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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Lenehan, F. (2017). Intercultural media studies: stereotypes and ideology as the textual semantics and syntax of journalistic articles of "other" cultures, with examples from the Irish-German and German-Greek Contexts. *interculture journal: Online-Zeitschrift für interkulturelle Studien*, 16(29), 9-26. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-55687-7>

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Intercultural Media Studies: Stereotypes and Ideology as the Textual Semantics and Syntax of Journalistic Articles of 'Other' Cultures, with examples from the Irish-German and German-Greek Contexts

Interkulturelle Medienstudien: Stereotype und Ideologie als textliche Semantik und Syntax journalistischer Artikel anderer Kulturen mit Beispielen aus dem deutsch-irischen und deutsch-griechischen Kontext

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Abstract (English)

This text argues for the validity of an Intercultural Media Studies containing a likely array of elements; the cultural history of print-media texts of 'other' cultures would constitute one of these possible components. An approach that views stereotypes as textual semantics, and ideological narrative meaning as textual syntax is suggested, allowing scholars the possibility of analysing text structure over longer periods of time. How this may be undertaken is shown in relation to an Irish stereotype of Germany and a series of German depictions of Greece.

Keywords: Intercultural, media, history, semantics, syntax

Abstract (Deutsch)

Dieser Text schlägt eine Interkulturelle Medienstudie vor, die aus verschiedenen wissenschaftlichen Elementen bestünde; die Kulturgeschichte der Texte in Printmedien von einer ,anderen' Kultur wäre eine sehr wichtige Komponente davon. Eine strukturorientierte Perspektive, die Stereotype als Text-Semantik und ideologische Narrativ-Bedeutungen als Text-Syntax betrachtet, würde Wissenschaftlern die Möglichkeit geben, Textstruktur über einen längeren Zeitraum zu analysieren. Wie das zu realisieren wäre, wird am Beispiel eines irischen Deutschlandstereotyps sowie von deutschen Griechenlanddarstellungen verdeutlicht.

Stichworte: interkulturell, Medien, Geschichte, Semantik, Syntax

1. Introduction

In our globalised, culturally entangled world ‘things’ do not just ‘happen’, they are also almost simultaneously mediated and communicated to, often, a very wide audience. This instantaneous communication is furthermore frequently an *intercultural* act, with cultural information, in the form of various types of depictions of a cultural ‘other’, being instantly transported to a new context. This is, of course, a process with a long tradition and history, with leading media organs, since their inception, retaining foreign correspondents with the stated purpose of ‘communicating’ one culture to members of another. Large numbers of people acquire their knowledge of ‘other’ cultures from such textual depictions – in the widest sense – and, therefore, texts of ‘other’ cultures retain great importance when it comes to processes of intercultural communication. This article argues for an approach to the analysis of such highly significant media texts of ‘other’ cultures that looks towards the presence and development of common structural elements, rather than an approach that simply becomes an extensive and critical listing of stereotypes. Instead it is claimed that an approach viewing stereotypes as *textual semantics* and ideological narrative meaning as a wider *textual syntax* would provide scholars with the possibility of analysing text structure over longer periods of time. Indeed, a culturally historical approach to such influential intercultural sources could, feasibly, be a founding element within a new sub-discipline of Intercultural Media Studies. Such an approach would be informed by a Cultural History that centres on the study of representations, as well as a Cultural Studies attentive to contested meaning (Burke: 64-66, and Hall 1997a10).

This article begins by reflecting upon the origin of and scholarly approaches to stereotypes and suggests ways in which stereotype research may be

extended, by incorporating more multifaceted understandings of agency, meaning and emotionality. It then looks at how stereotypes and ideology may be viewed as the textual semantics and syntax of articles dealing with ‘other’ cultures, incorporating and adapting Rick Altman’s approach to film genre theory. It also introduces two concrete examples; the use of German stereotypes by a liberal Irish author in order to ‘play’ with readers’ expectations, and the ideological syntax inherent to a conservative German author’s writings on Greece.¹

