspectives” complex and fascinating.<sup>42</sup> In this particular research he tries to tease out “an ensemble of representational strands coming from various narrative traditions, perspectives, and contacts and twisted into a complex knot,” thereby showing how the European self-image was based upon othering two non-European nations.<sup>43</sup> Next to looking at individual characters and other features, this research will set out to pursue a similar goal: to consider how the different novels construct national stereotypes through a contrast with the Other.

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<sup>40</sup> Janna Kantola, “Finland Is Not Europe, Finland Is Only Finland’, The Function of Funny Finns in Fiction,” *Orbis Litterarum* 65, no. 6 (2010): 440.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>42</sup> Joep Leerssen, “Stranger/Europe,” *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Philologica* 9, no. 2 (2017): 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

The search for the features and consideration of othering will be carried out by the method of close reading. Andrew DuBois describes how a teacher at Harvard explained the concept of the close reading method in the following manner: “[students] were not to say anything that was not derived from the text they were considering. They were not to make any statements that they could not support by a specific use of language that actually occurred in the text. They [were meant to read] texts closely as texts and not to move at once into a general context of human experience or history.”<sup>44</sup> The idea in this research is to look at national stereotypes as they are conveyed through the several texts. A close-reading analysis of the novels will be compared to established national stereotypes to look for similarities.

#### 4. Structure

The next step in analysing national stereotypes in the six novels about Titanic would be to look into the literary traditions around the three main national stereotypes present in the texts. Therefore, the first chapter will consist of a discussion of the American, the English and the Irish national stereotype. Chapter two will carry out research into how national stereotypes are constructed in the 1995-1996 novels. The first section will focus on this construction through individual characters and provide a summary of the novels, the second section will look at the subjects religion, landscape and other themes, and a third section will consist of a discussion of the texts in relation to othering and class. The analysis of the three novels published before *Titanic* was released will be concluded with a comparison between the results found in the individual novels. Chapter three will do the exact same thing for three novels published in 2012, for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Titanic’s sinking. Chapter four, the final chapter, will then

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<sup>44</sup> Frank Lentricchi and Andrew DuBois. *Close Reading: The Reader* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 2.

compare the findings of the analysis of the 1995-1996 novels to the one from the 2012 novels to see if the influence of *Titanic* can be observed and suggest topics for further research.

## Chapter 1: National Stereotypes

### 1.1 American National Stereotype

The most important national stereotype for this research is the American. One thing which all the novels have in common is the feature of rich first class Americans travelling on Titanic, therefore this stereotype will be discussed first. Peter Firchow explains the American national stereotype from today's point of view. After looking at his ideas, Henry James' ideas will be discussed because he offers a more contemporary view on Americans in the Titanic era. Firchow establishes two enduring stereotypical responses which were evoked from the very outset about the idea of America. It was firstly believed to be a place of extraordinary wealth and secondly, that its natives dwelled in a state of nature.<sup>45</sup> A positive image of America emerged in the nineteenth century viewing the country as "more fortunate than 'old' Europe by not being burdened with ruined castles, useless memories, and pointless feuds."<sup>46</sup> The crime of slavery was thereby avoided from an American point of view. A more negative stereotypical image is that Americans are always striving for an empty happiness in the form of money. This notion will be particularly useful within this research considering the fact that rich Americans in *Titanic* (1997) pursue a similar form of empty happiness as becomes clear from the aforementioned quote from Rose. In addition, there is the popular image associated with the United States known as the American Dream.<sup>47</sup> Firchow defines this dream as "owning a sub-urban house with a picket fence and a car in the garage, located in a town that was populated exclusively by whites and in which they could send their two average kids safely to school."<sup>48</sup> This dream can be extended to people

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<sup>45</sup> Peter Firchow, "America 3: United States," in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 90.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

who migrated to America in search of the American Dream in the shape of a better life than the one they left behind.

Titanic sank on 15 April 1912. Henry James (1843-1916) lived during this time and was a prominent voice in defining the American. He offers interesting views considering the idea of national stereotypes. James wrote a book about his own people and land when he returned to America after having travelled abroad for twenty years.<sup>49</sup> These twenty years had transformed New York in particular from a provincial city of commerce to a “vast crude democracy of trade” filled with skyscrapers and “a skyline that looked like a broken hair-comb turned up.”<sup>50</sup> James’ idea was to take an honest look at America’s present state. He describes the nation at the start of the twentieth century as “a land in the full tide of expansion and exploitation, with the gates of immigration wide open, bringing into the eastern cities strange languages and accents and faces alien to his own time.”<sup>51</sup>

James found that America had undergone drastic changes at the end of the nineteenth century. He described the country as “a continent striving to be a nation.”<sup>52</sup> A new aristocracy was established based wholly on wealth due to the new focus on commerce and industry. Business now existed in everything and “everything existed to nourish bigger and bigger business.”<sup>53</sup> James furthermore felt horror at America’s cult of impermanence. There was a sense of economic pride, but James states how “I have seen many persons, but no personages, have heard much talk, but no conversation. Nevertheless the sense one gets here of the increase of the various acts of life is almost oppressive. (...) The arts of life flourish, but the art of living, simply,

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<sup>49</sup> Henry James, *The American*, Scribner Reprint Editions (Fairfield, N.J.: A.M. Kelley, 1976), vii.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

isn't among them."<sup>54</sup> He feels that the people in America lack a sense of place, especially in a city like New York, which deprives them of tranquillity. Moreover, the place of religion was moved in favour of commerce. When James wants to visit an old church in New York, he finds it has been replaced with a row of nondescript stores. Overall, the image which Henry James describes about the American in his writing is rather negative. This image is in line with the rich Americans in *Titanic* as well as the national stereotype which Peter Firchow describes.

## 1.2 English National Stereotype

Menno Spiering states how the English have been portrayed in literary traditions in many ways, by others as well as by themselves. There are two specific personifications which often occur in literary traditions: the 'gentleman' and his uncultivated counterpart 'John Bull'.<sup>55</sup> The gentleman is characterized as "morally upright and honest, frequently using the word 'phlegmatic' to describe his behaviour," thus someone who does not easily get excited or emotional.<sup>56</sup> Being a gentleman entailed a certain code of conduct, irrespective of class or blood. The idea was that these men act honourable, also in their interactions with the lower class. There is a natural confident leadership around such a man, as well as the idea that this person never loses his temper. This stereotype manifested itself from the end of the nineteenth century onwards in phlegmatic detectives or agents such as Sherlock Holmes and James Bond.<sup>57</sup> The other personification, John Bull, is seen as "an honest plain-dealing fellow. Choleric, bold, and of a very inconstant temper he was very apt to quarrel with his best friends, especially when they

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>55</sup> Menno Spiering, "English," in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 145.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 146.

pretended to govern him.”<sup>58</sup> Bull furthermore “tends to be lower class, is easily angered and always ready to dust up his enemies.”<sup>59</sup> Additionally, Spiering states how John Bull actually obtained a stereotype status by appearing in numerous cartoons and prints. He is often contrasted with the French, who are depicted as more effeminate. A character like John Bull defines the stereotypical image of the English by showing his “directness, love of freedom and dislike of all things French.”<sup>60</sup> Bull, moreover, eats beef and places the Englishman in a tradition of plain country cooking. The two personifications of the English national stereotype discussed by Spiering share an emphasis on a high regard for honesty and liberty.<sup>61</sup>

The national stereotype of the English is furthermore characterized as Protestant and with “Protestant moral values such as the right to speak one’s own mind, and one’s duty to speak the truth.”<sup>62</sup> The English constitution was seen as “an ideal of political pragmatism and a stable state based on political liberties.”<sup>63</sup> The English broke with Catholicism and now see themselves as guardians of freedom and being morally upright. Catholics were thereby assigned the role of the Other. This united the English nation against a common enemy. Catholicism furthermore received the label of un-Englishness. The English felt invited to spread their national qualities of liberty and honesty all over the world. Englishness was also contrasted with Scots and the Irish, besides the French. The nation silhouetted itself against many continental ‘Others’. Then there was also the role of imperialism and its influence on the self-image of the English. A great sense of superiority over others is the dominant factor within this self-image. The continental ‘Others’ on the other hand, had a different perception of the English nation. The English were associated

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 147.

by other nations with an assertive arrogance as well as capitalism due to industrialization and the pauperization of the working classes. Spiering also states how “a tradition of literary critiques [was founded] of English social injustice and its underlying ‘class system’.”<sup>64</sup> Thus, there exists a literary tradition in which the English are criticized for their unjust class system, which will be an important feature to look for in the novels about Titanic.

The negative literary tradition about the English industrialization is contrasted with another literary tradition which was continued in the twentieth century. A tradition “of English countryside idyll, focusing on a peaceful homeland, a region with picturesque villages and cottages and marked by harmonious human relations and ancient traditions.”<sup>65</sup> Spiering places the ambivalence between the English countryside idyll and the negative image of the industrialization in a larger frame by a North/South divide, “contrasting a rugged industrialized North with a most genteel, rural South.”<sup>66</sup> These two regions of the English nations are united, however, in an image of a sense of “level-headed pragmatism and individualism against all forms of systematic or theory-driven rigidity.”<sup>67</sup> A final point which Spiering makes is that the European Union is seen by the English as a threat to the English national identity. The Union thereby poses a threat to English honesty and liberty by the interference from Brussels. Euroscepticism is a key term in this image of the English.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 149.

### 1.3 Irish National Stereotype

The Irish national stereotype was in many ways established by a contrast with the English. Joep Leerssen states how the “Irish image has from the Middle Ages onwards been characterized by contradictions.”<sup>69</sup> The country was on the one hand famous for a revival of Christian learning and on the other there was a well-established discourse depicting the nature of the country as barbaric, wild and uncouth. The English Crown justified their supremacy over Ireland by way of descriptions of Irish sinfulness and savagery. Many critics thereby characterize Ireland’s position through colonialism. The Irish were described by the English as “emotionally incontinent and intellectually handicapped.”<sup>70</sup> A more positive image arose in the mid-eighteenth century when the Irishman’s naivety became a moral asset and a “celebration of Irish spontaneity, creativity, musical abilities and tenderness of feeling” came into being.<sup>71</sup> The Irish themselves in this period became interested in creating a native, national self-image. They considered their people morally superior to their English oppressors as well as more sensitive to the supernatural and mysticism.<sup>72</sup> The most dominant image of the Irish exported to other Western nations became a sentimental-mystical image.

Another important aspect of the Irish image is one of Irish-British conflict and rebellion. From the war for independence from the nineteenth century onwards, a contradictory image about the Irish arose. One of ballad-singing and reciting poetry is contrasted with violent-mindedness.<sup>73</sup> The West of Ireland is considered the ‘mystical’ pole’ of the Irish image and the city slums of Dublin and Belfast more to the East is where the ‘violent pole’ of the image is

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<sup>69</sup> Joep Leerssen, “Irish,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 191.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

situated. Leerssen considers this contradictoriness as typically Irish. Alongside this contradictoriness, the Irishman is “non-rational, dismissive of practical expediency and reason, driven by dreams, visions, myths and feelings, and engaged (...) in a stubborn rebellion against the despotism of fact.”<sup>74</sup>

A final note on the Irish national stereotype can be found in David Lloyd’s description of the poor social situation in Ireland which the native Irish had to endure for centuries. Lloyd discusses the discourse around representations of the social situation of the Irish and makes some remarks considering literary traditions when it comes to depicting the Irish in a text. A stereotypical image came into being, of the Irish family living as tenants off of potato plants and constantly facing “the constant prospect of hunger, often to the extent of seasonal famine, wretched living conditions, cold, and disease on a daily basis, so that the misery of the Irish became a byword among nineteenth-century travellers, politicians and economists.”<sup>75</sup> The Irish were thus usually associated in literary representations with misery and being famished due to a lack of potatoes. Next to that, Lloyd describes how the Irish in literary representations by the British were seen as “a kind of contagion, both literally spreading disease and figuratively infecting the British working classes with slovenly habits and idleness.”<sup>76</sup> The diversity in both negative and positive literary representations of national stereotypes discussed in the paragraphs above present a broad set of features to look for in the six novels about Titanic.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>75</sup> David Lloyd, “The Indigent Sublime: Specters of Irish Hunger,” *Representations* 92 (2005): 157.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 162.

## Chapter 2: 1995-1996 novels

### 1. Individual Characters

The three novels which will be discussed in this chapter were all published before the 1997 film *Titanic* was released. They were first published in 1995 or 1996. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first one will discuss the main plotline of the individual novels and look at stereotypical traits in characters directly connected to national stereotypes. The second section focuses on stereotypical traits which come forward in other ways, through the subject of religion and landscape, for instance. A final section will look at the novels in a more general sense and discuss the way in which particular nations are othered.

