

NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

British and American

Lectures in Cross-Cultural Communication

NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

**"We all use stereotypes,
all the time, without knowing it.
We have met the enemy of equality,
and the enemy is us."**

(Paul, 1998)



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO AMERICANS 2012

from Yanko Tsvetkov's Atlas of Prejudice
www.alphadesigner.com



THE TERM

- The term ***stereotype*** derives from the Greek words στερεός (*stereos*), "firm, solid"¹ and τύπος (*typos*), "impression," hence "solid impression". It was invented by Firmin Didot in the world of printing; it was originally a duplicate impression of an original typographical element, used for printing instead of the original.
- The term, in its modern psychology sense, was first used by Walter Lippmann in his 1922 work *Public Opinion* although in the printing sense it was first coined in 1798.



THE DEFINITION

- The definition of a stereotype is any commonly known public belief about a certain social group or a type of individual.
- Stereotypes are part of the ‘common’, ‘background’ or ‘world’ knowledge shared by a social group, most frequently defined as accumulated wisdom of a community about an object, being, or phenomenon (Labov 1972: 314; Quasthoff 1989: 192; Scollon 1995: 58).



THE DEFINITION

- Stereotype is a fixed general image or set of characteristics that a lot of people believe represent a particular type of person or thing (Collins: Learner's Dictionary, 1996).
- Stereotypes are often confused with prejudices, because, like prejudices, a stereotype is based on a prior assumption.
- Prejudice is an unreasonable dislike of a group of people or things, or an unreasonable preference for one group over another.
- Race, nationality, gender and sexual orientation are the main factors of stereotyping. Stereotyping must be avoided at all costs, as it leads to treating groups as a single entity.



THE DEFINITION

- Whenever we don't have a good understanding of a subject, say, of people or countries, then we tend to make assumptions about them.
- Stereotype is nothing but those assumptions that have become common knowledge.
- Whenever you make judgments about people without knowing them, you are stereotyping them. Stereotyping makes people generalize things.
- More often, they are all false assumptions. Though there are both positive and negative stereotypes, a majority of them are offensive.



THE DEFINITION

- Stereotypes focus upon and thereby exaggerate differences between groups. Competition between groups minimizes similarities and magnifies differences. This makes it seem as if groups are very different when in fact they may be more alike than different.
- For example, among African Americans, identity as an American citizen is more salient than racial background; that is, African Americans are more American than African.



THEORY

- Different disciplines give different accounts of how stereotypes develop: Psychologists may focus on an individual's experience with groups, patterns of communication about those groups, and intergroup conflict.
- Sociologists focus on the relations among different groups in a social structure.
- Psychoanalytically-oriented humanists (e.g., Sander Gilman) have argued that stereotypes, *by definition*, are representations that are not accurate, but a projection of one to another.



THEORY

- One theory as to why people stereotype is that it is too difficult to take in all of the complexities of other people as individuals. Even though stereotyping is inexact, it is an efficient way to mentally organize large blocks of information.
- Categorization is an essential human capability because it enables us to simplify, predict, and organize our world.



THEORY

- Another theory is that people stereotype because of the need to feel good about oneself. Stereotypes protect one from anxiety and enhance self-esteem.
- By designating one's own group as the standard or normal group and assigning others to groups considered inferior or abnormal, it provides one with a sense of worth.



LEXICALIZED STEREOTYPES

- The analysis starts from lexicalized stereotypes, for they can be encountered in all kinds of discourse, and, consequently, learners are more likely to come across them.
- It is possible to say “He is the Napoleon of the 20th century”, “She’s our Marilyn Monroe”, “Hong Kong is the New York of South-East Asia”



LEXICALIZED STEREOTYPES

- ‘French bread’, ‘loaf’ or ‘stick’ is not just bread made in France, it also has certain distinctive characteristics - shape, flavor, taste - making it unique.
- After World War II in Britain ‘German shepherd dog’ was changed into ‘Alsatian dog’, the expression now employed in British English, while the former remained in usage in the United States.



LEXICALIZED STEREOTYPES

- Euphemisms - Bound collocations and phrases containing a nationality word are sometimes employed as a milder substitute for something that is not decent to be called its right name, or simply in order to achieve a humorous effect.
- Examples: French postcards, French prints – obscene drawings; French Consular Guard – prostitutes; to take French lessons – to use the services of a prostitute; Mexican breakfast – a cigarette and a glass of water.



