

SARAH DELLMANN

# IMAGES OF DUTCHNESS

Popular Visual Culture, Early Cinema  
and the Emergence of a National Cliché,  
1800-1914



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# Images of Dutchness: An Introduction

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| 13

This colour woodblock print was produced by Utagawa Toyoharu (1735-1814) in Japan (Fig. I.1). The print is designed according to the laws of the central perspective and shows a city or town. On the canal or river in the foreground, figures sit in a rowboat; some of them fish while others take a bath in the seemingly shallow water. Stairs lead from the banks of the river or canal to the streets of the city. The landscape is hilly; the brick-built houses and towers are situated on the hill slopes; trees and bushes grow between the houses. Some towers have fans attached to them. The print's title is *Scene of a Canal in Holland*.

While this image is not likely to trigger associations with the Netherlands among twentieth- and twenty-first-century viewers, according to Stephen Little (1996), it was perceived as a realistic documentation by Japanese viewers at the time it was produced. It takes some effort to understand how it was possible that this print was perceived as a realistic image of the Netherlands and the Dutch. Little offers an explanation by describing the historical period in which this print was produced. At that time, Japan underwent a period of isolation; hardly anyone could enter or leave the country, and international trade was very restricted. The Dutch were the only Western power that was allowed limited trade with Japan, which included Dutch books on Western sciences, among them books on optical laws as well as perspective prints. These goods became accessible to a small number of Japanese scholars and artists. The craft of woodblock printing was already well-known in Japan; inspired by the

foreign composition principle of the central perspective, some artists produced Japanese-style perspective prints between 1740 and the mid nineteenth century (Cf. Little 1996, 74–76). Little continues:

One of the rarest prints in the Art Institute's collection is Toyoharu's *Scene of a Canal in Holland*, which can be dated to the 1770s. The precise source of this strange image is unknown. That figures are swimming in the canal, however, suggests a degree of artistic license which is fully characteristic of prints of foreign lands, since the Japanese assumed (wrongly) that the Dutch went swimming in their canals. Toyoharu created a number of views of Europe, as well as imaginary views of China. Japanese print designers often mixed European and Chinese architectural styles, as Toyoharu did here. Since both were exotic – indeed virtually unknowable to the average Japanese – their combination would not have been recognized as incongruous. Such prints claimed to present real views of real places far from Japan, and their claims were accepted. (Little 1996, 84)

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The author thus suggests that “unknowability” of places was the explanation for an acceptance of the realist claims and authenticity of an image. But if this image was accepted as realistic and authentic, then – in spite of its topographical inaccuracies – it nevertheless produced knowledge about the Netherlands and the Dutch and disseminated this knowledge to its viewers. Rather than trying to picture the unknown, I assume, Toyoharu documented *to his best knowledge* from the sources available to him what places in the Netherlands looked like. This might seem a picky remark, but it reflects a fundamentally different approach to images in their relation to knowledge production: instead of judging images against the question whether their representation of the “real world” is “right” or “wrong”,<sup>1</sup> I am interested in the conditions under which an image was perceived as disseminating realistic and trustworthy knowledge. Examining these conditions requires a shift toward the historical configurations of media technologies and institutions involved in the production, display, and distribution of images; broadly shared assumptions and beliefs in a society; and the ways in which the readers/viewers are addressed by and through such images. These configurations, also known in the field of media studies under the term *dispositif* (for an overview, cf. Kessler 2007), I argue, shape the conventions that authenticated (or not) an image.

The perceived strangeness of Toyoharu's colour woodblock print today points to phenomena that will be investigated in this book. The question that Toyoharu's image provokes can – and, I propose, should – be asked more generally about images that seem less striking to today's readers and viewers: how



Fig. I.1 Utagawa Toyoharu (c. 1768). Colour woodblock print. © Photo SCALA, Florence.

is it possible that *any* image can communicate information about the Netherlands and the Dutch that is perceived as truthful?

In the nineteenth century, and especially in its first three quarters, average people had very limited possibilities to contest the documentary claim in the presentation of nonfiction images. Most of the people in the Western world did not have much choice about the images they saw or wanted to see and depended to a large extent on the itinerant showperson's repertoire. If such images were presented as realistic, typical, truthful, or representative of other people and places, why challenge this attribution?