#### 1.1 Every Man for Himself

Jane Gardam reviewed Beryl Bainbridge's *Every Man for Himself* in 1996 for *The Spectator*. She describes the novel as a "taut piece of historical fiction, an account of the classic tragedy of the sinking in 1912 of the 'unsinkable' Titanic on her maiden voyage to America."<sup>77</sup> She states how homely detail is essential in a story like this one, because the history of Titanic is very much researched and physical. The vanishing "of the Titanic was symbol of the end of an age and ghastly omen of what was coming next, when the Great War was to sweep first-class and steerage away again, but this time in larger numbers."<sup>78</sup> The main character of the story is Morgan, a young rich American man. Gardam states how Bainbridge "places him and his set of bright young things, the hugely wealthy, aimless, idle, American and English glitterati, shadowed by familial madness and dissipation, inside the wonderful structure of the ship."<sup>79</sup> The novel

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<sup>77</sup> Jane Gardam, "Every Man for Himself," *The Spectator* 277, no. 8774 (1996): 35.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

incorporates a variety of national identities, as well as a discussion of the significance of class through Morgan's reflections on the matter and therefore presents an interesting novel for an Imagologist analysis.

Morgan is a privileged young man in the sense that he is rich. His parents died before he reached the age of three. His uncle, the banker J. Pierpont Morgan, is one of the richest men in America, but he was raised by an aunt. Jane Gardam describes Morgan as a "bemused, erratic, hard-drinking, lecherous young virgin, heir to great wealth. [He] had a dark childhood and believes himself to be cast as an observer of tragedy. He has an animal awareness of evil and sees it as infectious."<sup>80</sup> Morgan furthermore states in the novel how he despises "a too evident regard for birth and position."<sup>81</sup> He is critical of the inequality which exists between the poor and the rich. Morgan expresses his critique on the class system after he gets into a little incident with a rich woman whining about a snail on the ship. He ends up in a long conversation with Scurra, an older rich American passenger, about his thoughts on the subject. He was convinced of his ideas because of a Socialist meeting which informed him "of the truth of Marx's theory that the real value of commodities lay in the labour embodied in them."<sup>82</sup> Scurra tears these "new-found beliefs to shreds, [...] by questioning [Morgan's] capacity for sound judgement, the young, he asserted, being prey to delusions, awash with misplaced guilt and only too prone, by virtue of unexplained chemical changes and immortal longings, to be struck by the lightning bolt of giddy ideals."<sup>83</sup> Scurra furthermore lays Morgan bare by stating how it is typical that a "young man

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>81</sup> Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1996), 12.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 97.

such as yourself, rich, pompous, ignorant of the lives of the general mass of humanity, should find himself so persuaded.”<sup>84</sup>

Henry James put an emphasis on one of the most prominent differences between the English and Americans.<sup>85</sup> The English aristocracy was based on inheritance, whereas America’s was made up of people with great wealth which they acquired themselves. Morgan does not adhere to this image on the one hand, because he is an American heir. On the other, he is not as concerned with his position and money as stereotypical English inheritors are in literary traditions concerning critique of the class system.<sup>86</sup> Thus, by contrasting Morgan with the stereotypical upper-class English, he can be placed in a literary tradition in which Americans are eager to create their own success. The stereotypical image is furthermore exemplified in a comment which is made about a passenger named Charlie: “Being British, Charlie had nothing of his own and nothing to do save ride around the family estate with a gun under his arm, waiting for his father to die.”<sup>87</sup> The contrast between the stereotypical image of the English and Americans is thereby highlighted through this comment. Peter Firchow establishes how a positive literary tradition considering the American stereotype arose in the nineteenth century viewing the country as “more fortunate than ‘old’ Europe by not being burdened with ruined castles, useless memories, and pointless feuds.”<sup>88</sup> Morgan’s thoughts on inequality are not in line with this stereotypical image, because his critique is not merely on Europe, but also extends to the inequality in America. This claim might furthermore be supported by the fact that Morgan seeks help from Shakespeare when he is trying to write a love letter to a girl. He sets out “armed with two

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>85</sup> Henry James, *The American Scene*, edited by Leon Edel (London: Hart-Davis, 1968), x.

<sup>86</sup> Find source on literary tradition criticizing the class system.

<sup>87</sup> Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1996), 77.

<sup>88</sup> Peter Firchow, “America 3: United States,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 91.

volumes of poetry and a copy of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, [...] sat down at a library table and struggled to write to Wallis."<sup>89</sup> The American national stereotype considers Europe's past a burden, whereas Morgan seeks help from old English texts and thinks them valuable.

Morgan additionally, "had worked as an apprentice draughtsman in the design offices of Harland and Wolff for eleven months prior to the launch of the ship."<sup>90</sup> In a small way, Morgan had contributed to the creation of Titanic. This is how Morgan met Thomas Andrews, "managing director and chief designer of the White Star Line," and British, rather than American.<sup>91</sup> Andrews had "more than once paused beside [Morgan's] desk on one of his fleeting visits to the draughtsmen's shed at Queen's Island in Belfast. Morgan's prime task was to look at wash-basins in the third class accommodation areas, "but Andrews had never failed to convey appreciation."<sup>92</sup> Scurra at one point exclaims how "Andrews is a curious man. Unlike many who regard succession as a right, he believes in proving himself. I find that very boring, don't you? He also believes in fate. [...] The sentence of the Gods. A comforting idea, don't you think, in that it leaves the individual blameless?"<sup>93</sup> Scurra points to the idea that Andrews does not approve of inherited wealth, but is more fond of making one's own fortune. It is also implied that Andrews is not a religious man, but believes in fate, as opposed to one God. He thereby deviates from the English national stereotype and seems to agree with values which are stereotypically attributed to Americans: making one's own fortune by working hard for it.

As mentioned before, Morgan does not consider Europe's culture a burden. Thomas Andrews feels the same way. He appears rather fond of his culture's inheritance in the form of

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<sup>89</sup> Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1996), 103.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

great European minds of the past. Whilst Titanic is on her way to New York, Thomas Andrews can continuously be found working on the ship and trying to find improvements everywhere he looks. He starts a discussion with Morgan at one point considering the artwork in the library of the ship. He asks Morgan about a “painting of Plymouth Harbour - here he pointed at a rather dull oil hung above the fireplace - [and whether it] should be replaced with a portrait of a literary figure.”<sup>94</sup> Thomas Andrews wonders about which literary figure would be the best choice and three names are mentioned: Percy Bysshe Shelley, Doctor Johnson and Charles Dickens, three unmistakably English writers. Andrews’ Europeanness, is thereby established by his validation of great English writers, as opposed to American’s stereotypical trait of considering Europe’s old culture a burden. Morgan considers how he possibly “had a crush on Andrews. [...] One needs someone to look up to, someone worthy that is, and being fulfilled rather than just rich he was what I judge to be a successful man.”<sup>95</sup> This connection between Morgan and Thomas Andrews brings forth an interesting matter from an Imagologist perspective. Morgan admires Thomas Andrews for his success and being a fulfilled man rather than just rich. This might be seen as a point of criticism on the American pursuit of empty happiness in the form of money which Peter Firchow points to.

## 1.2 From Time to Time

Jack Finney’s *From Time to Time* is a sequel to another one of his novels titled *Time and Again* in which Simon Morley, an American advertising illustrator is recruited in a project through which he travels to the past. He decides to remain in that past of the 1880s because he fell in love. *From Time to Time* tells the story of what happens afterwards when Simon returns to his own

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 82.

time. He is recruited once more by major Rube Prien to go on a mission and finds himself in 1912. The idea here was to prevent World War I from happening, but Simon does not succeed. The novel is significant for this research because Simon is an American who ends up on Titanic and is very much aware of the culture around him. In order to travel back in time to 1912, he had to visualize New York in that particular year and immerse himself in the cultural aspects of that time. The novel dedicates much time to creating an image of what New York was like in 1912. Finney incorporates several photos and illustrations in his novel to give the reader a sense of authenticity. The actual mentioning of Titanic, however, and Morley's conduct on the ship covers merely a couple of pages at the beginning and end of the novel. Morley actually reflects on an important matter concerning Imagology. The idea of stereotypical images of national identity arose from a nationalist need to define one's own nation. Engaged in a conversation, Morley reflects how time patriots love the word nostalgia. They are "people who live in the best country in the world. Must be the best because that's where *they* live. And they live in the best of times; has to be the best because it's their lifetime."<sup>96</sup> Morley thus considers how a positive nationalist image of one's own nation can be created through nationalistic feelings.

Simon Morley's character development in *From Time to Time* appears to have given way to an in-depth image which is created of the city of New York. The only character which seems significant in this section of the analysis of the novel is Ruben Prien. This particular novel yields more results in the sections 'Landscape' and 'Class and Othering'. Ruben Prien is an American major controlling the time travelling project, yet lacks the ability to actually move through time. Prien tells a doctor how he dedicates all of his time to work, often working sixteen hours a day and therefore has no time for marriage. He also believes that "women are nicer than men, they're

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<sup>96</sup> Jack Finney, *From Time to Time* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 58.

better people.”<sup>97</sup> One way in which Prien conforms to the American national stereotype is through his positive image of women. Americans are stereotypically considered more modern in their views on topics like these as opposed to burdened Europe. The idea that marriage is not for him deviates, however, from Peter Firchow’s definition of the American dream. He defines the dream as “owning a sub-urban house with a picket fence and a car in the garage, located in a town that was populated exclusively by whites and in which they could send their two average kids safely to school.”<sup>98</sup> Prien does not live in this dream. The major is furthermore the one who comes up with the idea to alter the past to such an extent that the first World War might be prevented. His colleague tells him how he is happy Prien lacks the ability to travel through time because he would “alter the past. In order to alter the present according to [his] own godlike understanding of what’s best for the rest of us.”<sup>99</sup> America is associated with modernity and the ability to create in a godlike manner. From this perspective, Prien might be said to be characterized by this trait stereotypically attributed to Americans.

### 1.3 Titanic Crossing

Barbara Williams’ *Titanic Crossing* depicts the life of a thirteen-year-old boy named Albert who travels on Titanic in second class. He originally comes from America, but has lived rather unhappily in London for three years. He travels with his mother Katherine and his six-year-old sister Virginia, or Ginny. Albert’s father passed away due to appendicitis and they are accompanied by their Uncle Claybourne. Katherine’s mother in law and Uncle Claybourne have summoned the family back to America because they are afraid London will defile them. Albert’s

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>98</sup> Peter Firchow, “America 3: United States,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 92.

<sup>99</sup> Jack Finney, *From Time to Time* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 94.

grandmother, who lives in America tells Katherine that “the only way she’d ever be able to see [her grandchildren] regularly was to threaten to cut off your annuity if you refused to raise Albert and Virginia in America.”<sup>100</sup> The real reason behind the grandmother’s urging is that she and Uncle Claybourne are afraid of Katherine’s involvements with London’s suffragettes and actresses. This already shows how stereotypical images about nations are definitely present in *Titanic Crossing*. Besides these family tensions, the novel portrays the sinking of the Titanic and the aftermath for Albert and Ginny who lose their mother. A significant detail in the story is the fact that Albert was at first refused when he wants to enter a life boat with his little sister, because the officer in charge considers the thirteen-year-old a man, rather than a child. The novel was intended for an 8-14 year audience and written in a relatively simple style compared to the other novels.

Albert is the main character of the novel. He is originally from America, but spent the past three years of his life in London under the watchful eye of an English governess. He has a rather negative image of London and seems to cling to his American heritage. Throughout the novel he makes several remarks regarding his aversion against the English city. The text actually starts with him exclaiming his happiness about leaving for America. He exclaims: “Good-bye London! You can have your soot. And your fog. And your old cricket games. You can have your know-it-all Miss Harcher!”<sup>101</sup> He is not very happy with the consequences of industrialization, but what he hated most about England was not “the biting cold or the gray skies or even the coal smoke in the air that made his chest hurt when he tried to run. It was being tutored. It was never going to places where he could make friends.”<sup>102</sup> The text conveys a negative stereotypical image

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<sup>100</sup> Barbara Williams, *Titanic Crossing* (New York: Dial Press, 1995), 12.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

which Albert has formed of London. What is striking is how the text emphasizes how it is something in his head, about being more successful at making friends in America, which makes up his negative association with London, rather than tangible subjects such as the air which hurts his lungs. He believes in a kind of American dream in a way.