LEXICALIZED STEREOTYPES

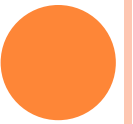
- Metonymy. She laconically answered that the living conditions in Serbia were Spartan. 'Spartan' has become a term of reference for simple and severe living.
- Let us examine which aspects - traits or characteristics – of particular ethnic groups are highlighted and lexicalized in the following expressions:
- Asiatic (navy & marine corps, before W.W.II) – crazy; wild, violent;











LEXICALIZED STEREOTYPES

- Scotch - mean (person), ungenerous (act);
- Byzantine – characterized by complexity, intrigue;
- Turk – (archaic) – one who is cruel or tyrannical;
- Arab - a homeless vagabond; esp. an outcast boy or a girl;
- gypsy – wanderer.
- Sayings and proverbs. The only good Indian is a dead Indian. He won't be late because he's German.



GENDER PROFILING

- ❑ There are also some common stereotypes of men and women, such as:
- ❑ Men are strong and do all the work.
- ❑ Men are the "backbone."
- ❑ Women aren't as smart as men.
- ❑ Women can't do as good of a job as a man.
- ❑ Girls are not good at sports.
- ❑ Guys are messy and unclean.
- ❑ Men who spend too much time on the computer or reading are geeks.



CULTURES

- ❑ Stereotypes also exist about cultures and countries as a whole. Stereotype examples of this sort include the premises that:
- ❑ All white Americans are obese, lazy, and dim-witted. Homer Simpson of the TV series *The Simpsons* is the personification of this stereotype.
- ❑ All Mexicans are lazy and came into America illegally.
- ❑ All Arabs and Muslims are terrorists.
- ❑ All people who live in England have bad teeth.



CULTURES

- Italian or French people are the best lovers.
- All Blacks outside of the United States are poor.
- All Jews are greedy.
- All Asians are good at math. All Asians like to eat rice and drive slow.
- All Irish people are drunks and eat potatoes.
- All Americans are generally considered to be friendly, generous, and tolerant, but also arrogant, impatient, and domineering.



GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS

- A different type of stereotype also involves grouping of individuals. Skaters, Goths, Gangsters, and Preps are a few examples. Most of this stereotyping is taking place in schools. For example:
- Goths wear black clothes, black makeup, are depressed and hated by society.
- Punks wear mohawks, spikes, chains, are a menace to society and are always getting in trouble.
- All politicians are philanders and think only of personal gain and benefit.



GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS

- ❑ Girls are only concerned about physical appearance.
- ❑ All blonds are unintelligent.
- ❑ All librarians are women who are old, wear glasses, tie a high bun, and have a perpetual frown on their face.
- ❑ All teenagers are rebels.
- ❑ All children don't enjoy healthy food.
- ❑ Only anorexic women can become models.
- ❑ The elderly have health issues and behave like children.



SEXUAL STEREOTYPES

- Sexual stereotypes suggest that any feminine man is gay and any masculine woman is a lesbian. Those who believe gay stereotypes may also believe that homosexuality is immoral, wrong and an abomination.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