The terms "realistic", "typical", "representative", "documentary", and "truthful" that were used at the time under investigation, often passing as merely descriptive, already indicate that the images in question did not simply show people and places (in our case, of the Netherlands), but that these images were part of a specific discourse *on* the Netherlands and its inhabitants. This discourse, or rather, these discourses, are not neutral or objective (although they may at times present themselves as such, see Chapters 4–6) and, when investigated closely, the reality claim of any image may appear equally strange or persuasive as the one of Toyoharu's colour woodcut print.

## Images and Supposed Common Knowledge

This book investigates the role of images in the production of what I will call supposed common knowledge about the Netherlands and the Dutch in the long nineteenth century (c. 1800-1914) in the Western world. By supposed common knowledge, I refer to a cumulative and fuzzy body of knowledge that contains what people at a given time in a given community believe or are supposed to know about a topic (I will define my use of the term “supposed common knowledge” in more detail in Chapter 1). As a result of this analysis, this book will also show how supposed common knowledge, once established, contributed to the production and dissemination of certain images. The aim of this study is to shed light on a semiotic process, namely the attribution of meaning to images, which eventually results in supposed common knowledge of the Netherlands and the Dutch. My approach for studying the role of images in the emergence of supposed common knowledge is thus characterized by a historical perspective, intermediality, and visual analysis.

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### Historical Perspective

The historical perspective has two aspects. As a twenty-first-century researcher, I look back on historical phenomena informed by present-day research questions. This notwithstanding, I approach the historical objects as products of their own past and not as antecedents of media or images yet to come. Material objects and the ideas that surrounded them, I am convinced, are products of history and not indicators of a future that necessarily remained unknown when they came into being.

At the beginning of my research, I started from the idea that I would investigate images of Dutchness mostly in films of early cinema, the new turn-of-the-century mass medium that disseminated images on an unprecedented scale. When I looked at films of the early period about the Netherlands and the Dutch in the collection of EYE Film Institute Netherlands, I was astonished by the homogeneity of the image repertoire that I observed in fiction and nonfiction films alike. Except for films of the royal family, the Netherlands seemed to consist mainly of canals, windmills, cheese, tulip fields, and fishing villages, and Dutch figures mostly wore traditional costumes with wooden shoes and fancy headwear – as if there was nothing else to film in an at least partially industrialized country around 1900. If these clichéd images of the Netherlands and the Dutch were so dominant in the formative phase of early cinema, then the cliché must have been “out there” already. My research question subsequently shifted to the investigation of the origins of national clichés in

visual media, which would help me find the reasons for the relatively invariant image repertoire representing the Netherlands and the Dutch in these historical documents. As will become obvious in the following chapters, film drew on already conventionalized images and strategies of presentation. Film, I will show, came into being at a time when both the structure of thinking in stereotypes and the image content of these clichés (at least those of the Netherlands and the Dutch) had already been defined and were widely established.

The perspective of media archaeology (Cf. Huhtamo and Parikka 2011) proved useful for two reasons. Firstly, it circumvents teleological pitfalls when writing the historiography of media, and, secondly, media archaeology offers a historical approach to media that fits well with an intermedial perspective. Media archaeology explores cultural forms that *anticipated* the studied medium or media-cultural phenomenon in question by investigating the interconnections to other media of the researched period. Most media archaeologists consider performance practices, designs, contemporary comments, descriptions, and reviews. Erkki Huhtamo defines the “study of topoi” as a “possible goal for media archaeology” (Huhtamo 2011, 28), that is, the identification of recurring formulas, their transformations, and the cultural logics that are manifested in media (Cf. Huhtamo 2011). Investigating how media functioned in locally and historically specific circumstances, and their relation to the broader culture and the identification of topoi, however, is not the *aim* of my research, but only its first step. In order to study the *production* of meaning that often, but not exclusively, manifests in topoi, I will put a greater emphasis on visual analysis and also investigate the *functions* of a given media formation; my research will thus take a different, more conceptual path.