2. Stereotypes: Agency, Meaning and Emotionality

2.1 Origin of the Modern Term Stereotype

The study of stereotypes has been undertaken within several academic disciplines, ranging from Psychology to Cultural Studies and Anthropology.² The modern usage of the term stems from American journalist and intellectual Walter Lippmann, and his 1922 book *Public Opinion*. Lippmann (1998: 79, 88) famously does not see stereotypes in a pejorative sense but as necessary generalizations of a highly complex reality that, simply, is not humanly possible to view individually but has to be viewed as “types and generalities” as an individual’s realm of direct experience remains limited. Vast arrays of non-directly experienced aspects of reality are, thus, stereotyped for us in culturally specific representations. Indeed, our very perception of new experience is pervaded and moulded by what Lippmann (1998: 80, 89/90) calls the “repertory of stereotypes” inherited from an early age from authoritative figures such as parents, teachers and, especially, the mass media; this is an integral element, thus, within the reservoir of direct and indirect experience which constitutes the *Wissensvorrat*, or store of knowledge, of each individual (Schütz and Luckmann 2003: 48). Yet if, ac-

cording to Lippmann (1998: 90/91), we become *conscious* that our thoughts and ideas consist of stereotypes, we can gain some distance from them and may perceive them in a more critical light; we may “hold them lightly” and “modify them gladly” when experience or further knowledge sheds doubt upon their veracity.

2.2 Representations, Lived Reality and Agency

What is central here, thus, is the void that exists between representations³, and directly experienced and lived material reality. Indeed, our lived reality is greatly intertwined with textual and symbolic representations – which is not to say that there is *no* material reality outside of representations. Yet this reality, as the film theorist Richard Dyer (1993: 3/4) notes, “is always more extensive and complicated than any system of representation can possibly comprehend”, and representations always have a “tense and unfinished” relationship to reality. Cultural critics must, however, as Lippmann also emphasizes, recognize individual agency as having some level of awareness regarding this juncture between reality and representations. Dyer (1993: 3) writes that human beings “always sense” that the relationship between reality and representations is problematic, that “representation never ‘gets’ reality”. The Anthropologist Edward Bruner (1986: 6) has similarly written of “the critical distinction between reality (what is really out there, whatever that is), experience (how that reality presents itself to consciousness), and expressions (how individual experience is framed and articulated)”. While recognizing the potentiality of critical agent incredulity in relation to medial representations one should not, of course, ignore the possibility of (stereotyped) representations retaining hegemonic functions within specific social and cultural contexts. Indeed, the area of Postcolonial Studies has successfully highlighted this impor-

tant aspect of stereotyped representations.⁴

2.3 Historical Stereotype Research

One of the few theoretically reflective methodologies that has analysed stereotypes over extended periods of time through the study of a variety of sources, including film, popular literature but especially print media, has been German *historische Stereotypenforschung*, guided principally by the figure of Hans Henning Hahn. Congruent with prevailing approaches to stereotype research Hahn (1995: 12ff) has emphasized the importance of studying the *function* and *usage* of stereotypes as distinct forms of societal discourse, which, due to their existence within the minds of vast amounts of people, create their own reality that affects contact and communication between people. Scholars should not, Hahn convincingly argues, attempt to analyse stereotypes in relation to their content of ‘truth’.

A number of points are central to Hahn’s approach. He sees the principal distinction between stereotypes and generalizations, in the widest sense, in the relationship of stereotypes to emotionality. Stereotypes are generalizations (Henning Hahn and Eva Hahn 2002: 22ff) “in which emotional components dominate, they are emotionally loaded, indeed this emotional load obviously represents their most important informational content”.⁵ Stereotypes are “emotionally passed on through the social milieu”. Hahn places, thus, the chief emphasis here upon the *communicators* of stereotypes. If stereotypes and generalizations were seen as synonyms (Hahn / Hahn 2002: 21/22) it would have an inflationary effect in relation to meaning that would make the term stereotype unfit for scholarly usage. Hahn’s arguments concerning the interconnectedness of stereotypes and emotions have not found universal agreement, not even among scholars of *historische Stereotypenforschung*.⁶ Indeed, Hahn (2007:

19ff) himself has relativized his position somewhat, stating that text genres and social and cultural stereotypes exist in which emotional ‘loadedness’ may be possible, but not necessary. However, in relation to the consequences of stereotypes and their role in politics, he still believes that the ‘emotional load’ is a central and distinguishing characteristic. The parallel relationship between hetero-stereotypes (‘about others’) and auto-stereotypes (‘about us’) also remains central to Hahn’s approach. He argues (Hahn 2007: 31/32, and Hahn / Hahn 2002: 31/32) that, in most cases, hetero-stereotypes also implicitly contain an auto-stereotype; thus a negative hetero-stereotype contains an often ‘un-stated’ positive auto-stereotype. Hahn (1995: 9, and 2007: 15) also situates *historische Stereotypenforschung* within the wide disciplinary areas of the history of mentalities and perceptions; a sub-discipline, thus, that permits the scholar access to the history of mass thought.

2.4 The Sceptical Potentiality of Receiving Agency and the Plurality of Possible Meanings

Following Lippmann and Dyer, it is here argued that ‘receiving agency’; the people reading, viewing or hearing stereotypes, especially within culturally globalized liberal democratic societies, have a sceptical potentiality and that one cannot write a history of societal mentalities by analysing media and filmic stereotypes, due to the vast plurality of *possible meanings* characteristic to representations. The societal context, beyond the reality of texts themselves, retains also, of course, a methodologically elusive quality. For Stuart Hall (1997: 1) “culture is about ‘shared meanings’” that are usually found, he believes, in language; yet any specific grouping can never be seen as being *in charge* of meaning, as meanings are constantly negotiated and renegotiated (Hall 1997: 236). Stereotypes are often oriented towards metaphors and anal-

ogies, as is also implicitly clear within Hahn’s work⁷, and the historical study of stereotypes could benefit greatly if it were re-oriented explicitly towards the study of metaphor that could, potentially, show more awareness towards the plurality of potential meanings.

The history of communication, thought and interaction has, indeed, increasingly been perceived as interconnected with the wider notion of metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson, in their influential work *Metaphors We Live By* (1994: 36, 56), see metaphor as “a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding”, while they claim that “most of our normal conceptual system is metaphorically structured; that is, most concepts are partially understood in terms of other concepts”. For the American philosopher Richard Rorty (1999: 21), intellectual history is essentially the history of a continuous cycle of metaphor, of how “some vocabularies are better representations of the world than others”.⁸ The German philosopher Hans Blumenberg’s idea of *Metapherngeschichte* may be useful here in relation to the historical study of stereotypes. Blumenberg sees the history of metaphor as a subsidiary method of *Begriffsgeschichte*, the history of concepts. *Metapherngeschichte* would however, he believes, due to a metaphor’s vast number of possible associations, have to be more context-dependent than *Begriffsgeschichte* (Bödeker 2002: 23/24). Blumenberg’s definition of metaphor remains consciously ambivalent and he emphasizes metaphor’s open-ended status in relation to meaning, highlighting the variety of possible associations different speakers, listeners or readers could, potentially, bring to a specific word (Zill 2002: 225). Blumenberg (1986: 116, and Zill 2002: 224) sees, ultimately, metaphor as a mechanism for turning the *unheimlich* into the *vertraut* – the strange into the familiar.

2.5 Stereotypes and Emotionality

Hahn, as we have seen, has taken a somewhat wavering position in relation to stereotypes and emotionality. This relationship, it is here argued, is indeed central, yet is of a rather more ambiguous quality than Hahn suggests. A stereotype, seen as a generalization that is linked to a specific cultural collective by, either, the members of that collective or by agents outside of the collective⁹, retains always, it is here argued, a *residue of potential emotionality* dependent on the possible meanings given to it by various agents who hear, read or view the stereotype. This residue of potential emotionality is seen in the clear fact that a negative hetero-stereotype, by excluding various aspects of cultural complexity, would be likely to arouse feelings of resentment by members of the stereotyped grouping or those with direct or specialized knowledge of that grouping; they are liable to feel that it is an inaccurate representation that has little to do with their lived reality, nor with their own store of inherited cultural generalizations regarding this collective. Stereotypes, thus, always exist in relation to counter stereotypes; such conflict is inherently emotional, intertwined as it is with highly personal feelings relating to collectives. This residue of potential emotionality may function in a similar resentment-arousing manner for positive hetero-stereotypes and negative auto-stereotypes. Positive auto-stereotypes may likewise arouse feelings of resentment due to a perceived lack of accuracy; their residue of potential emotionality may also be seen in feelings of intense belonging, as part of distinct identity processes.