The three years which Albert spend in England however, including the three years of tutoring by the strict Miss Harcher, seem to have had their influence on him because Albert shows a couple of characteristics stereotypically attributed to the English. Menno Spiering describes the stereotypical personification of the English gentleman as honest, morally upright and carrying out a respectful code of conduct, irrespective of class or blood.<sup>103</sup> The behaviour of the little boy comes across as gentlemanlike, especially when Titanic is sinking and he is faced with the opportunity of taking a seat on a lifeboat, which could also potentially save someone else's life. After Albert has been turned away from one boat, he is pushed towards another by an old man telling him: "Thirteen? Of course you're not too old. I'll speak to the officer with this boat and get you on board."<sup>104</sup> The man tries to force Albert forward, but he tells the man: "No! Please, sir! Thank you, anyway. But I think I'd like [...] to be a man."<sup>105</sup> This privileged second class boy's behaviour shows stereotypical traits attributed to the English gentleman in the sense that he carries out a respectful code of conduct, wanting to give up his place to a woman or child regardless of their social status.

Earlier in the novel, there are two more situations in which Albert shows gentlemanlike behaviour. When Katherine has to push Virginia in a wheelchair, Albert does not hesitate for a

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<sup>103</sup> Menno Spiering, "English," in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 145.

<sup>104</sup> Barbara Williams, *Titanic Crossing* (New York: Dial Press, 1995), 138.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

second and tells his mother “I’ll help you.”<sup>106</sup> Throughout the story he holds open doors for her and jumps up the second she needs him. Another example is when Albert gets really annoyed with twelve-year-old Emily, a second-class girl who has a crush on him. He “wanted to punch her. He’d do it too, if she were a boy.”<sup>107</sup> The restraint and phlegmatic conduct which he exercises in the interaction with a girl who annoys him emphasizes Albert’s gentlemanlike conduct.

## 2. Religion, Landscape and Other Themes

### 2.1 Religion

Religion in *Every Man for Himself* is used in a way to criticize the class system. Throughout the novel several sections of the ship are described as Morgan and Thomas Andrews go on inspection rounds on Titanic. Jane Gardam states: “A visit to the ship’s engine rooms suggests to them that man is catching up with God.”<sup>108</sup> The novel implies how man has now taken on God’s role in creating this mini-world on Titanic, her storage rooms stocked with everything a passenger could possibly desire. This idealized image of luxury which modernity at the start of the twentieth century offered is contrasted by another image, which Morgan encounters, of a man from the boiler room. The stricken man is held up by two seamen and Morgan reflects how he “was past middle age, the perspiration plastering his white hair to his scalp. Bare-chested, his sodden trousers smeared with grease and dirt, he looked half drowned.”<sup>109</sup> The man had done a nine hour shift in the boiler room putting coal in the engines in the blasting heat after which he went

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>108</sup> Jane Gardam, “Every Man for Himself,” *The Spectator* 277, no. 8774 (1996): 35.

<sup>109</sup> Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1996), 78.

straight into a six hour shift. It is useful here to recall how Richard Davenport-Hines states that “the crew of the Titanic was overwhelmingly British.”<sup>110</sup>

The scene is significant for a discussion of religion in the novel in relation to national stereotypes, due to the man’s “elaborate crucifixion tattooed on his back, the arms of the Christ spread out across his shoulders.”<sup>111</sup> These tattoos were apparently quite common in the past, because men would try to avoid the lash in this manner. Next to that, a man mentions to Morgan how when the crewmen come aboard “you’ll see some of the old hands saluting the quarterdeck [...] the cross used to hang there.”<sup>112</sup> A stereotypical image of the British can be constructed through their faith, as can be observed in this particular scene in *Every Man for Himself*. The Irish are therein staunch Catholics and often superstitious, and the English advocates of Protestantism. The faith of the crewman is thereby contrasted with Morgan’s beliefs. He states: “I don’t believe in heaven, [...] only justice.”<sup>113</sup> A significant aspect in this matter is that Morgan’s uncle was a religious man: “a regular, even fanatic church-goer”, but also an American.<sup>114</sup> At first sight, the scene with the man from the boiler room could imply how religion merely plays a prominent role in characterizing the British crewmembers, but this small detail in the novel undermines that assumption.

Religion does not play any significant role in *From Time to Time* and therefore this novel will not be discussed in this section. *Titanic Crossing* on the other hand, does offer images concerning religion. In *Titanic Crossing* Albert and his family travel along another family staying in second class. They are English missionaries and express their faith several times throughout

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<sup>110</sup> Richard Davenport-Hines, *Voyagers of the Titanic: Passengers, Sailors, Shipbuilders, Aristocrats, and the Worlds They Came From* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 2013) 191.

<sup>111</sup> Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1996), 79.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

the novel. The fact that they are missionaries on their way to America already presents a stereotypically English image. Menno Spiering discusses how, as the stereotype has it, the English feel superior due to the break with Catholicism and now feel invited to spread national qualities of liberty, honesty and Protestantism, the morally right religion in their eyes.<sup>115</sup>

Emily is part of the missionary family and her religious upbringing becomes evident in two instances in the novel. Emily and Albert start a conversation with a steward on Titanic, ask him about the number of life boats and compare it to the number of passengers on board. Emily exclaims: “That’s disgraceful!” when she hears that there are not enough life boats for everyone on board.<sup>116</sup> The steward defends the White Star Line, however, by telling the two children that there are more life boats than the law requires and next to that, ships were nowadays equipped with a wireless which means that in case of distress a rescue ship would presently be there. His arguments do not hold of course as the ship does sink and takes a lot of lives down with it. What is significant here though is that Emily reflects how: “There should be enough lifeboats to rescue everyone on ship. Anything less is sinful.”<sup>117</sup> Another instance occurs when Albert and Emily’s families are on their way to attend public mass in first class. Emily’s little sister Sarah asks: “Why do rich people lock us out?”<sup>118</sup> Emily answers her with: “Because they don’t know what it says in the Bible about rich men getting into heaven.”<sup>119</sup> The two examples create a negative image about the rich on board Titanic through Emily’s comments about religion.

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<sup>115</sup> Menno Spiering, “English,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 147.

<sup>116</sup> Barbara Williams, *Titanic Crossing* (New York: Dial Press, 1995), 75.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

## 2.2 Landscape

*Every Man for Himself* does not discuss images of New York or the Irish landscape, assumingly due to the fact that the entire novel takes place on board of the Titanic. The opposition of centre and periphery from Beller and Leerssen's book is, however, quite significant in a discussion of *From Time to Time*'s use of landscape descriptions. Joep Leerssen extends his theories about national stereotypes to the opposition of centre versus periphery. He states how in "countries and societies, the centre is the locus where power and prestige converge: the capital or urban heartland, where court and government are situated."<sup>120</sup> The periphery refers to those areas of a nation which are uninvolved in networks of culture and power. When the opposition is used in literary texts and speaks positively about the centre, it "will count as a locus of refinement, progress, energy and dynamism, often contrasted with an opposite, negatively valorised image of the periphery as uncouth, static, passive and backward."<sup>121</sup> When a text conveys a negative image of the centre, it "will count as a locus of decadence, frenzy and unnatural delusions, and thus be opposed to an opposite valorisation of the periphery as balanced, close to nature and morally regenerative."<sup>122</sup>

In *From Time to Time*, Morley experiences a great opposition between New York and Belfast. The novel is quite positive about the centre as well as the periphery. New York is the centre in the novel. Morley reflects on how he is very familiar with Broadway, having been there so many times and now that the street was no longer new and exciting, "Broadway down here was just plain ugly."<sup>123</sup> He furthermore characterizes the buildings by connecting their modern

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<sup>120</sup> Joep Leerssen, "Centre/Periphery," in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 278.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>123</sup> Jack Finney, *From Time to Time* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 70.

look with ugliness, the “uncoordinated rooflines jagged as broken teeth.”<sup>124</sup> He emphasizes his opinion again stating that the street was “a drably, crudely utilitarian commercial street, not even attempting to be anything but what it so purely was, ugly. And I liked it. I loved it.”<sup>125</sup> A connection can be made here with Henry James’ opinion regarding New York. He felt a horror at the culture of impermanence and would have disliked the every-changing city. James, moreover, describes the emerging skyscrapers at the start of the twentieth century as “a skyline that looked like a broken hair-comb turned up.”<sup>126</sup> This image presents almost a synonym for Morley’s description of the city’s skyline. The novel’s characterization of New York conforms to a positive stereotypical image of the centre in that the city comes across as a locus of progress, energy and dynamism.

It would have made sense if the periphery in *From Time to Time* would have been portrayed in a more negative way as opposed to the bubbly energetic image of the city, but when Morley has to kill time in Ireland he is overwhelmed in a positive manner by the Irish countryside. When he looks out at Belfast he sees “a mountain dominating the skyline,” rather than skyscrapers.<sup>127</sup> He does consider Ireland’s landscape passive and backward, but the image does not convey a negative connotation, like the one described in Joep Leerssen’s work on centre versus periphery. Morley finds himself walking on quiet streets where he can smell the kerosene as he passes under orange-flame streetlights. Next to that, there was not a single automobile. As he explores more of Ireland he discovers “the fields truly are a shade of green seen nowhere else.”<sup>128</sup> He characterizes the landscape by describing “strange castle like fortresses of centuries

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>126</sup> Henry James, *The American Scene*, edited by Leon Edel (London: Hart-Davis, 1968), viii.

<sup>127</sup> Jack Finney, *From Time to Time* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 274.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 281.

past, still standing, their entrances high above the ground, against siege from - Vikings? I wasn't sure."<sup>129</sup> The description of Ireland's periphery is not as negative as one might expect in opposition to the energetic city of New York, but it does show how the image adheres to an American's national stereotypical image of Europe. The castles and feud with the Vikings to which Morley refers are precisely what America considers a burden to Europe, against which they define themselves as modern and free of such past feuds.

*Titanic Crossing* also mentions the beauty of Ireland, but is even more positive about its splendour. In terms of landscape, *Titanic Crossing* is mostly critical of London and the city's weather, as expressed several times by Albert. He states how: "London is always cold and rainy. [...] How could anyone want to stay in damp, bitter London when they could go to Washington?"<sup>130</sup> The city is furthermore associated with defiling, dangerous influences like actresses and suffragettes. Albert's American grandmother is especially critical of the English in that respect. London can be seen as a centre in this context, whereas a short comment about Ireland establishes the opposition between the negative image of London as a locus of decadence and frenzy and a more positive image of the balanced, close to nature Irish countryside. *Titanic* makes a stop in Queenstown in Ireland and Albert and his family get to admire the countryside from the ship's railing. It is described how "the dazzling morning sun had emerged from a cloud to turn the Irish hillsides green as peppermint leaves."<sup>131</sup> Albert and his mother even consider leaving the ship for a while to explore the beautiful groups of dwellings above the shoreline cliffs.

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>130</sup> Barbara Williams, *Titanic Crossing* (New York: Dial Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

### 2.3 Other Themes

Third class merriment in *Every Man for Himself* presents an instance through which critique on stiff Americans can be observed. Morgan goes out on to the boat deck at one point and hears “the squeal of bagpipes.”<sup>132</sup> He joins a group of other first class passengers looking at the steerage space beneath the first class deck. The steerage passengers were “dancing down there, a kind of skirl, the men whooping as they swept the women in figures of eight about the deck.”<sup>133</sup> Someone next to Morgan can be heard murmuring: “They know how to enjoy themselves.”<sup>134</sup> The bagpipes imply that among the people dancing and having a great time, there was probably a large number of Irish people. The passengers on the first class deck express a sense of envy at the joy which is created in the third class. The image of the dancing people and the sounds of bagpipes can be said to be stereotypically Irish. Joep Leerssen describes how in the mid-eighteenth century, a positive image of the Irish arose. This image existed of a “celebration of Irish spontaneity, creativity, musical abilities and tenderness of feeling.”<sup>135</sup> This positive image is exemplified in the third class merriment in *Every Man for Himself*.

A similarly positive image about the third class passengers and thereby the Irish is also present in *Titanic Crossing*. Albert and Emily are sketching away on the second class deck one afternoon when Albert looks down over the railing and sees how “the third-class passengers were having a jolly time yelling and chasing each other. Then someone struck up an accordion, and several of the passengers began dancing an Irish jig.”<sup>136</sup> Albert envies their merriment and wishes

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<sup>132</sup> Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1996), 45.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>135</sup> Joep Leerssen, “Irish,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 192.