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## Intermediality

Images, and certainly popular images, circulated in a multimedial landscape already in the nineteenth century. To study the relations between different media that coexist(ed) at a given time, the concept of intermediality has been applied in many fields across the humanities. For this study, I will draw on approaches developed within the field of early cinema studies that, precisely, aim to situate cinema within a wide network of different visual media. Among scholars of early cinema studies, there is agreement that the emergence of cinema was an inherently intermedial phenomenon and that film was deeply connected to other forms of entertainment, performance practices, distribution networks, and visual media around 1900 (cf. for example Charney and Schwartz 1995; Gaudreault and Marion 2005; Gaudreault, Dulac, and Hidalgo 2012; Askari et al. 2014). As a consequence

of this disciplinary embedding, visual media that existed before film have often been called “pre-cinematic” or have even been considered as antecedents of a cinematic *dispositif*. Such an understanding of nineteenth-century visual media has been challenged more prominently in the last two decades, not at least because the teleology inherent to such thinking hindered studying each medium in its own right. Alternatives for writing historiographies were proposed, for example through the focus on screen practices (Musser 1984; Vogl-Bienek and Crangle 2014a) and approaches following principles of media archaeology.

18 | Intermedial approaches within early cinema studies bring to light the historical component in the relations between media, and show how the function of each medium changed in relation to each other when “old” media gradually disappeared and “new” media emerged. Applying intermediality to diachronic studies has contributed to a better understanding of the dynamics between “old” and “new” media, including content migration. This allows for more nuanced statements about continuities and changes in media history (for an overview of various applications of the concept in early cinema studies, cf. Shail 2010). While the description of the dynamics between media as such is not the goal of my study, knowing that media coexisted and how they borrowed from one another is crucial for any investigation of the circulation of images. The intermedial aspect of my study not only demonstrates that images circulated across the borders of a medium, but also that they easily crossed the borders of genre and discourse. The rough chronological order for the presentation of my research findings in Chapters 3 and 4 should therefore not be seen as an expression of abrupt changes or clear-cut demarcations, but as a reflection on the coexistence and overlaps of partially similar, yet distinguishable, medial forms.

## Visual Analysis

Taking the images in films of early cinema as a starting point, and tracing back the image tradition that inspired film as a then-new medium, is an established approach within the field of early cinema studies. This archaeology of visual tropes and topics nuances the notion of film as “new medium” by showing visual continuity in the ever-changing media landscape. For example, Pelle Snickars (2001, 59) traces imagistic strategies of early cinema for the depiction of places back to photographic visual media of the 1850s and Alison Griffiths concludes that early ethnographic films “drew upon the visual lexicon of well-established precinematic forms” (Griffiths 2002, 250) for their adaptation in films. From Charles Musser’s analysis of *European Rest Cure* (Edwin S. Porter,

Edison, USA 1904) and the visual indications that signified specific places in Europe, we can conclude that films of early cinema used established visual conventions that were expected to be understood by the viewers (Cf. Musser 1990a, 125). Nanna Verhoeff (2006) traces the image tradition of films depicting America's West through various media that preceded film. María Magdalena Brotons Capó's insightful study on the iconographic tradition of early (mostly fiction) films produced in France (Cf. Brotons Capó 2014) considers a broad range of popular visual media of the nineteenth century in order to identify the visual sources of filmic images. William Uricchio and Roberta Pearson (1993) analyse films of the American production company Vitagraph and conclude that these films rest on popular knowledge and image repertoires that had been well-established and mediatized in the time preceding the advent of cinema.

The aim of my research, then, is not to test whether or not the findings of previous studies about an established image repertoire also apply to films about the Netherlands and the Dutch. In the following, I wish to explain not only the origin of motifs in early films about that country, but also to explain how it happened that these motifs were understood as signifiers of Dutchness. The history of a motif is thus combined with a history of the shifting connotations of the concepts expressed in visual motifs. To this end, my visual analysis is coupled with a discursive analysis of the spoken and written words that surround(ed) the image, accounting for performativity and exhibition practices. Therefore, my visual analysis does not focus exclusively on iconography and motifs but approaches visuality as performative within a *dispositif*. The intermedial perspective on the dissemination of image content is coupled with an understanding of images as relics of performative practices. To study the triad image-text-performance, I draw on insights derived from studies into exhibition practices and the role of the exhibitor or lecturer in the performance of an image (for magic lanterns, cf. Musser 1984; Altman 2004; Brooker 2013; and Vogl-Bienek and Crangle 2014a; for peepshows, cf. Kember and Plunkett forthcoming; for moving Panoramas, cf. Huhtamo 2013; on a conceptual level about the role of titles in the production of meaning, cf. Fisher 1984; specific for early cinema cf. Kessler 2002; Kessler 2003; Kessler 2006b; and Loiperdinger 2011).