Methodologically, the residue of potential emotionality that, it is here argued, is inherent to stereotypes lies within a realm of reality that remains difficult to measure empirically. Some evidence may, however, be indeed forthcoming in relation to the reception of stereotypes and the complex processes through which their residue of potential

emotionality may function. An example relating to a distinct Irish stereotype will perhaps suffice to highlight this often ambiguous, multi-agent process. Following the reporting of an extreme incident involving a drunk and disorderly Irish man in Australia in 2014, the Irish ambassador (*The Journal* 2014) criticized the Australian media's reporting of the incident, stating that some of the media representations of the Irish in Australia were similar to "the caricature of the fighting, drinking, dissolute Irish, notoriously promulgated in the pages of [British magazine] *Punch* in the nineteenth century". Thus, here we see an example of a member of the Irish state apparatus criticizing what he sees as an unfair and inaccurate hetero-stereotype which had gained expression within some media in Australia; feelings of resentment in relation to this mediated stereotype are obviously apparent, a similar emotion, perhaps, to the feelings of resentment at the presence and behaviour of some Irish people in Australia communicated by the journalist users of this stereotype. An indirectly related example may shed further light on such stereotyping processes, and their complex relationship to meaning. Following Barack Obama's state visit to Ireland in 2011, an Irish government agency, Fáilte Ireland; the Irish Tourist Board, was also accused of propagating the same 'drunken Irish' stereotype by tweeting a photograph of the American president holding a pint of Guinness aloft, with some authors (O'Connell 2013) seeing this tweet as the propagation of a negative auto-stereotype. I think it fair to suggest that Fáilte Ireland, by tweeting this photograph, acted in an unemotional, rational manner that is probably typical to marketing and place branding; they, surely, intended to purvey an image of Ireland as a convivial place with a lively pub culture, a place for potential tourists to visit. The photo's reception, however, aroused feelings of resentment due to the meaning subjectively placed upon this image by some receiving agents.

A stereotype, thus, will often arouse a feeling of resentment from the stereotyped grouping, or those close to it, due to the fact that they are *always* overly-simplistic representations that exclude various aspects of reality within their representational form and, thus, communicate often a sense of ‘untruth’; like all representations they have an “unfinished” quality that does a disservice to the complexity of reality (Dyer 1993: 3). Being often expressed in metaphoric terms stereotypes also have an inherent ambiguity of meaning; although sometimes intended in a certain manner, they can be read in a variety of manners. The *Wissensvorrat*; the store of knowledge of an individual, guides the meaning that may be read into them, however. Stereotypes may, thus, be seen as inherently inter-textual – in the widest possible sense – in terms of their construction, as well as the choice of meanings placed upon them. The Irish ambassador in Australia, when criticizing the contemporary depiction of Irish people in some Australian media, was obviously influenced by the depiction of Irish people in the nineteenth century British newspaper *Punch*; knowledge of which he would probably have acquired at school in Ireland. The Australian journalists, who published articles with these stereotypes, were also influenced by what Lippmann calls their “repertory of stereotypes” within their own *Wissensvorrat* when constructing their texts and describing, for example, the main protagonist within their ‘story’ as a “drunk Paddy”. Stereotypes thus retain a, sometimes astonishing, longevity. They usually have a substantial history and may be seen as *dominating cultural generalizations*, often competing with less dominant cultural generalizations. Dominant stereotypes gain currency over long periods of time, within certain cultural contexts. Commentators who criticized the Irish tourist board’s tweeting of a photograph of Barack Obama holding a pint of Guinness imparted this image with a pejorative meaning due to the repertory of nega-

tive auto-stereotypes within their *Wissensvorrat*, as well as, probably, inherited feelings of resentment relating to such stereotypes. Stereotypes, thus, always retain a residue of potential emotionality that is connected to the *meaning* imparted to them. This is not just true for stereotypes that are used in an obvious political or propagandistic manner, as Hahn (2007: 19) argues. This residue of potential emotionality is always relative, context-dependent and, due to the fact that it is oriented towards receiving agency, beyond the reality of the text containing the stereotype itself.