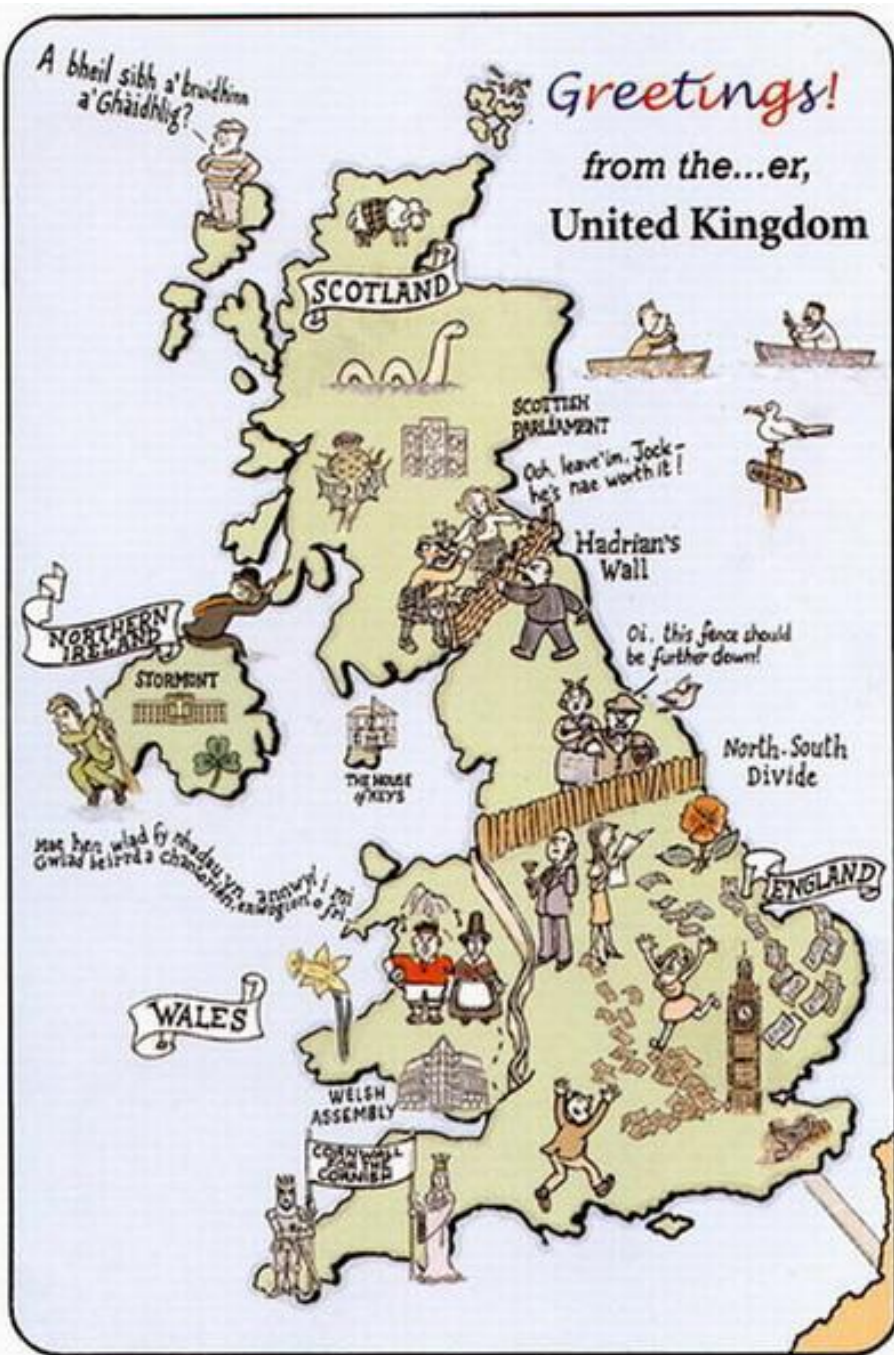
- ❑ People that belong to various nations may differ and they always differ from one another within each nation.
- ❑ For example, the Germans are regarded as scientifically-minded and industrious; they're always considered solid, intelligent, mathematical, extremely nationalistic, arrogant and even aggressive.
- ❑ And, for instance, Jews are believed to be mercenary, industrious, shrewd, loyal to family, religious.
- ❑ There are many examples we can list about national character of different peoples.



A bheil sibh a' bruidhinn
a' Ghàidhlig?

Greetings!

from the...er,
United Kingdom

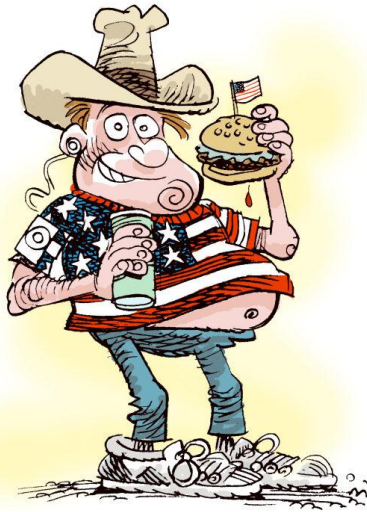


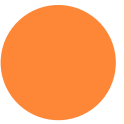
NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- There are certain stereotypes of national character which are well known in United Kingdom.
- For instance, the Irish are supposed to be great talkers,
- the Scots have a reputation for being careful with money,
- the Welsh are renowned for their singing abilities,
- and the English are considered to be reserved.
- These characteristics are, of course, only caricatures and are not reliable descriptions of individual people from these countries.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES







NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- Englishmen are reserved, tradition-loving, courteous, honest, and extremely nationalistic.
- They have a specific sense of humor. They say that they can't understand Russian jokes and anecdotes because their humor is more delicate.
- British people give a relatively high value to the everyday personal contacts.
- British people try to appear as if they belong to as high class as possible, though nobody wants to be thought of as 'snobbish'.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- Some writers on Britain have talked about the British desire 'to belong,' and it is certainly true that the pub, or the working man's club, or the numerous other clubs devoted to various sports and pastimes play a very important part in many people's lives.
- Many people make their social contacts through work and, partly as a result of this, their profession is also an important aspect of their sense of identity.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- The British have few living traditions and are too individualistic to have the same everyday habits as each other.
- They are rather proud of being different. However, this does not mean that they like change. They don't. They may not behave in traditional ways, but they like symbols of tradition and stability.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- The British are rather conservative and their conservatism can be combined with their individualism.
- Why should they change just to be like everyone else? Indeed, as far as they are concerned, not being like everyone else is a good reason not to change.
- Their driving on the left-hand side of the road is a good example to this.
- Systems of measurement are another example. The British government has been trying for many years to get British people to use the same scales that are used nearly everywhere else in the world. But everybody in Britain still shops in pounds and ounces.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES



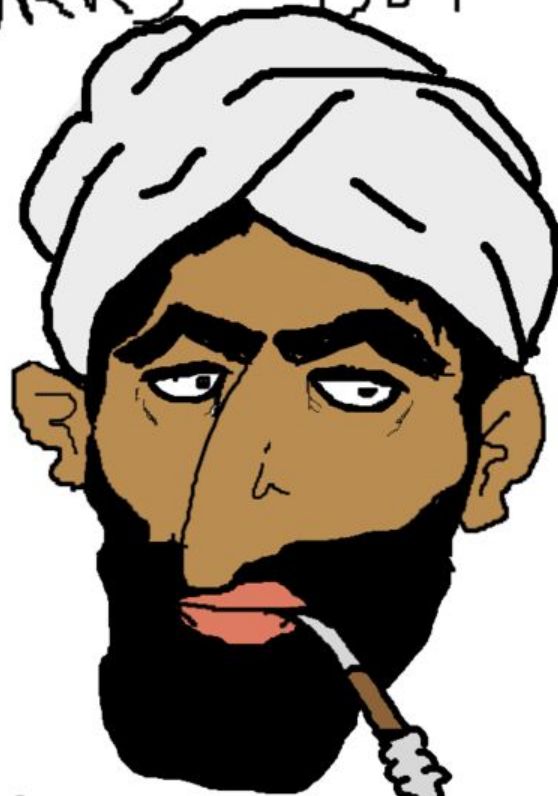
NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- The modern British are not really chauvinistic. Open hostility to people from other countries is very rare. If there is any chauvinism at all, it expresses itself through ignorance.
- Most British people know remarkably little about Europe and who lives there. The popular image of Europe seems to be that it is something to do with the French.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

SORRY BUT I'M



BRITISH



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- It is probably true that the British, especially the English, are more reserved than the people of many other countries. They find it comparatively difficult to indicate friendship by open displays of affection.
- For example, it is not the convention to kiss when meeting a friend. Instead, friendship is symbolized by behaving as casually as possible.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- The British are comparatively uninterested in clothes. They spend a lower proportion of their income on clothing than people in most European countries do.
- Many people buy second-hand clothes and are not at all embarrassed to admit this.
- Of course, when people are 'on duty', they have to obey some quite rigid rules. A male bank employee, for example, is expected to wear a suit with a tie at work.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- But on Sundays the British like to «dress down». They can't wait to take off their respectable working clothes and slip into something really scruffy.
- In fact, the British are probably more tolerant of 'strange' clothing than people in most other countries.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

- The English people are great pet lovers. Practically every family has a dog or a cat, or both. They have special dog shops selling food, clothes and other things for dogs. There are dog hairdressing salons and dog cemeteries.
- Millions of families have 'bird-tables' in their gardens. Perhaps, this overall concern for animals is part of the British love for nature.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

You can tell I'm British because...



I live in the past



I don't care what people think



I'm a different person when the sun's out



I'm not bothered about a bit of dust



I never refuse a drink



I don't speak a foreign language



I'm lost without my dog



I wouldn't live anywhere else!