All three approaches – historical approach, intermediality, and visual analysis – are intricately connected to one another and relevant to answer the question of where supposed common knowledge of the Netherlands and the Dutch comes from and how visual media contributed to that body of knowledge. In order to answer this question, my research combines a semiotic perspective with the history of iconography in the available media (see Chapters 1 and 2) and historicizes both the categories/functions of descriptions and

motifs/images of the Dutch. This requires expanding the researched period beyond the era of modernity and consumer culture (Chapter 3), which often serves as default demarcation for studies in early cinema.

## Popular Culture and the Stereotype: Nation, Culture, and Identity Once Removed

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This research ties in with discussions in various fields of the humanities and aims to contribute to several theoretical debates, social concerns, and archival practices. Firstly, I present, analyse, and interpret material that has not yet been discussed widely in academic studies; some of these images are reproduced here for the first time, as they were not, and some of them are still not, accessible to academic researchers, let alone the general public. The historical material that I analyse – artefacts of and references to Western popular visual culture and popular education in the long nineteenth century – comes, to a large extent, from private collections and from not (yet?) digitized collections of libraries, public archives, and business archives, as well as from unstable internet sources such as eBay. In spite of each medium's huge popularity at the time, and its relevance to media history, social history, and popular education, it can hardly be said that these media have triggered great academic interest, up to now. The state of documentation and preservation of the objects I have studied is generally poor (see Chapter 2). Hopefully, my study will give glimpses of the richness of the material and provoke curiosity among archivists and other scholars about this often neglected material, that may even bring about practical investment in the preservation and presentation of the material. In addition to scholarly discoveries, knowledge about the various contexts in which an archival object was used is crucial for making well-informed archival decisions (Cf. van Dooren 2014).

While stereotypes and clichés are often analysed in film and media studies, the question of how specific stereotypes and clichés became widespread and why they persist, even if considered harmful by the so described and depicted group of people, has not been fully explored, and certainly not from a historical perspective. More often, this question has been answered with very general explanations about power and ideology. While power and ideology are certainly necessary aspects to describe and critique stereotypes and clichés, such analyses generally do not aim to explain in detail why these ideological forms of thinking worked and on which epistemological, technological, and visual conventions they are built. I hope that my historical approach in the study of national clichés will strengthen the arguments of those who counter essentialist notions of national and cultural identity in contemporary debates

by providing historical evidence for the varying and contingent functions and connotations of the national.

In historical literature studies, the discourse on supposed “national character traits” is examined. The analysis of national stereotypes is a central objective of the method of imagology (Cf. Beller and Leerssen 2007). Developed and rooted in comparative literature studies, imagology approaches (national) identities from a constructivist perspective and investigates national stereotypes, mostly in literature. As part of the field, statements about the “national character” of the Dutch have been analysed (cf. Krol 2007; Zacharasiewicz 2010, 49–53). My focus, however, is less on the supposed national characteristics than on the visual representations in the various media I analyse; my concern is with the uses of pictures in different discourses and specifically the performative functions at play that turn the pictures into meaningful evidence for statements about the Dutch. With this study, I intend to complement the study of historical stereotypical ideas with the history of their visualizations and their various functions.