<sup>136</sup> Barbara Williams, *Titanic Crossing* (New York: Dial Press, 1995), 68-69..

he could also travel in third class. The next morning he even asks his mother: “If we ever take another ocean trip, can’t we please go third class?”<sup>137</sup>

### 3. Class and Othering

#### 3.1 Every Man for Himself

*Every Man for Himself* in general, appears to other the stuck-up attitude of rich Americans against the virtuous conduct of the British. Throughout the novel, there are several instances in which Americans are portrayed in a negative light. Morgan’s aunt once sailed on a ship called the SS Adriatic. She “reported a lost vanity case which had belonged to her mother [and] held that the rich, having a heightened sense of property, were bound to feel such betrayals more keenly than the poor. Later she discovered she’d left the case at home.”<sup>138</sup> The aunt considers the loss of her vanity case as a greater misfortune than the everyday challenges which the poor have to face and cannot be bothered by the idea that some crewmember lost his job because of her. Morgan and his family were used to luxury to such a large extent because they had spent their “lives in splendid houses and grand hotels and for [them] there was nothing new under the sun.”<sup>139</sup>

Morgan does seem aware of his privileged life, however, when he states that “ours was a small world and between the soup and the fish we were all constantly bopping up and down to acknowledge people we knew; but for the intermittent and minute flickerings of the electric lights we might have been dining at the Ritz in Paris.”<sup>140</sup> The shallowness of the lives of the rich Americans on Titanic thereby appears to be criticized. Their haughtiness towards anyone outside of their little world is illustrated by “a stoker who had climbed up as some sort of practical joke”

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>138</sup> Beryl Bainbridge, *Every Man for Himself* (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1996), 19.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 32.

in the sight of several first-class women. One of these women took the man “for an apparition [and] shot up from the very flames of hell, screamed in alarm and declared it an omen.”<sup>141</sup>

Morgan himself also articulates critical thoughts about his fellow rich American passengers when he says:

“The world consists of men who know us. Look around you. This place is chock-a-block with people who went to the same schools, the same universities, attended the same fencing classes. [...] I could pick out fifty or more I’ve known half my life and Lord knows how many others I’ve shared a dinner table with in half the capitals of Europe. There isn’t a photograph of the Nile that doesn’t feature twenty or more of us lined up to watch the dicky-bird. [...] Why, half the older men here have even shared the same mistresses. [...] One big unhappy family.”<sup>142</sup>

This critical stance is emphasized by Morgan’s aforementioned appreciation of Thomas Andrews, the fulfilled self-made British man.

### 3.2 From Time to Time

*From Time to Time* seems to other Europeans against a positive image of Americans. When Ruben Prien is reflecting on how time travel might potentially stop World War I from happening, he considers how there are tiny details which instigated the war. Ludendorff, an important German general, for example, “could have stopped it dead with a word. And would have if he’d only understood a certain truth: that the United States truly did have the ability to mobilize, equip, train and transport an army to Europe within months.”<sup>143</sup> The foolish conduct of the

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>143</sup> Jack Finney, *From Time to Time* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 102.

German general is othered against two important American figures: President Roosevelt and President Taft. Their political strategy is not exactly idealized, but there is an emphasis on how “they both wanted peace.”<sup>144</sup> The novel additionally opposes the idea that America is a place of empty happiness. Henry James stated, on his visit to New York: “I have seen many persons, but no personages, have heard much talk, but no conversation. Nevertheless the sense one gets here of the increase of the various acts of life is almost oppressive. (...) The arts of life flourish, but the art of living, simply, isn’t among them.”<sup>145</sup> Morley describes Broadway in a more positive light, a place of “no fake glamour or glitz, but an almost homely street.”<sup>146</sup> Morley evidently does not agree with James’ notion that people in America lack a sense of place, especially in a place like New York, which deprives them of tranquillity. When Morley first enters New York in 1912 he feels like he “had come into a time worth protecting.”<sup>147</sup>

There are two more stories of people who were able to create a decent life for themselves in America, experiencing what is stereotypically labelled ‘The American Dream’. Morley meets a man at a theatre company who tells him: “success comes if you deserve it.”<sup>148</sup> The man used to live a rather miserable life being broke during one of Chicago’s hardest winters. He became a hit, however, after he got a chance at a grand theatre with his act. His life took a really good turn through determination and hard work, and he now states: “If it’s a dream, don’t ever wake me up.”<sup>149</sup> Another success story is that of a man in the theatre show who has a talent for imitating

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>145</sup> Henry James, *The American Scene*, edited by Leon Edel (London: Hart-Davis, 1968), xii.

<sup>146</sup> Jack Finney, *From Time to Time* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 166.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

the sounds of a cat. Morley thereby reflects: “to what strange kind of person would it ever occur to turn a talent, if that’s the word, for meowing and yowling like a cat into a lifetime career?”<sup>150</sup>

Next to that, there is a rich English lady who is interviewed after arriving in New York on a ship called the Mauretania. It is the countess of Warwick who believes that suffragettes will succeed at getting the vote, both in America and back in England. She tells the interviewer: “Yes, certainly I am a socialist.”<sup>151</sup> The interviewer asks whether she stayed at the Ritz-Carlton hotel, a newly opened and utterly expensive hotel, and seems sceptical of her confirmation of this rumour. It is not explicitly stated in the novel, but it seems to be implied that this woman is merely a pretentious socialist, who is at the top of the class system enjoying a life of luxury in expensive hotels. It seems easy for her to claim she wants equality, a little like Morgan in *Every Man for Himself* who speaks of the injustice of inequality and is then questioned by Scurra who tells him he is too privileged to know about inequality. The English countess is contrasted with an American benefactress who Morley also encounters. A young, well-off American lady tells an officer and Morley: “I had thought at first of giving a dinner party to my friends. Then I thought how much better to give a dinner party to the poor.”<sup>152</sup> There were about four hundred poor men waiting for a shop to throw away its old bread and the lady, who tells the officer she does not want to give her name, but rather wishes to stay anonymous, gives each and every one of them a half-dollar. The men “each thanked Lady Bountiful politely, a lot of them in a foreign language.”<sup>153</sup> This random event to which Morley is a witness argues in favour of the idea that the novel conveys a rather positive image of Americans as opposed to Europeans.

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

### 3.3 Titanic Crossing

Othering in *Titanic Crossing* can be found in the constructed image of England by Americans. As mentioned before, Albert's American grandmother is concerned about London defiling her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren. She uses the bad influence of suffragettes and actresses as an argument, but these of course also existed in America. Albert's grandmother has heard about an English suffragette called Zora LaRue with whom Katherine was acquainted. She and Uncle Claybourne have read about LaRue "in the newspaper and were worried that [Katherine] might start getting dangerous opinions like hers."<sup>154</sup> Therefore they decide to threaten Katherine with cutting off her annuity. The duality here is that these American characters have constructed a negative image about London in their head, whereas in the novel Americans are portrayed in a negative way because of how Albert's grandmother and Uncle Claybourne blackmail Katherine. Albert himself, also felt negatively about London and longed to go to Washington where life was supposed to be much more to his liking.

A similar comment can be made about Albert's reflections on who owns Titanic. He considers how the White Star line is "a luxury steamship company operating out of Britain. But Albert knew the real owner was J. P. Morgan, an American millionaire."<sup>155</sup> It is interesting how there is an emphasis on the opposition between Britain and America here. The consideration reflects on the question of who was to blame for the Titanic disaster, the British steamship company or the rich American owner. The novel puts the blame most prominently, however, on Bruce Ismay, a British millionaire. Albert overhears two officers discussing why Captain Smith is not slowing down on the evening of April 14 despite several warnings concerning ice fields. One of the officers says: "It's that Ismay hotspot. [...] Wants to set a crossing record. Told Captain to

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<sup>154</sup> Barbara Williams, *Titanic Crossing* (New York: Dial Press, 1995), 21.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

go full steam ahead.”<sup>156</sup> Alberts knows J. Bruce Ismay “was president of the White Star Line” and a rich British man.<sup>157</sup> Again, the British are othered in this particular novel, rather than Americans.

#### 4. Conclusion

The three novels have in common that they were all published right before James Cameron’s *Titanic* was released. They also all incorporate several traits which relate to national stereotypes. The most significant difference between the novels can be found in which nations or groups are othered. *Every Man for Himself* covers mostly the first class life on Titanic and others stuck-up rich Americans against the virtuous British. *From Time to Time* in comparison, celebrates Americans and others Europeans in support of this celebration. Next to that, *Titanic Crossing* others the British. Thus, these three books offer a diverse range of national stereotypes in the sense that they all create a positive image about one nation or people against an othered image of another. This is especially interesting because one might have expected a more coherent outcome here, like a prominent emphasis on othering stuck-up rich Americans for example.

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

## Chapter 3: 2012 novels

### 1. Individual Characters

The second chapter in this research will carry out the same method as the first and is structured in a similar manner. The three novels written for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Titanic sinking will first be looked at individually through the main characters in the novels and then analysed through several topics, including religion and landscape. The final section of this chapter will focus on the texts in relation to othering and class, after which a conclusion based on the findings will be presented. The idea here is to find out, through the use of an Imagologist approach whether concepts around national stereotypes in *Titanic* (1997) are also present in the books written fifteen years after the release of the impactful film.

#### 1.1 The Girl Who Came Home

Hazel Gaynor's *The Girl Who Came Home* contains two plotlines which are connected. The first one follows seventeen-year-old Maggie Murphy through her journey on Titanic. She is an Irish country girl persuaded by her aunt Kathleen to take the journey in search of a better life in America. She travels alongside thirteen other Irish men and women, but is one out of merely two people in her travelling company who survive the journey across the Atlantic ocean. She meets Harry, an English steward on the ship and befriends him. Besides the English Harry, Maggie comes into contact with many cultures and is mainly amazed at how stuck-up the first class passengers on the ship are.

The second plotline in the novel revolves around Grace Butler. This part of the novel takes place in 1982 in Chicago. Maggie, by now an old woman, is Grace's grandmother. Grace is young and studies journalism. She takes a break for two years after her father dies, but returns to

her studies when Maggie tells her the story of her experience on Titanic. Grace writes an article on her grandmother's never before told tale and impresses her teachers. A significant factor in this part of the book is Maggie's remaining ties to Ireland. She arrived in America at the age of seventeen, searching for the American dream, but never dared to cross the ocean again to visit her true home in Ireland. Her Irishness is, however, very prominent throughout the book, even in the parts where she is an old lady and has spend about seventy years in America as opposed to the seventeen years in Ireland. The Irish national stereotype is most prominent in parts of the novel which refer to Maggie's home country and through the character of Seamus, Maggie's sweetheart who at first remains in Ireland because of his sick father. Maggie and Seamus are eventually united in America, though, and live a happily married life. When Maggie thinks of Seamus, she remembers "his gentle manner, his soft eyes, his beautiful red hair."<sup>158</sup> One way in which *The Girl Who Came Home* characterizes its Irish characters is through a typical hair colour.

Maggie Murphy is a typical Irish country girl. Her rich auburn curls are seen as being characteristic for the Irish and she lives in a "thatched stone cottage that three generations of her family had called home."<sup>159</sup> She is a Christian and her low self-image becomes evident when she says: "Why would God have spared me, [...] an insignificant young girl from Ireland, when so many others drowned?"<sup>160</sup> Old Maggie, who has at this point lived in America for seventy years pronounces her fondness of Irish traditions to her granddaughter. She believes it is a shame Americans use teabags as opposed to the way the Irish make tea. She used to enjoy the reading of tea leaves which she calls *Piseóga*, another word for superstitions. Other Irish superstitions which she tells Grace about are "putting eggs mong the new hay, respecting the fairy forts and hearing

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<sup>158</sup> Hazel Gaynor, *The Girl Who Came Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 85.

<sup>159</sup> Hazel Gaynor, *The Girl Who Came Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 3.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

the banshee and [...] silly little leprechauns.”<sup>161</sup> She promises Grace to teach her the art of leaf reading and says “a bit of an Irish tradition for you to pass on to those kids you’re going to have one day.”<sup>162</sup> Maggie is never associated with Irish violence throughout the novel, but does adhere to the stereotype of the Irish as described by Leerssen that the Irish are sensitive to the supernatural and have ties with the mystical. Maggie’s description of Irish traditions confirms this idea. The fact that she is a country girl could explain the lack of any association with violence or rebellion which characterizes the national stereotype of Irish cities.