3. Stereotypes and Ideology as Textual Semantics and Syntax

3.1 Newspaper Articles of ‘Other’ Cultures: Descriptions and Explanatory Narratives

It is here argued that journalistic texts of ‘other’ cultures may be divided into two primary text types, namely descriptions and narratives. The use of narrative as an analytical structure in the humanities and social sciences has enjoyed recent widespread practice. Indeed, some scholars have written of the “narrative turn” (Czarniawska 2004). Narrative has also become increasingly utilized as an analytical category within the scholarly study of intercultural communication, often from an anthropological perspective.¹⁰ The Canadian scholar Ellen Rose (2011) has even suggested that one may reimagine intercultural communication, on an interpersonal basis, as a type of collaborative narrative construction.

The American Philosopher of History Hayden White (1992: 121) has famously highlighted the similarities in form between fictional narratives and “factual representations” – in this instance from the discipline of history – that orient themselves towards an idea of ‘truth’. Other authors, such as the Psychologist Jonathon Potter (1996: 184), have highlighted the selective na-

ture of journalistic narratives – which of course also make claims towards ‘truth’ – in their representations of reality, as journalists engage in a type of “ontological gerrymandering” which “pick[s] out a particular range of phenomena as relevant and ignore[s] other potential ones”. Indeed, as Bruner (1986: 143) notes in relation to Ethnography, narrative always retains an exclusive quality: “Narrative structures organize and give meaning to experience, but there are always feelings and lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story”.

The American literary theorist David Herman’s (2009) approach to text types is central here. Journalistic texts of ‘other’ countries, it is argued, may be subdivided into two principle text types and may be seen as either short textual descriptions, or longer narratives in which the journalist often places themselves at the centre of the ‘story’. For Herman (2009: 90) descriptions “entail the ascription of properties to entities within a mental model of the world”, such ascriptions may be static occurring “at a moment in time”, or relatively dynamic; “ascriptions of enduring attributes over an undifferentiated span of time”. While explanations as text types concern themselves, Herman (2009: 90ff) believes, with the universal, narratives always have a sense of particularity – although explanations and narratives as text types are frequently interrelated and the difference between them is often porous. For Herman (2009) narratives, of all kinds, retain four basic elements. The first element he calls “situatedness”: all “narrative representations are situated in specific discourse contexts” (2009: 17), they are “*communicatively situated* [original italics] representations” (2009: 18), and making sense of them requires giving attention to the specific communicative context. In relation to journalistic texts of ‘other’ cultures the communicative context is the cultural history of the

print media. The second component, according to Herman (2009: 102), is “event sequencing”, and “narrative’s temporal profile helps distinguish the prototypical narrative from many examples of description”. For narratives of ‘other’ cultures, as opposed to mere description, this is usually seen in the historical context within which events or people represented in a text are placed by the journalistic authors being examined. The third element Herman (2009: 137) labels “worldmaking/world disruption”, as the events represented in narrative “introduce some sort of disruption or disequilibrium” into what he calls a “storyworld” that may be fictional or factual. For journalistic texts of ‘other’ cultures this may be specific on-going socio-cultural conflict in the ‘other’ culture or ‘disrupting’ political events, such as general elections or referenda. The fourth component of narrative, Herman believes (2009: 138ff.), is narrative’s ability to convey a sense of “what it’s like”: “Narrative representations convey the experience of living through storyworlds-in-flux” as they are “tailor-made for gauging the felt quality of lived experiences”. For print media texts of ‘other’ cultures this is often a central element, and is either drawn from interviewees who appear within the texts as ‘characters’ or reflects the personal feelings and impressions of the journalistic authors themselves, situated within the text also as ‘characters’.