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My understanding of the performative aspect of images that claim to inform truthfully about the Netherlands and the Dutch considers visual representations partially as standing in an indexical relation to the reality to which they refer. In order to fulfil that function, the acceptance of the media’s authenticity claim needs to be produced. In the cases of photographic media and films of early cinema, authenticity is produced via the medium itself: in the nineteenth century, film and photography were widely considered to document reality objectively and thereby to produce objective images. In the case of non-photographic media, images can be authenticated with reference to an eye-witness account. In both cases, the specific quality of a medium, its inherent mediality, addresses the reader/viewer of such images to see the reality of the Netherlands presented. In order to contribute to answering the intriguing question of how stereotypes and clichés about the Netherlands and the Dutch *emerged*, I will specifically reflect on the visual side of knowledge production and examine the conditions of the perception of people in categories of the national. Benedict Anderson (1996) has pointed out the important role of printed text in vernacular language for the emergence of national consciousness. I wish to add images to research into imagined communities; next to shared language, I am convinced that images were relevant tools in imagining oneself as part of a national collective and, maybe more relevant, imagining people from other places as part of another national community. In particular, my research will address the vast number of images produced for mass consumption outside the realm of pictures that were acknowledged as art. Media-historical research into nineteenth-century popular visual culture can show the forces in cultural nation-building and inquire into the categories that

shaped our perception, sometimes until today. Taking the Netherlands as an example, I believe that more general conclusions can be derived about the origins of national clichés, the role of images in knowledge production, and the role of images in the structure of nineteenth-century Western thinking about (national) identity and (national) difference (see Conclusion). My research thereby aims to contribute to a better understanding of the emergence and persistence of (national) stereotypes and clichés.

22 | The terms “nation”, “identity”, and “culture” that I have mentioned *en passant* are central categories of contemporary research in the humanities. In the past, as today, people were ranked, privileged, or discriminated against and even excluded from communities and territories in the name of nation, identity, and/or culture. In spite of the at times violent consequences of these categories and the expressed desire to overcome discrimination, dismissing these categories would not render justice to the relevance they play both in Western nineteenth-century culture nor in current debates. Many scholars agree that these categories and the resulting identities and perceptions are culturally and historically constructed; nevertheless, they matter in the present everyday life of people. By pointing to the change in categories with which we describe people and the places they live, and by recalling that these terms do not necessarily need to place the national as most relevant in order to enable meaningful communication, I hope to broaden the horizon to develop other, less exclusive forms of community or, at the very least, less exclusive forms of conceptualizing “national identity”.

## Corpus

Supposed common knowledge about the Netherlands and the Dutch, according to my observation, is rooted in the empirical sciences, which underwent a significant upturn after the French Revolution and which are linked to bourgeois approaches to learning and the nation. As the most influential discourses for the propagation of knowledge about people and places at that time, I have identified anthropology, geography, and tourism (Chapters 4, 5, and 6).

For the study of the creation of supposed common knowledge, the restriction to nonfiction images of the Netherlands and the Dutch is suitable, as fictional images may function but do not *claim* to inform about the subject realistically. Likewise, this book is limited to the investigation of images in nonfiction discourses. This choice does not imply that I consider fiction irrelevant in the construction of supposed common knowledge. Popular stories influenced common knowledge about a country despite the fact that readers knew that they dealt with fiction.<sup>2</sup> The artistic period of “Holland mania”

(1876-1914) in the United States (Cf. Stott 1998) influenced supposed common knowledge of the US population about the Netherlands through artistic representations of an imagined Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> However, these discourses are not taken into account because they did not explicitly claim to give a truthful and realistic image of the Netherlands and the Dutch.

In the course of my research, I consulted more than 3000 images from eleven kinds of visual media (illustrated magazines, tourist guidebooks, promotional material for potential tourists, sets of prints, catchpenny prints, perspective prints, advertising trade cards, stereoscopic photographs, magic lantern slide sets, picture postcards, and films of early cinema), as well as numerous additional unillustrated primary sources (mostly newspaper articles, trade catalogues, and lecture material). I will give an overview of these popular visual media that contained nonfiction images of the Netherlands and the Dutch in Chapter 2. Wherever I was confronted with the happy situation to be forced to make a selection of available source material, I opted for the most popular documents because we may cautiously suppose that images seen by many people are more likely to influence common knowledge than the exceptional ones.<sup>4</sup>

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## Presentation of the Chapters

This book investigates, on a conceptual level, how the relations between word, image, and readers/viewers created knowledge, and, more exactly, how supposed common knowledge emerged and, once established, how it validated certain images, not (empirically) what people actually really knew about the Netherlands and the Dutch. In order to explain the historical phenomenon of how nonfiction images were to make sense and how this sense became widely known, I chose a comparative strategy.