Maggie’s aunt, Kathleen Dolan, is an interesting character because she was originally Irish, but chased the American dream in New York and has now merely returned to Ireland to visit her sick relative and preaches to everyone who is willing to listen that they should emigrate from Ireland to America like she did. Because of her success in America she is particularly critical of anything Irish. Kathleen inspires romantic notions of America “and captured the imaginations of the women and men of Ballysheen when she spoke of her American life” letting them imagine that lives of wealth and independence are waiting in America.<sup>163</sup> Young girls especially “could often be found gawping at the ‘American ladies’, i.e. Kathleen wearing “fancy hats and shiny brass buttons.”<sup>164</sup> Kathleen even claims “how America offered much better prospects for young women than Ireland ever could.”<sup>165</sup> She defines America as an opportunity “to be away from the social constraints of Irish life.”<sup>166</sup> The Irish national stereotype is characterized by the enduring oppression from England. It thereby represents England’s rigid social class system, as opposed to America’s world of opportunity. Kathleen is also the one out of

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

the fourteen passengers from the Irish Ballysheen group who organizes everyone at first when Titanic hits the iceberg. Maggie wonders where Kathleen is and someone tells her: “your aunt [is] organizing us all, walking up and down those corridors until every one of us was woken and dressed with our coats and shoes.”<sup>167</sup> One might wonder whether Kathleen’s ‘Americanness’ caused her to act rationally and calm at the approaching disaster. Especially since Leerssen states that the Irish national stereotype was partly made up of “emotionally incontinent and intellectually handicapped” people.<sup>168</sup>

Seamus is Maggie’s sweetheart. He lives in the countryside in Ireland and is held back by his sick father from joining Maggie on Titanic. This appears to be for the best in the end, because he would have been a male steerage passenger on Titanic and his chances of survival would have been very low considering the *women-and-children-first* protocol which was enforced. The red-haired boy does not represent the violence with which Irish men are often associated. It is interesting to remember here how *Titanic* (1997) did incorporate a rebellious Irish man in the shape of Tommy Ryan who starts yelling at a couple of stewards who are keeping the gates from third class locked. He says: “You can’t keep us locked here like animals. The ship’s bloody sinking. [...] For God’s sake man, there are women and children down here. Let us out so we can have a chance!”<sup>169</sup> He and Jack find a bench with which they break open the gates. There are, however, no such rebellious Irish men in *The Girl Who Came Home*. Seamus as a character is mostly defined by his infatuation with Maggie.

Vivienne Walker-Brown is one of the few American characters in *The Girl Who Came Home*. The story mostly takes place among the steerage passengers and the majority of

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>168</sup> Joep Leerssen, “Irish,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 192.

<sup>169</sup> *Titanic*, dir. by James Cameron (1997; Twentieth Century Fox, 2005 DVD).

Americans on Titanic travelled in first class. Harry's mother makes a prediction about first class Americans right before Harry leaves to work on Titanic. She considers "the stuck-up American millionaires and socialites, who, it was believed, had chosen to sail on Titanic to make business contracts or to give them something to boast about at one of their dinner parties."<sup>170</sup> Her image of Americans seems to apply quite well to Vivienne Walker-Brown. Maggie and two other Irish girls are taken up by Harry to have a look at the passengers in first class and when they see Vivienne "she oozed such style and sophistication that all three of them wanted to trade their lives for hers immediately."<sup>171</sup> Her character, however, comes across as very much stuck-up. When Titanic is sinking, Vivienne refuses to wear a life jacket because they are ugly-looking things. Harry reflects how "all Vivienne Walker-Brown was worried about was how she looked and whether her precious little dog was all right."<sup>172</sup> Vivienne adheres to the concept which Peter Firchow describes of how the stereotypical American strives for empty happiness. It is all about commerce and status for Vivienne. She had barely reached New York, yet she was already discussing the possibility of starring in a film depicting the Titanic disaster.

The only instance in which Vivienne does not act like a stuck-up rich American lady is when she gives her second coat to Maggie with whom she shares a lifeboat. This act of kindness is invalidated later on in the novel when she nags about her terrible experience with the steerage passengers on Titanic in a letter. She states how "those poorly educated steerage people caused such an unnecessary panic and stampede it was almost impossible to hear oneself think, never mind pay any heed to one's own survival."<sup>173</sup> Vivienne furthermore sneers at Maggie stating: "I

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<sup>170</sup> Hazel Gaynor, *The Girl Who Came Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 12.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

suspect I will never see the coat again and I suspect it will be the nicest coat that she will ever own.”<sup>174</sup>

A really important passage in the novel for an Imagologist analysis occurs when Vivienne describes her thoughts on Europe. She is described as “greatly interested in anything European, finding the ladies so elegant and the countries so interesting.”<sup>175</sup> She proclaims how “New York may boast the highest buildings and the finest jewellery store and department store in the world, [...] but that is nothing compared to the beautiful cobbled streets of a medieval Italian town or the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. So much more culture. So much more elegance than this stinking hellhole.”<sup>176</sup> Vivienne, being a rich American lady takes pride in having educated herself in European culture. The novel does point, however, to the fact that “these things interested Vivienne as passing diversions, but they didn’t engage her for long”, reinforcing the idea that the interests of Americans are rather superficial.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, Firchow describes how America was stereotypically seen as unburdened as opposed to ‘old’ Europe. *The Girl Who Came Home* does not support this stereotypical image of Europe which Americans have by making ‘anything European’ a prime interest of the main American character in the novel.

## 1.2 **Fateful**

Claudia Grey’s *Fateful* depicts the eighteen-year-old Tess Davies who boards the Titanic in service of the Lisle family. The Lisles are headed to America in search of a good match for their daughter because the fortune of the family is starting to run dry. The story focuses mostly on first class passengers of Titanic, since Tess spends a great deal of her time in first class tending to the

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 155.

family she serves. The Lisle family is run by Regina, mother to Irene and Layton. Regina is a rather typical Englishwoman and throughout the novel she expresses a lot of her thoughts on Americans. She furthermore does not treat Tess with kindness, as opposed to her kind-hearted daughter Irene, whom she intends to marry to a rich man. There is a supernatural twist to the story though. Mr Marlowe, owner of the department store Macy's in America has a son, Alec, a handsome first-class passenger who turns out to change into a wolf every single night. *Fateful*, like the other novels, incorporates many aspects around Titanic based on facts from the historical event, but its main love story between Tess and Alec is completely fictional and includes several men who have the ability to turn into wolves. Whilst on the ship, Tess is also hunted by a werewolf named Mikhail, who is after Alec and wants him to join a kind of werewolf brotherhood. Moreover, *Fateful* mostly draws on the English and American national stereotypes.

The most logical option to start a discussion of *Fateful*'s characters would be Tess, since the novel mainly revolves around her. Tess is a servant to the Lisle family and can often be found being bossed around by Regina whilst wearing her black and white servant's dress. She has been a servant since she was thirteen and reflects how her dress in itself marks her "as lower class and insignificant."<sup>178</sup> This self-image of insignificance is prominent throughout the beginning of the novel but changes because of her interactions with Alec. The first day on Titanic, Tess is asked kindly whether she has lost her way on the ship and she considers how the man "wears what I believe is an officer's uniform, so why he's speaking to the likes of me, I can't imagine."<sup>179</sup> The relation between Tess and Lady Regina, the mother of the Lisle family, is characterized by the following situation. Irene, Lady Regina's daughter, tells her mother how she should call Tess 'Miss Davies' now that she is her ladies' maid rather than just a maid because that is the

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<sup>178</sup> Claudia Grey, *Fateful* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 2.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

respectful thing to do. Lady Regina answers with; “I’ll give Tess respect when she’s earned it.”<sup>180</sup> Throughout the novel, Lady Regina is nothing but unkind to Tess.

The Lisle family forces Tess and her fellow servant Ned to stay in steerage on Titanic, which was quite unusual since servants would normally sleep closer to the family they serve in first class. Tess meets Myriam in her steerage cabin, a girl from Lebanon. The scene which follows shows a stereotypical image which Tess has of England, her home nation. She is firstly surprised at how she is put in a cabin with a foreigner, stating that she always “heard that foreigners were dirty, and this girl isn’t.”<sup>181</sup> She furthermore explains her image of ‘the English rose’ as “the ultimate standard of beauty: delicate frame, pale skin, pink cheeks and fair curls.”<sup>182</sup> She cannot help but be astonished by Myriam’s beauty, however, despite her deep tan skin and thick black hair. Tess is also surprised to learn that Myriam is not very happy about sharing a room with her. When Tess learns of Myriam’s disposition she thinks to herself how that is possible “even though I’m English - as though all the world didn’t look up to England!”<sup>183</sup> A little later on the two girls are arguing about who gets the lower bunk in the cabin and who has to sleep on the upper one. Tess utters the following argument: “Listen here. I’m an Englishwoman, and this is an English ship.”<sup>184</sup> This argument is rather unconvincing, but from an imagologist point of view this image which Tess has about her own nation presents a clear example of a constructed national stereotype. It adheres to Menno Spiering’s description of how the English see themselves as superior and that this notion is a stereotypical tradition in literary texts.

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

There is one more scene in the novel which shows how an English national stereotype is constructed to characterize Tess. At one point, Tess is away from her cabin for an entire night, due to the Russian werewolf Mikhail who is after her. She is chased into the Turkish baths on board the Titanic and locked up there until she escapes in the morning. Tess walks into her cabin and Myriam tells her: “I’ve always heard how very proper Englishwomen are, [...] who could have guessed I would get so much proof, so quickly?”<sup>185</sup> Myriam points to a stereotypical image about the English and makes fun of Tess for not conforming to this image. She believes Tess must have spend the night in some boy’s bed, which Tess did not, but it still shows how national stereotypes are constructed in the novel.

Lady Regina Lisle married into the English nobility and now occupies herself with being critical of Americans and trying to make an advantageous match for her children. Tess defines Regina by stating that: “Beauty is no guarantee of goodness; Lady Regina is proof enough of that.”<sup>186</sup> Irene Lisle later on states how her mother “never felt as easy as her friends who have a title in their own right,” which could partly explain why Lady Regina is such a strict woman towards her servants and children.<sup>187</sup> She is furthermore meant to be a fine Christian woman and loses her mind when she finds out Ned was the father to the miscarriage which her daughter Irene experienced. Regina finds out whilst on Titanic and says to Ned: “You ruined my daughter. You’ve taken advantage of her.”<sup>188</sup> Irene’s virginity is seen as “a material possession of the family, one she threw away on her brother’s valet.”<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

There are three instances throughout the novel in which Regina's feelings about Americans and toward America become clear. She wants to make a match between Alec and her daughter and is occupied in a conversation with Mr Marlowe who tells her about the refinements of Chicago. Tess reflects how normally she "would expect Lady Regina to snort with contempt at the idea of anything in America being refined, but she's all sunshine and light now."<sup>190</sup> The passage reveals how Lady Regina considers the English to have much higher standards when it comes to museums, theatre and other refinements. She also makes a comment about Americans when she is discussing her plans for a marriage between Alec and Irene. She states how "Alec Marlowe would do quite well. Marlowe Steel is a fortune to rival that of the highest English nobility. True, they're Americans, but one can't have everything."<sup>191</sup> Once again, her image of how the English are superior to Americans comes through. Tess reflects how Alec is "nothing like the dream Lady Regina is chasing."<sup>192</sup> It might be said that in a way, Lady Regina is pursuing the American dream by wanting to make a match between this rich American and her daughter. Alec is of course not a regular eligible rich bachelor due to his werewolf status which could represent the idea that the American dream is not as feasible as it seems.

A third interesting character in *Fateful* is Myriam Nahas. Myriam is labelled as a 'foreigner' by Tess. She is originally from Lebanon. The stereotypical image of foreigner which Tess ascribed to her is rejected as the two girls become close friends throughout the novel. Corinna Albrecht discusses the concept of foreigners in Beller and Leerssen's critical survey on Imagology. She states that the concept of the Other is really significant when literary texts deal with foreigners. She also explains how "what is defined as foreign [...] define[s] the relationship

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

between the domestic and the foreign.”<sup>193</sup> England defines itself as the opposite of dirty, an attribute which Tess immediately ascribes to Myriam when she sees her for the first time. This is due to the mental image which was formed in her mind. The English in this novel, as represented by Tess, “conceive of what is seen as foreign either as something special or as stimulating, threatening, or inferior to one’s own culture or society.”<sup>194</sup> One quality which the term ‘foreigner’ carries is a sense of exoticism. Tess appears to be a little intimidated by Myriam’s exotic beauty which shows how there are two stereotypical constructions at work here. Myriam is first introduced as this exotic, extremely beautiful girl, almost like a femme fatale who knows how to handle a boy’s attention. Tess considers how she would rush and act silly at receiving attention of the steward who welcomes the two girls on board, whereas Myriam “simply smiles back at him, slow and warm, completely unhurried.”<sup>195</sup> A little further on in the novel Myriam tells Tess about her life in Lebanon which sounds “deliciously exotic” to Tess, “olive trees and the seashore.”<sup>196</sup> This positive image clashes with the stereotypical construction of the English image of foreigners which Tess at first exemplifies. One more interesting matter to point out here is how Ned, another servant of the Lisle family, also adheres to the negative stereotypical notion which the English have of foreigners. When he finds out the Lisle family put their servants in third class he is rather annoyed and mutters: “We’ll be penned down below with a lot of damned foreigners.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Corinna Albrecht, “Foreigner,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 326.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

<sup>195</sup> Claudia Grey, *Fateful* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 39.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

### 1.3 The Dressmaker

Kate Alcott's *The Dressmaker* follows Tess Collins on her journey to America. At the start of the novel, she is employed as a maid, but rather underpaid for her significant skills as a seamstress. She overhears someone relating how Titanic is about to depart and that the ship could offer employment for her. She is disappointed with the White Star Line office, but manages to charm Lady Lucile Duff Gordon, an English world-famous designer. The story of how Titanic sinks happens rather quickly and most of the novel revolves around the aftermath of the disaster. American Senator Smith is set to the task of investigating why Titanic sank and to establish why so few people survived, particularly looking into the life boats which were not at all filled to their capacity. The novel furthermore highlights the way in which newspapers dealt with the event through the eyes of Pinky Wade, a female American journalist. Finally, there is a love story involved as well. Tess meets two very different men on Titanic and ends up having to choose between sympathetic Jim Bonney, a relatively poor guy from England or Jack Bremerton, a self-made American millionaire. The novel present many opportunities for an imagologist analysis, for instance through the experiences of the rich Lucile, who faces American inquiries into her escape on a rather empty life boat.