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

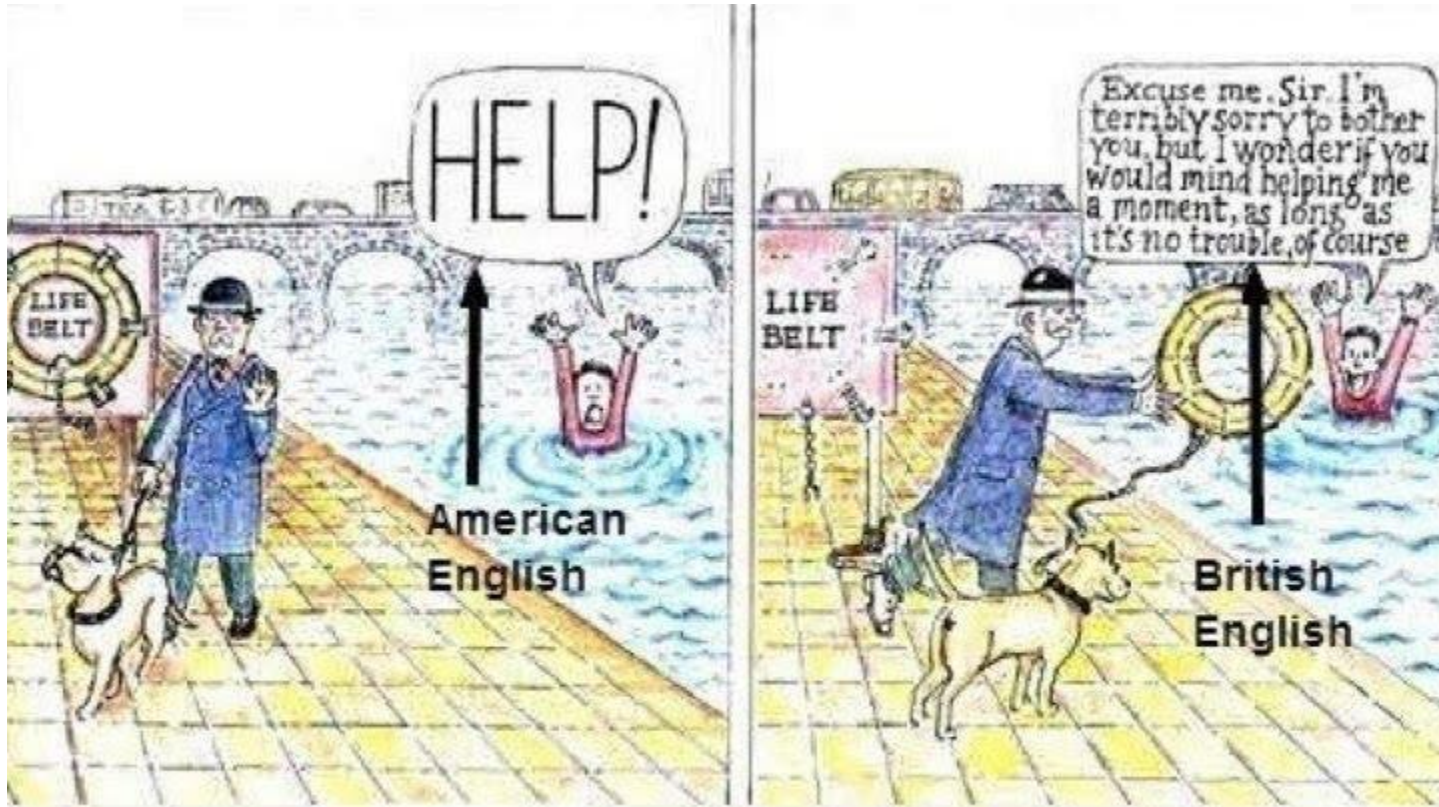
- The British are always talking about the weather. Unlike many others, this stereotype is actually true to life. But constant remarks about the weather at chance meetings are not the result of polite conventions. They are not obligatory. Rather, they are the result of the fact that, on the one hand, to ask personal questions would be rude while, at the same time, silence would also be rude. The weather is a very convenient topic with which to 'fill the gap'.



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES



Feel the difference



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

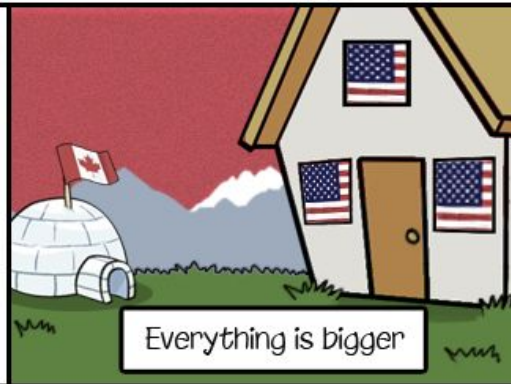


the world map
of stereotypes
and ignorance



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

AMERICAN STEREOTYPES



www.chinchatcomics.com



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES



NATIONAL STEREOTYPES



A PICTURE OF THE WORLD?

- The systems of stereotypes may be the core of our personal tradition, the defenses of our position in society. They are an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves.
- They may not be a complete picture of the world, but they are a picture of a possible world to which we are adapted. In that world, people and things have their well-known places, and do certain expected things.