The book starts with a definition of the terminology and relevant approaches. The analytical concepts “stereotype”, “cliché”, and “supposed common knowledge of the Netherlands and the Dutch” are distinguished from one another. Chapter 1 outlines relevant dimensions of the concept “nationality”, the intermedial, and semiotic-performative approach to the source material (Chapter 1). The second chapter provides background information on the state of research on the respective nineteenth-century popular visual media that are consulted for this analysis and introduces the corpus (Chapter 2).

These media, their exhibition practices, and the descriptive categories in the captions and comments to the images have a history, too. Chapter 3 questions the commonly applied periodization in the study field of Visual Culture and argues for the relevance of media before the invention of photography. I

will trace the emergence of the categories “the Netherlands” and “the Dutch” in popular visual media and give an overview of traditions of Western popular visual culture in the dissemination of knowledge on people and places with a claim to realism. The development of the ambition to document people and places in a realistic way is sketched and serves as background to discuss the appearance and function of such images in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Chapters 1 and 2 thus embed the analysis of the visual media theoretically and Chapter 3 embeds the analysis historically.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 form the core chapters of this book. There, I will analyse the word and image relation in three prominent discourses that, in the long nineteenth century, disseminated information on people and places with a claim to realism: anthropological discourse, popular geography, and tourism and consumer culture. The comparison of sources from diverse visual media will serve to define the patterns in which nonfiction images and their textual comments addressed the readers/viewers. These patterns, I will argue, are not found in the surface of the material but in the way in which word, image, and reader/viewer are linked. These patterns are the places where meaning is created, and they vary according to what Michel Foucault calls “discourse” or “discursive formation” in *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1977):

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*. (Foucault 1977, 38, emphasis in original)

Foucault’s definition of discursive formation and discourse enables me to analyse the rules and the patterns in the way that objects – things and words – are combined to make sense, as Foucault explains in the following chapter of his book:

[...] that “discourses”, in the form in which they can be heard or read, are not, as one might expect, a mere intersection of things and words [...]. I would like to show with precise examples that in analysing discourses themselves, one sees the loosening of the embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practice. *These rules define not the dumb existence of a reality, not the canonical use of a vocabulary, but the ordering of objects.* (Foucault 1977, 48–49, emphasis added)

The analysis of word and image combinations in my corpus from the perspectives of the three discourses will give insight into the range of visual and textual information that widely circulated about the Netherlands and the Dutch. As a result, my analysis seeks to detect the body of knowledge from which people could draw with respect to the Netherlands and the Dutch.

Approaching historical material through the lens of discourses implies that the individual document is not interesting in itself but only in relation to others that are part of the same discourse. This calls for an intermedial approach as described above. The patterns I am interested in therefore do not lie in recurring motifs nor in recurring statements alone, but in *structures that serve as links between elements within a document and between various documents*. My choice for assigning a document to a discourse in many cases does not speak from the document itself but follows from the perspective I take and the questions I pose – which means that, at times, the same document appears in the discussion of two discourses.

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## Aspects for the Analysis of Discourses

I wish to stress that I do not consider the discourses to correspond to (academic) disciplines, neither does my discussion of the material intend to write a disciplinary history. Rather, the organization of the material into discourses results from a *perspective* on the material. This approach to the historical material allows me to include popular publications as well as scholarly material; it also allows me to address the same source material from more than one perspective and to investigate the ways in which the same motif could be used for the dissemination of anthropological, geographical, *and* touristic information about the Netherlands and the Dutch.

Moreover, presenting the material according to a perspective (informed by discourse rather than discipline) can account for the various reception contexts and communicative aims, from academic to popular, from instruction to visual entertainment, or both at the same time, while avoiding the tricky identification of a publication or an image into discretely defined genres (and thus avoiding the essentializing choices that come with it). This is all the more necessary as popular images circulated across the lines of discourses, media formats, and national borders: the meaning of an image, as this chapter will demonstrate, does not lie in the properties of the image itself but is constructed discursively. For example, advertising trade cards of people and places could popularize ethnographic knowledge (Chapter 4); collected in albums, they could serve as armchair travel media that offered a virtual travel through the Netherlands (Chapter 5); or as medium that used clichés to promote a commodity or service (Chapter 6).