Lady Lucile Duff Gordon is a self-made successful English woman with “flaming, almost defiantly red, hair.”<sup>198</sup> The use of the adjective ‘defiantly’ here already points to the idea that Lucile is a woman who does not accept criticism or disapproval. Lucile and her sister Elinor have a conversation halfway through the novel which reveals their climb to success. Elinor says:

“We’re self-made women; there aren’t many like us, wouldn’t you say? [...] Look at the two of us. I’ve been writing stories since I was fifteen. You, my dear sister, put your head

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<sup>198</sup> Kate Alcott, *The Dressmaker* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 23.

down to the needle and sewed your way out of a miserable marriage. Then you came up with the idea of draping clothes over live models and voilà! Success. Helped along, of course, by marrying a title.”<sup>199</sup>

*Fateful* creates a stark contrast between self-made American success and English inherited riches. In comparison, this contrast is less pronounced in *The Dressmaker* since Lucile and her sister are English. Lucile did marry into the English nobility, but her financial success is due to her own career as a designer. The American dream is not a stereotypically English concept, but Lucile certainly managed to become a self-made woman who is just as successful and well-known in America, as she is at home. Moreover, Tess called Lucile regal once, after which Lucile explains her background story. She tells Tess: “I came from a family as impoverished in its ways as yours. I scabbled up the ladder, dear, breaking a fair number of rules along the way. But I came from nothing to something. I like the taste of success, however unattractive in a woman.”<sup>200</sup> The hybrid notion around Lucile’s self-made fortune will be discussed in more depth in the section “Imagology and Class” below.

Lucile adheres to Menno Spiering’s discussion of the stereotypical image of the English in three respects. Spiering establishes how the English stereotypically felt superior over others. They are associated with an assertive arrogance. Tess describes Lucile at one point as “a sunflower reaching for light.”<sup>201</sup> She thrives in making a spectacular entrance and having people look at her. When Lucile safely gets through the Titanic disaster she immediately plans a fancy dinner, seemingly unbothered about the hundreds of lives which were lost in the most terrible manner. She also insists on taking a photograph on board the rescue ship the *Carpathia* and tells

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<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 224-225.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

Tess: “Come dear, this will be for the history books. Our stalwart little crew deserves remembrance.”<sup>202</sup> She appears to be rather excited about her little adventure on Titanic even though many fellow-passengers died only a couple of hours ago because the ship sank. Her arrogance is furthermore emphasized by how she looked down upon the accommodations on Titanic. The ship was seen as the most luxurious one ever created until that point in time, yet Lucile manages to criticize it by being haughty about the ship’s food. She states how her first night after arriving in New York would be lovely because there would be “no more terrible shipboard food.”<sup>203</sup> Lucile additionally insists on having her tea served in the thinnest china cups on board of Titanic because “tea tasted like dishwater in anything else.”<sup>204</sup> A final point in discussing Lucile’s feeling of superiority is a comment which she makes in which she is critical of Americans. She criticizes her models for their lack of discipline saying “if they only had the discipline to walk for two hours each morning with books balanced on their heads, they would have decent posture, but no, Americans like to slouch.”<sup>205</sup>

Secondly, Lucile presents a perfect example for showing the differences within the English class system and the unjustness of it through her demeanour in lifeboat one. Throughout the novel there is much speculation about what happened in Lucile’s lifeboat. There are several perspectives which are discussed, yet at the very end of the novel Lucile reveals the truth. She says: “I don’t care what people have to say about an empty boat - one takes care of oneself first.”<sup>206</sup> There were only twelve people in her boat including crew, yet it could have held over fifty. She told the crewmen on the life boat not to turn around to all the people struggling in the

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

water for fear of being turned over. The crew did not protest. Her authority, and the fact that this first-class lady offered the crewmen money shows the unfairness of the class system: first class passengers were privileged in getting to enter the lifeboats first, whereas third class passengers had just as much right to live as them. Lastly, a final comment which Spiering makes is that one stereotypical trait of the English is that they glorify their “level-headed pragmatism and individualism against all forms of systematic or theory-driven rigidity.”<sup>207</sup> When Lucile is asked to relate how she survived on Titanic she says: “By keeping my head when others lost theirs,” pointing to her pragmatic behaviour as the key to her survival.<sup>208</sup> All these aspects show how Lucile is characterized in several ways by traits attributed to the English national stereotype.

Tess is not really defined by characteristics which can be attributed to her Englishness. The novel mostly characterizes her through her experience of America and how she gets to live the American dream in a way. Lucile observes Tess as she is exploring the workplace of the grand designer and Lucile considers how “the girl’s eyes were round as melons. So she was swept up in the glamour of it all.”<sup>209</sup> Jim Bonney is a final English character who is important for the discussion of national stereotypes in *The Dressmaker*. His experience of America is linked to the character of Margaret Brown, a rich ‘new money’ American woman who also survives Titanic. Jim used to be a coal miner and when he meets Tess he tells her how he is on his way to America searching for a better life because there “a man can do what he wants, live the life he makes for himself. There’s no bloody class system holding you down.”<sup>210</sup> As mentioned before, Jim pronounces critique which is part of a literary tradition of criticizing the English for their unjust class-system. Jim has a great talent, but due to his lower class status, he is prevented from

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 83.

making proper use of it. Mrs Brown is the one who makes Jim's American dream come true by recognizing his talent for carving wooden sculptures and commissioning him with a large assignment and recommending him to others. Once Mrs Brown has employed him he tells Tess that "this whittler from London now has a job in a woodworking shop. [...] You are looking at somebody described as a master craftsman by an excitable lady who can make anything happen."<sup>211</sup>

The excitable lady in this utterance is Mrs Brown. Tess recalls how Lucile was critical of Mrs Brown. She was also staying in first class on Titanic due to "a place named Leadville [which she had turned] into a fortune in gold."<sup>212</sup> Peter Firchow states how America is stereotypically characterized as a place of extraordinary wealth. Mrs Brown adheres to this image. Throughout the novel, hints of modernity are placed in an era when times were changing rapidly. This notion manifests itself in the mention of the suffragist movement in America. Mrs Brown also supports the cause. She does not agree however, with the idea of some suffragists who claim that saving women and children first was a matter of discrimination. She replies to some of the protesters: "Honey, it cuts both ways. [...] We had good men and some rotten ones. Same for women - don't get your bloomers in such a frenzy."<sup>213</sup> She then says to Tess: "Well, dearie, now you're seeing how we do things in America."<sup>214</sup> The idea that America is not as burdened as Europe and more open to change manifests itself in this scene through the women's open demonstrations for change. The fact that Margaret Brown is the opposite of a delicate English girl in need of protection of a gentleman is also shown in her actions in the lifeboat. Senator Smith considers

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<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 403.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 403.

“any female who went through that experience too delicate to speak of it.”<sup>215</sup> Mrs Brown, however, is eager and states: “He won’t call me to testify, and I want things to go on the record. Especially how the women had to take over from the male cowards.”<sup>216</sup> The lifeboat in which Mrs Brown and Tess end up has a couple of crew men on it who argue about who should take the oars, thereby establishing that none of them knows how to use them. Mrs Brown takes charge and actually rows the oars herself stating: Let’s show these cowards what it means to do your job!”<sup>217</sup>

There are two more American characters in *The Dressmaker* which are important in a discussion of the novel regarding the construction of national stereotypes. Jack Bremerton, one of Tess’s suitors, is a typical American man. He says so himself to Tess: “I’m your standard American self-made man.”<sup>218</sup> It is stated that no one knows how he made his fortune. He is aware of his status and tells Tess that he is “the product of a fairly predictable life with more privileges than most, but I earned them myself.”<sup>219</sup> He uses his American self-made wealth, which is a trait of the American national stereotype, to convey Tess of his worth telling her how he could show her a wonderful life out there. Tess thereby feels as though she walks into another world, Jack’s American world of great wealth, every time she meets him. He presents an opposite to Tess’s other suitor, Jim, a poor English guy. Stereotypical images are used within this contradiction to emphasize the difficult decision which Tess has to make, since her two suiters are radically different. Jack Bremerton conforms to another American stereotypical trait next to his wealth, through his opinions on Europe and the British. When Tess first meets Jack on Titanic, he relates how he gets “tired of Europe. Too stodgy. Moves too slow.”<sup>220</sup> This is in line with the

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<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

stereotypical idea that America is unburdened compared to Europe. He is very much aware of the typical differences between Americans and the British as well. He explains his interest as a first class passenger in *Tess* by stating: “I’m an American, from the very brash city of Chicago, and not as respectful of British social niceties.”<sup>221</sup> It is implied here how he is critical of the rigidity of the English class system, again highlighting his nationalist attitude.

A final character from *The Dressmaker* which will be discussed here is Pinky Wade. She is a journalist and first introduced in the story when her boss feels that something pathetically sentimental should always be covered by a woman. Tess considers Pinky “brashly American, all exuberance and confidence.”<sup>222</sup> Pinky Wade is really good at what she does and even asks her boss for a raise after being involved with the suffragist movement in New York which is happening. She also utters critical thoughts on the British, which adds to the construction of an American stereotype in her character. When Tess and Pinky discuss Lady Duff Gordon and talk about poverty, Pinky remarks: “You Brits, with your titles.”<sup>223</sup> Pinky is annoyed at Tess for being in awe of Lady Duff Gordon and tells her: “You don’t have to bow too deeply Tess.”<sup>224</sup> Her critique on the English class system becomes evident in this way. Mrs Brown, Jack Bremerton and Pinky Wade are all characterized by rather typical American traits against which the English Tess, Lucile and Jim experience America. The three main American characters adhere to the American national stereotype which could have been incorporated to sharpen the contrast between Europe and America, thus supporting the main plotline of the novel in which Tess gets to live in an American dream.

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<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

## 2. Religion, Landscape and Other Themes

### 2.1 Religion

Besides national stereotypes constructed in the creation of characters in the novel, there are also stereotypical images which can be found in the voice of the novel's narrator. The stories are told in third-person style by an anonymous narrator. Descriptions of habits, atmospheres and landscapes can thereby also be analysed through Imagology. An important aspect of how *The Girl Who Came Home* constructs an Irish national stereotype is by showing the religious side of the Irish travellers. Leerssen describes how Ireland was famous for a revival of Christian learning. The important role of religion in the life of the Irish is prominent throughout the story. The day Titanic sets sail for the Atlantic ocean, for instance, Maggie can be found on deck grasping her rosary beads and saying a silent prayer. The community in Ireland from which the Ballysheen group leaves is a small one and the departure of the group is felt deeply. A small group of women even make "a short pilgrimage to pray for the safe passage of the fourteen who had left their homes just a day ago."<sup>225</sup> Harry, the third class steward, tells Maggie and her company not to worry about an awful prediction they got from someone reading their tea leaves because he personally saw a priest blessing the life jackets of the ship, which is a little ironic considering the fate of Titanic.

When Maggie and her company are confronted with the inevitable sinking of the ship someone suggests: "Well, maybe we should say a prayer first. [...] Y'know, for all our safety like."<sup>226</sup> This suggestion is ridiculed by a passage a little further on in the scene. Harry and another steward are discussing the situation and the steward says: "There's a whole gang of Irish in the dining room. Have you seen them? Some are already at the booze and others are sittin'

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<sup>225</sup> Hazel Gaynor, *The Girl Who Came Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 94.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

around prayin' with those beads they have - fat lot of use they'll do 'em at the bottom of the ocean."<sup>227</sup> This statement implies two things considering the Irish national stereotype. It firstly points to the passive state of the people turning themselves to religion rather than taking action trying to save their own lives. This potentially refers to Ireland's past in which it was forced to remain passive whilst being colonized by the English. Secondly, the statement relates to the point which Joep Leerssen makes about Ireland's contradictoriness: some people try to remain good Christians and ask God for help whereas others simply give up and turn to alcohol to help them with their fear.