In order to compare the heterogeneous material published in a period of over a hundred years in a way that it will serve to answer the research question, I will discern three aspects that recur through all discourses.

The first aspect is descriptive and presents the material with respect to *partiality and comprehensiveness*. What does the source material say about things to be known about the Netherlands? Which regions and cities are mentioned in the text and which of them are illustrated? I will also investigate if there is an implicit or explicit rationale given for the selection of illustrations. The second aspect is defining. Here, I will investigate the material with respect to *the typical and the general*. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, “typical” means “pertaining or relating to a type”; qualifying something as “typical” thus implies a definition: the element in question is judged to be part (or not) of a family, class, kind, or a larger whole. Such a judgment is usually achieved by comparing the characteristics of the phenomenon to characteristics of the larger family or class. By commenting on an image as “typically Dutch”, the image becomes implicitly or explicitly related to a bigger whole. I will observe which of the described phenomena are defined as typical and if there is a discernible pattern among those phenomena that are qualified in the source material as “typical”. The third aspect is evaluative in kind and concerns the tension between *authenticity and artificiality*. “Authentic” means principal, genuine, real, not faked, not corrupted from the original, and truthful to its origins, attributions and commitments. Judging a phenomenon as “authentic”, therefore, is the result of an evaluation, in which the elements in question are compared with a norm (here: a non-faked origin). The tension between authenticity and artificiality is also used to express nostalgic sentiments, as nostalgia implies a comparison with the present day and a look back on its presumed history (and, more precisely, a diachronic comparison of past and present in which the present is subsequently evaluated).

Films of early cinema about the Netherlands and the Dutch suppose the representation of a visible distinct national difference. Chapter 4 sketches how the spectacle of ethnographic diversity within a nation at the beginning of the nineteenth century gradually changed to a representation of visible distinct nations that increasingly came in the form of national clichés. Visual and narrative strategies in travelogue films on the Netherlands are connected to similar strategies as observed in popular geographical publications in other media, as I will show in Chapter 5. Across the line of medium, publications that popularize geography present first and foremost factual information on the country and the population which, in contrast to anthropology, may include aspects of modernity. From 1870 on, this changes, and modern aspects of the Netherlands or sites that are economically or historically relevant become less prominent in illustrations, which, since then, focus on visually attractive sites.

Chapter 6 opens with a short overview of the history of travel in leisure through and to the Netherlands, and compares tourist publications and earlier travel writings from both Dutch and foreign companies. In contrast to anthropological and geographical discourse, the description of people and places in tourist discourse is not the aim in itself but functions to promote locations as potential destinations for travel. Qualifiers such as “authentic”, “quaint”, and “picturesque” are used to advertise a visual attraction that is sellable as “typically Dutch”. The function of images in this discourse, consequently, is to perform (clichéd) images of the Netherlands and the Dutch as “authentic” and “typical”. This chapter concludes with a discussion on reactions by Dutch journalists to clichés as promoted by the tourist sector. Their reactions to the cliché are more complex than the commonly assumed opposition between self-image and outsider’s image would suggest.

In Chapter 7, I will bring together the results from Chapters 4, 5, and 6. The new medium film, I will show, took up the image repertoire of “earlier” media; it did not use the potential of the new medial form right away to produce new images or experiment with new visual and narrative strategies. Rather, early cinema’s motifs and representational strategies can be traced back to the use of images in previous media and contexts. The meaning of an image in non-fictional settings, so my conclusion, largely depends on the line of reasoning of the context of its appearance: the same motif can be used for various communicative aims. The meaning of an image is thus the result of performative signifying practices and not inherent to the image itself.

When I presented earlier stages of my project on images of Dutchness, it was repeatedly suggested that I compare the self-image of the Netherlands to the outsider’s image. As I will argue, images of the Netherlands and the Dutch do not vary much along the lines of place of production, but rather along the line of discourse. For example, word and image relations in material produced by Dutch or British tourist associations show more similarity with each other than Dutch material produced for the promotion of tourism and Dutch material produced for geography lessons. Moreover, as I will show in Chapters 2 and 3, popular images were already disseminated internationally in the nineteenth century, which would make “place of availability” rather than “place of production” a criterion for studying supposed common knowledge within the domain of popular visual culture.