Religion plays a rather small role in constructing national stereotypes in *Fateful* when compared to how the Irish in *The Girl Who Came Home* are defined by their devotion to religion. One of the few references to religion is presented when Tess scolds Mikhail for claiming to be a god because of his supernatural ability to turn into a wolf. She tells him: "You're no god. [...] You walk on all fours and you smell like a dog. That's not what I worship in church."<sup>228</sup> Following Menno Spiering's theory about the English national stereotype, it does seem odd that *Fateful* does not incorporate more on the subject of religion considering the fact that there is a literary tradition of the English in defining themselves as Protestants.

Religion in *The Dressmaker* has a different role from the one in *The Girl Who Came Home*. The latter uses religion to characterize its characters by highlighting their faith as part of their identity whereas in *The Dressmaker* the disregard of God is used to define characters. Mrs. Brown, for example, the typical wealthy American lady does not believe in God. This becomes evident when she discusses her experience on Titanic with Tess and tells her: "Honey, Neptune

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>228</sup> Claudia Grey, *Fateful* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 266.

was exceedingly good to us. [...] We made it out of those waters, and now we bear witness.”<sup>229</sup> It is not God to whom she is thankful, but the mythological god of the sea, implying she does not believe in Christianity. A less logical instance of religion is the lack thereof in the character of the English Jim Bonney. When Tess and Bonney are on the rescue ship after Titanic sunk, they look into a room which was set aside for the dead and those hauled up from the sea. Tess feels the need to say goodbye to one particular human with whom she shared a lifeboat, yet did not survive the journey. Jim tells her: “I can’t help you pray or anything. I’m not a religious man.”<sup>230</sup> It is interesting to note here how the novel constructs national stereotypes in several ways, but barely through religion.

## 2.2 Landscape

Landscape is another topic through which national stereotypes can be constructed. *The Girl Who Came Home* is very positive about Ireland’s landscape, for example, as opposed to a more negative image which is conveyed about New York. The novel is filled with characteristic descriptions of Ireland’s countryside which are in line with the stereotypical image of the nation which exists as a tradition in literary representations of the country. The morning of the departure of the Ballysheen group, Maggie watches a solitary cloud drift across the pale blue sky, casting a shadow over the sheep that grazed in the fields at the foot of the mountain. The men were already at work in the lower fields. She imagined their hands muddied from cutting the turf and sowing the potatoes.”<sup>231</sup> Throughout history, Ireland experienced many famines due to failed potato crops and the dependency of the inhabitants of the nation on this sole plant. It therefore makes

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<sup>229</sup> Kate Alcott, *The Dressmaker* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 139.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>231</sup> Hazel Gaynor, *The Girl Who Came Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 10.

sense to characterize the land by referring to potatoes. This notion can also be found in Maggie's thoughts when she visits Ireland again in 1982 and recalls "herself as a young girl staring at another failed harvest, the crops blighted."<sup>232</sup> When Grace visits Ireland, she is also completely mesmerized by the Irish countryside. There is a great sense of serenity and peace which Maggie and Grace feel whilst travelling through Ireland's green hills and fields. New York, and thereby America as a whole in the perception of the Irish characters, is in a way contrasted with Irish rural life. It is described as filled with "construction workers, shouting above the noise of their machinery, talking in a hundred different accents as they continued with the seemingly endless task of building more and more offices for the businessmen to occupy, going higher and higher into the clouds above."<sup>233</sup> The city is shown in a negative light in comparison to the peacefulness of the Irish countryside.

The opposition between centre and periphery favours the periphery in *Fateful*, just like the image conveyed in *The Girl Who Came Home*. *Fateful* opens with Tess walking through the streets of Southampton after sunset. The "unfamiliarity of everyone and everything" around her in the city puts her off balance and to her, "the city seems dangerous."<sup>234</sup> The opposition between centre and periphery and landscape in general are, however, not as prominent in *Fateful*.

The city of New York is presented in two ways throughout *The Dressmaker*. Tess is in awe of the city's opportunities and glamour, whereas Lady Duff Gordon is very negative about its filthiness. Lucile expresses her critique of the city several times throughout the novel. One day, when she makes her way to her office, she is irritated at a smudge on the sleeve of her jacket, "the city was so dirty; you couldn't wear anything without some cleaning disaster."<sup>235</sup> The

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 339.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>235</sup> Kate Alcott, *The Dressmaker* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 286.

only thing keeping Lucile from returning to England is her fashion show which she has to organize and attend. Her sister Elinor is of the same opinion and states: “the sooner we can get you out of here and back to England the better.”<sup>236</sup> Tess on the other hand, is very glad about the city she finds after surviving the Titanic disaster. Through her eyes, the city is described as “bathed in a rosy glow,” which presents a contrast with Lucile’s opinions on the city.<sup>237</sup>

### 2.3 Other Themes

The Irish in *The Girl Who Came Home* are, besides their religious activities, characterized by their way of entertaining themselves. One night Grace is reading her grandmother’s journal from her time on Titanic. The diary described how “the sounds of *uilleann* pipes and fiddles played in the general room after dinner.”<sup>238</sup> Uilleann pipes are the characteristic national bagpipe of Ireland. It would have filled the third class of Titanic with traditional Irish music. Alongside this instrument one of the Ballysheen girls kept “everyone’s spirits up with her songs and had half the steerage passengers singing along to her favourite Irish ballads.”<sup>239</sup> Joep Leerssen describes how the Irish national stereotype became more positive in the mid-eighteenth century. A “celebration of Irish spontaneity, creativity, musical abilities” came into being.<sup>240</sup> The descriptions of the festivities in steerage adhere to this image of the musical abilities of the Irish. The musicality of the Irish is furthermore emphasized by making a contrast with the English. One of the Ballysheen girls states “we’ve to show these borin’ folk from England how to sing a decent song.”<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>240</sup> Joep Leerssen, “Irish,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 192.

<sup>241</sup> Hazel Gaynor, *The Girl Who Came Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 126.

The idea that the entertainment on board the Titanic was more cheerful in third class can also be found in *Fateful*. When Tess is trying to find her cabin in third class she encounters “men and women of every age and size and shape and nationality [...] shoving into one another in an eager search for their cabins. [She had] expected to be repulsed by this bedlam, but instead, it energizes [her]. Though this is a strange crowd, it’s a happy one.”<sup>242</sup> Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the nationality of the people who provide entertainment in steerage. Myriam joined a dance at which “an Italian who had brought a violin and a German who had brought an accordion joined in with the volunteer piano player, nationality unknown, to play tunes for hours.”<sup>243</sup> There is an opposition which can be observed here between *The Girl Who Came Home* and *Fateful*. The first novel focusses on the Irish passengers in steerage and spoke of Irish instruments which provided entertainment on the journey, whereas the latter barely mentions anything about Irish passengers on Titanic. The only Irish stereotypical image in *Fateful* is presented when Tess is walking the decks and considers how “a few little girls - Irish, to judge by their flame-red hair - run past.”<sup>244</sup> *The Dressmaker* does not comment at all on the third-class entertainment on board Titanic, presumably due to the focus on the aftermath of the disaster in New York.

### 3. Class and Othering

#### 3.1 The Girl Who Came Home

*The Girl Who Came Home* appears to revolve around an opposition between two groups. The rich first class Americans and the third class Irish passengers. America’s national stereotype is characterized by Peter Firchow as people following a continuous pursuit of an empty form of

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 126.

happiness in the shape of money and status.<sup>245</sup> The novel defines its Irish characters by othering the rich Americans as stuck-up, emotionless and selfish. The motives of the Americans for travelling on Titanic for example, are contrasted with those of the steerage passengers. Harry the steward realizes how “unlike the socialites and the honeymooners and the returning European travellers and the theatre stars with silly little dogs [...] the many steerage passengers who were boarding at Queenstown had a strange air of remorse about them, a distinct sadness.”<sup>246</sup> The novel dedicates quite some attention to highlighting the absurdity of the inequality between these two groups. The poverty of the steerage class is emphasized and at one point it is stated how for many “the crossing of the Atlantic would result in nothing more than the exchange of one life of poverty for another.”<sup>247</sup> Steerage passengers have to worry about their survival while first class passengers are ridiculed for their fussing and complaining even though their lives are filled with the utmost luxury. This is exemplified in Maggie’s reflection on how in the cabin next to hers there is a small baby which has to sleep in a suitcase, “a fact that had troubled her every night, especially since she’d seen the opulence of the first-class decks.”<sup>248</sup> In one of Titanic’s lifeboats, she is furthermore struck by “how completely unjust it was that babies and children were drowning in the sea while a small dog was here, sailing to safety.”<sup>249</sup> The ways of the first class Americans are thereby othered for their right to survive and the fact that they get to live merely because of their wealth.

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<sup>245</sup>Peter Firchow, “America 3: United States,” in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 91.

<sup>246</sup> Hazel Gaynor, *The Girl Who Came Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 101.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

### 3.2 **Fateful**

Tess, Regina and Myriam, the three characters from *Fateful* which have been discussed in relation to national stereotypes, already reveal how there is this great opposition between Americans and the English throughout the novel. The text, for example, states how the rigid boundaries between the different classes on the ship have been established by Americans. A steward hands Tess a key with which she can open exclusive doors to go back and forth between first and third class. The steward tells her how it is very important to keep them closed because “United States regulations say we have to keep those doors shut, and if we find you haven’t, we’ll confiscate that key post haste.”<sup>250</sup> Another steward is explicitly critical of America when he apologizes to Myriam for being combed through like a dog to look for lice. He says: “Begging your pardon, Miss Nahas. It’s crude and unconscionable treatment, and you can be sure it’s not White Star policy. It’s those American laws. You wouldn’t believe the nonsense with quarantines and all they stick us with.”<sup>251</sup> A third example in which American regulation is portrayed in a negative way is through the Chinese men which hid under the benches on a lifeboat for a chance to survive. Tess praises the men for how they must have “realized the ship was sinking, suspected nobody would let a Chinaman onboard a lifeboat, and hid to save their own lives.”<sup>252</sup> After being saved by the *Carpathia* and reaching New York the Chinamen are, however, not allowed to come ashore because “America has a Chinese Exclusion Act.”<sup>253</sup> This critique of American strictness is opposed by Tess when she reflects on the possibility of having a life with Alec even though he is a rich American and she merely a servant girl. She considers how “social boundaries aren’t as

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<sup>250</sup> Claudia Grey, *Fateful* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2012), 23.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

strict in America, or so I hear.”<sup>254</sup> America is thus criticized by the English crew for strict rules on the ship, yet the social mobility is praised. The two main rich American characters, however, are kind and have gentlemanlike attributes as opposed to the English nobility in the form of the Lises which are portrayed as nasty people.

Mr Marlowe represents rich Americans in this novel. The way in which he ended up in first class is by making his own fortune, a bit like the American dream. Tess considers how British society defines gentility in a different manner. It is about not lifting as much as a foot if it can be helped. She states how “half the reason the Lises have servants is so they can show they’re better than someone.”<sup>255</sup> The heart of the matter is that the novel suggests that rich Americans do not feel the need to prove anything because they made their own fortune, whereas the English have to continuously prove their superiority because their fortune and titles are usually inherited. This stereotypical image of the American dream creates a much more positive image of the American first class passengers on Titanic by emphasizing the self-made authority of their privileged life. This positive image is reinforced by the contrast in the behaviour of Mr Marlowe versus the demeanour of the Lises in the face of death when Titanic sinks. Alec tells Tess how “Dad’s already chosen to go down with the ship. He said he’d be ashamed to take a seat that could go to a lady.”<sup>256</sup> The Lises on the other hand are too busy screaming at each other to even make it to the life boats on time. Tess tries to convince them to leave their rooms and find a boat on the decks, but they are too busy fighting. The rich English nobility is thereby othered against a more positive image of Americans.