Before I move on to the first chapter, I wish to stress that this is a study of cultural dynamics in and of the Western world. If not explicitly mentioned otherwise, I claim validity of the conclusions only for Western cultures and societies. Supposed common knowledge about the Dutch and the Netherlands is quite different in other countries, especially in former colonies. On the island of Mauritius, the Dutch are mostly associated with the extinction of

the dodo bird,<sup>5</sup> and most Indonesians and Surinamese do not think of clogs and windmills when talking about the Dutch, but of the period of colonialism. In nineteenth-century Japan, rather than the rural population in traditional costume, representations of Dutch women prominently featured Titia Bergsma, the first Western woman who ever visited the country.<sup>6</sup> These three examples should suffice to indicate why my conclusions about the role of images in the generation of supposed common knowledge on the Netherlands and the Dutch only elucidate a part of Western (media) history. My research should therefore be seen as a contribution to the history of Western nonfiction popular visual culture, its ideas and images, and their mediations.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

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Some source material used an earlier form for the letter “s” (“f”), which I have modernized to “s” for reasons of readability. Prepositions of Dutch family names (“van”, “de”, “op den”) are treated as the initial letters of the family name in the bibliography in order to prevent confusion from inconsistencies between in-text notes and the bibliography. The margins of many prints have been cropped in order to give more space to the motifs.

Both original and added emphasis will be italicized. In the case of added emphasis this is mentioned at the end of the quotations. In the case that there is original emphasis within added emphasis, for example, the text will be both italicized and underlined.

A small number of images that are reproduced in this book contain racial-ly or otherwise offensive content, especially catchpenny prints that depict figures representing cultures outside of Europe. These images are included here as historical reproductions from a different period and do not indicate any support or approval of such attitudes by the author.

## NOTES

- 1 After all, the underlying expectation that images were to document their subject matter realistically is not a transhistorical constancy of the communicative functions of images. See Chapter 3.
- 2 For example, the famous American children’s book *Hans Brinker, or, the Silver Skates: A Story of Life in Holland* (Dodge 1865) tells the story of a poor family, saved from misery by son Hans. It was richly illustrated with figures in dress resembling the traditional costumes of Volendam and is still in print. This book also contains

a passage in which a boy saves the Netherlands by putting his finger into a leaking dike, which is, of course, completely made up but nevertheless became a well-known anecdote associated with the Netherlands.

- 3 This period was largely inspired by John Motley's enormously popular publication *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1855), which glorified the Netherlands of the "golden century". Around the period of the American Civil War, Arti Ponsen and Jori Zijlmans argue, the wish to define "Americans" as one nation led to a search for traditions in the past. Rather than the successful War of Independence against Britain, some intellectuals found inspiration for the definition of American values in the 80 Years' War between the (then) young nation of the Netherlands and the established colonial power Spain (1568-1648). The historical narrative of a young nation defeating an imperial power was popularized, which had as a side effect that many US-Americans admired anything Dutch, or at least what Motley defined as such (Cf. Ponsen and Zijlmans 2009). Not the contemporary Netherlands, but the Netherlands of the "golden century" were nostalgically glorified by following writers and artists, and probably also by travelling Americans who went to the Netherlands in search of "their roots".
- 4 We should realize that the popularity of a medium or an image is not always easy to assess (cf. Dellmann 2016b), and certainly not by numbers only. More often than not, information on print runs and range of distribution is unavailable and can only be assessed roughly through trade catalogues, my observation of adaptations and reprints of images through various publications, and the invaluable experience of collectors. Moreover, artefacts of popular culture have not always been regarded worth archiving by cultural heritage institutions. This makes availability of sources a strong criterion for the selection, too.
- 5 I thank Jade Botter for bringing this to my attention.
- 6 Titia Bergsma was married to a Dutch overseas trade officer. Despite her short stay in 1817, she provoked much interest and her image was widespread in paintings and applied graphics (Cf. Bersma 2002 for illustrations). She was a modern lady, dressed in the fashion of that time; Japanese representations of Dutch women in the nineteenth century featured Titia Bergsma portraits rather than images of Volendam women.