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

### 3.3 The Dressmaker

The overall image which *The Dressmaker* conveys about nations is quite positive about America, against which the English are othered. Tess gets to live her dream by working for Lady Duff Gordon to which Pinky Wade's father responds: "You're the girl working for the big designer, right? Only in America, that kind of thing."<sup>257</sup> This positive aspect of the social mobility in America is mirrored by how the English Jim Bonney gets to experience an American dream as well by starting out as a coal miner and being offered the opportunity to become something greater because of his actual talent. The English are furthermore portrayed as backward and old as opposed to Americans in the form of Lucile's rigidity when it comes to her fashion designs. Even Elinor, Lucile's sister, considers Lady Duff Gordon's time to be gone and states: "My sister can't change," yet the future of the fashion industry is bound to change, making it inevitable for Lucile's fashion to become outdated.<sup>258</sup>

The criticism of the English can furthermore be narrowed down to a matter of class. It is mostly the upper English class which is put under fire throughout the novel. Jim Bonney reflects how Lady Duff Gordon is "what's wrong with the English class system."<sup>259</sup> Tess tries to refute his argument by stating that Lucile made it on her own by working hard. Jim on the other hand, still does not agree and says: "Marrying into the titled class. That helped. Gave her license to be cold about other people's lives."<sup>260</sup> He is angry with Lucile because she did not let the crew of their lifeboat pick up more survivors. This anger reflects a broader problem which he takes issue with, that usually no one gets blamed and that the investigation of senator Smith into the Titanic

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<sup>257</sup> Kate Alcott, *The Dressmaker* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 318.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

case is merely “one more dance of greedy businessmen finding excuses for their mistakes.”<sup>261</sup>

More critique is uttered about the English through senator Smith’s investigations around Titanic. He reflects how the business around the interrogation of British nobility is a sticky one. He feels reluctant at the prospect of bringing the Duff Gordons to the witness stand because he would “rather not; it would anger the British too much.”<sup>262</sup> It turns out that the Duff Gordons bribed their crewmen not to turn around even though their lifeboat was quite empty. This shows a negative image about the British nobility in the sense that the inequality of the class system extends to who does and who does not have to answer for their unjust conduct around this subject of investigation. Senator Smith considers letting the Duff Gordons off, merely to avoid angering the British who are proud and protective of their upper class. Pinky Wade is really critical of the situation and believes that senator Smith should dig into the world of the entitled rich, whereby the Duff Gordons “deserved to be brought down.”<sup>263</sup> When she first interviews survivors of the Titanic, she already reflects: “Here it was, that whole rotten class-division thing again. [Another story] of the rich getting preferential treatment over the poor.”<sup>264</sup> Thus, not only does the novel other the British against Americans, there is also an overall critique of the upper class, specifically aimed at the British nobility.

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

#### 4. Conclusion

Considering the fact that the importance of the 1997 film *Titanic* was already established when each of these 2012 novels were published, an emphasis on othering stuck-up rich Americans could have been expected, similarly to how first-class Americans were portrayed in James Cameron's film. Only one out of the three novels, however, others first-class Americans, whilst the other two other first-class British passengers. The main focus of *The Girl Who Came Home* was on the Irish and their experience in third-class against which one rich American lady in particular is othered for her haughty and superficial behaviour. *Fateful* and *The Dressmaker* on the other hand, include first-class passengers who are explicitly English and other these against a more positive image of Americans.

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

### 1. Comparison

The goal of this research was to answer the following question: How are national stereotypes constructed in three novels about Titanic published before and three novels published after the release of James Cameron's 1997 film *Titanic*? All six books constructed national stereotypes to typify its characters, but do not represent a direct consistent pattern around national stereotypes in texts about Titanic in doing so. Some novels constructed more straightforward stereotypes than others. Kate Alcott's *The Dressmaker* was suffused with characters whose traits could be attributed to national stereotypes, whereas Jack Finney's *From Time to Time* constructed national stereotypes most prominently through the novel's portrayal of New York.

A striking result of this research is how the novels differ radically in which nation is othered in a text, despite the fact that they share a foundation created out of historical facts around Titanic. The English were othered in three out of the six novels; *Titanic Crossing* (1995), *Fateful* (2012) and *The Dressmaker* (2012). Two out of these three books specify how it is the rich upper-class English who are portrayed in a negative way. *Every Man for Himself* (1996) as well as *The Girl Who Came Home* (2012) on the other hand, both other rich Americans which is remarkable because these two books offer radically different perspectives on the Titanic journey. *Every Man for Himself* is merely concerned with the first class, whereas *The Girl Who Came Home* shows the maiden voyage of Titanic from a third class perspective. *From Time to Time* (1996) seems to be the odd one out in this corpus of primary literature. Titanic is not at the heart of this novel, as opposed to the other five books, but merely plays a small role at the start and ending of the story. The novel also differs in the sense that it others Europe as a nation and does not focus on any class or nationality on board the Titanic. The lack of consistency in the nations which are othered in the novels at first suggests an absence of the influence of *Titanic*. There are

two arguments, however, in favour of the idea that *Titanic* had an influence on the novels published after the film was released.

The expected outcome of this research was a discovery of patterns in the three novels published in 1995-1996 and different patterns for the 2012 books. The two timeframes considered in this research offer various perspectives concerning images of individual nations in the sense that othering is imposed on different nations. There are two images presented in *Titanic*, however, which can be found in all three 2012 novels. The anticipated outcome of looking into the six novels about Titanic was to find a clear influence of Cameron's film on the three novels published for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ship's sinking. As was established in the introduction of this research, James Cameron's film was critical of the idea that there was no American class system and celebrated the lower class. The 2012 novels actually present a similar image through their representation of Titanic's maiden voyage. *The Girl Who Came Home* celebrates the lower class quite explicitly by focussing on a positive portrayal of third-class passengers and othering stuck-up Americans. *Fateful* shows a lower class English girl finding happiness, against all odds, with a first-class American boy and *The Dressmaker* portrays how the lower class Tess becomes successful in New York through her own instigation. The three novels evidently share this notion which could be traced back to *Titanic* even though the stereotypes constructed in the texts are not directly similar to the ones in the film. An important argument in favour of this claim is that the 1995-1996 novels incorporate no such celebration of the lower class. Firstly, *Every Man For Himself* only briefly touches upon the lower classes on board Titanic, but its focus is placed continuously on the experiences of a first class American heir. Secondly, *From Time to Time* does not mention anything at all about the steerage passengers of Titanic. In addition, *Titanic Crossing* concentrates on the heroic conduct of a second class privileged boy, also supporting the

claim that there is a clear difference between the 1995-1996 novels and the 2012 texts in the sense that the 2012 novels conform to an important concept of *Titanic*.

The second way in which the texts from the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Titanic conform to ideas presented in Cameron's film is through the fact that rich first class passengers are othered. *Titanic* others them by situating Jack, a grounded poor American guy, in a position where he interacts with the first class passengers, thereby contrasting and emphasizing the haughty attitude and the shallow world in which the first class passengers lived. *The Girl Who Came Home* creates a similar contrast by highlighting the haughty attitude of the rich American Vivienne Walker-Brown and putting her in a negative light. *Fateful* does not other rich Americans, because Alec and Mr Marlowe are portrayed in a positive way, but it does contrast the negative traits of the rich English upper class with Tess creating an opposition which is similar to *Titanic*'s only with the English, rather than Americans. *The Dressmaker* similarly positions the lower class English Tess opposite a negative image of the English upper class. From the 1995-1996 novels, only one is explicit about the social status of the group which is othered, whereas the other two are critical of an entire nation. The two similarities at the core of the 2012 novels and Cameron's film comply with Richard Howell's statement that "many people today draw their knowledge of the history of Titanic," and shows how the influence of the films seems to extend to the literary field.<sup>265</sup>

## 2. Self-reflection

The research carried out in this thesis was meant to search for patterns in the construction of national stereotypes in literature about Titanic. The corpus of primary literature was quite extensive and seems like a wide enough scale to base claims upon such as the one presented

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<sup>265</sup> Richard Howells, "One Hundred Years of the Titanic on Film," *Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 32, no. 1 (2012): 73.

above. The outcome of the research adhered quite well to the hypothesis, but there are a couple of factors which are left out and which could potentially have influenced the analysis. Many of the novels deal with characters which were real passengers of the original Titanic. This research was not concerned with looking into the level of historical accuracy with which these personas are represented in the texts. *The Dressmaker*, for instance, revolves around Lady Duff Gordon who actually made the journey on Titanic. Kate Alcott, the novel's author, states in her 'Author's Note' at the end of the book how the "basic bones of the story are true: Lady Duff Gordon, a world-famous designer, escaped with her husband and secretary in a lifeboat that, according to various reports, could have held between forty and fifty people instead of only twelve."<sup>266</sup> The extent to which Alcott drew on her own imagination when it came to the characterization of Lady Duff Gordon is, however, unmeasurable and therefore it seemed logical to simply base the analysis of national stereotypes on the characters constructed in the novel. A second factor is the role of facts around Titanic. Thomas Andrews, for example, "was the Titanic's designer" and his death on Titanic is a fact.<sup>267</sup> Chapter one presents claims about Thomas Andrews in *Every Man For Himself*, but the degree to which facts played a role in the characterization of this man is disregarded in the analysis.

The theoretical framework and method of Imagology proved quite useful in trying to answer the research question. Especially the book by Joep Leerssen and Manfred Beller was important in establishing traditions in the depiction of national stereotypes in literature, since this information was required in order to see if these concepts were present in the novels. One suggestion for improvement which could be made for the theory of Imagology would be to

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<sup>266</sup> Kate Alcott, *The Dressmaker* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 407.

<sup>267</sup> Richard Davenport-Hines, *Voyagers of the Titanic: Passengers, Sailors, Shipbuilders, Aristocrats, and the Worlds They Came From* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 2013), 61.

incorporate elements based on historical accuracy and its role within traditions of national stereotypes.

### 3. Suggestions for Further Research

The subject of intertextuality in relation to a big historical event like Titanic, especially considering the cultural influence of *Titanic* (1997), raises a number of questions which extend beyond the scope of this research, but are nonetheless interesting for future research. This research focused on the three main nations involved with the Titanic disaster, but some of the novels also mention other nations. In *Fateful*, for instance, a couple of Chinese men hide under the benches of a life boat and survive the Titanic disaster, but are not allowed to come ashore in New York because of a Chinese exclusion act enforced by America. It is a minor detail in the novel, but nonetheless says something about the image Americans had of the Chinese. Another interesting view on a nation can be found in *From Time to Time* which holds a German general responsible for World War I. *Every Man For Himself* expresses a similarly negative view on Germans considering someone crazy for having a German mother. Next to that, two upper class men have a conversation about Germany and through that discussion come to the conclusion that life is run by two overwhelming impulses: hunger and the sexual instinct. The image of Germany in novels set in 1912 could be a fascinating subject for research in the sense that World War I is just about to happen at this point in time.

Another factor which might have contributed to the construction of national stereotypes, but which is difficult to look into is the influence of the nationality of the authors of the books. It seems plausible that an American writer would want to avoid being critical of rich Americans, since they supposedly earned their wealth themselves. Next to that, a question could be posed about the intertextuality of particular images around the historical event of Titanic. One image in

particular, of a boy with a spinning top on the original Titanic explicitly returns in *Titanic*, *Every Man For Himself*, *From Time to Time*, *The Girl Who Came Home* and *The Dressmaker*. Richard Howells pointed out the image of a boy with a spinning top on deck in the 1997 film to illustrate the level of authenticity to which James Cameron aspired to adhere. The shot in the film of the boy “lasts for barely a second, but experts will recognize it as a recreation of a rare photograph taken on board the actual Titanic by Irish priest Father Frank Browne.”<sup>268</sup> Very few photographs exist of the actual Titanic, therefore it seems logical that any author who wants to create a sense of authenticity in a novel would incorporate the scene from the picture. The image has therefore almost become part of a literary tradition around Titanic and presents an interesting subject for further research into the intertextuality around these recurring images in cultural manifestations involving Titanic.

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<sup>268</sup> Richard Howells, “One Hundred Years of the Titanic on Film,” *Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 32, no. 1 (2012): 73.

### **Afterword**

This research offered me the opportunity to dive into a subject which I have been obsessed with ever since I first watched *Titanic* (1997) when I was eleven years old. I did not understand at the time, that the film was based on something which actually took place. I was simply moved by the tragic love story and amazed at the display of beauty and stunning shots throughout the film.

Over the years, I must have watched the film start to finish at least twenty times, yet I never grow tired of it. There is always more to discover, especially since James Cameron devoted so much of his time to tiny details. Immersing myself with information about Titanic and reading about the terrible disaster through six different books gave me a new perspective on the historical event.

Reading about the horrors from various perspectives allowed me to grasp, to a much larger extent, the terror which all the people involved must have felt in the early morning of April 15, 1912. Finally, I would like to thank Mr Kersten for being the most supportive, intellectual and positive supervisor I could have asked for. Thank you for preventing me from having any mental breakdowns over writing this thesis.

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