3.2 Rick Altmann’s Genre Theory Applied to Texts of ‘Other’ Cultures

The interrelating structure of descriptive and narrative texts of ‘other’ cultures may also be fruitfully analysed, it is argued, in relation to Rick Altmann’s theory of genre. For Altmann (2003) the structure of film genre may be broken into two categories, semantics and syntax. He views (2003: 31) the semantics of movie genre as generic “building blocks”, with “semantic elements” comprising of “common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations,

[and] sets". Thus, for example, the semantic elements of a western film may include a quasi-desert location, wooden sets of a town with one street or a good guy/bad guy sheriff/outlaw character contrast. The syntax of a movie genre, on the other hand, is for Altman (2003: 33) the "genre's specific meaning-bearing structures". In Altman's study of the American film musical (1989: 127ff.), he describes three distinct recurring syntactic, meaning-bearing structures within this genre: The fairy tale musical (being in another world), the show musical (being in another body) and the folk musical (being in another time). This is not, however, meant in an essentialist manner; there are frequent syntactic structures that give narrative distinct meanings, but a "fluid approach" is required as elements may be often intermingled. Altman (2003: 38) perceives the distinction between semantics and syntax as the same as that between language and narrative; "between the primary, linguistic elements of which all texts are made and the secondary, textual meanings that are sometimes constructed by virtue of the syntactic bonds established between primary elements". The writing of film genre history should thus, he believes (1989: 94, 101), orient itself towards the development, deployment and disappearance of structures, while one may talk of "generic syntax" if the meaning-bearing structure is "reinforced numerous times by the syntactic patterns of individual texts".

While it is *not* argued here that journalistic texts of 'other' cultures constitute a textual genre *per se*, the structure of these articles, it is argued, parallel the textual patterns that Altman describes. The semantics or building blocks of these texts – especially in shorter textual descriptions, but also very often in longer narrative-based texts – are stereotypes of 'other' cultures; dominating cultural generalizations, with a long history, that would appear to be a stable, distinct element of a specific collective *Wissensvorrat*. These stereotypes constitute a *textual language* that journalists

may utilize to write about a specific place; a commonly held set of symbols that have been conventionalized within distinct communicative contexts, even if the *exact* meanings communicated may vary. This is an integral element of discourse in relation to 'other cultures' and is not, in itself, *necessarily* problematic, especially when one takes the sceptical potentiality of receiving agency, as outlined by Lippmann and Dyer, into account.

3.3 Stereotypes as Textual Semantics

Commonly held stereotypes within texts of 'other' cultures, it is argued, are utilized in relation to two distinct purposes. Firstly, they function as a reference to a distinct discursive level that retains connotations of 'truth'. The term verisimilitude is central here. This refers to, as the Anthropologist Norman Denzin (1997: 10) notes, a text's "ability to reproduce (simulate) and map the real"; in this sense verisimilitude is "the production of a text that "feels" truthful and real for the reader". For the literary theorist Tzvetan Todorov (1987: 81) verisimilitude is a concept that should fill the gap between the laws of language and "what is claimed to be language's constitutive property: its reference to reality". Todorov (1987: 82ff.) builds upon the ideas of the ancient Greek rhetorician, Corax, whom he calls "verisimilitude's first theoretician". For Corax "verisimilitude was a relation not with reality (as is truth) but with what most people believe to be reality – in other words, with public opinion". For this reason Todorov thinks that "discourse must be consistent with another (anonymous, impersonal) discourse, not with its referent". The Sociologist Dominic Strinati (2000: 43), building on Todorov's ideas, calls this type of verisimilitude "cultural verisimilitude". Stereotypes are often used within journalist texts of 'other' cultures as a type of *intercultural verisimilitude*; they implicitly reference another anonymous, impersonal discourse, namely

the reservoir of cultural stereotypes held within a specific *Wissensvorrat*, which Lippmann (1998), as we have seen, actually calls “public opinion”. Such usage references what the authors believe to be commonly held beliefs – a level of supposedly shared discursive ideas relating to the reality of specific, distinct cultures. The usage of cultural stereotypes in this manner problematically reinforces the essentialization of already dominant cultural generalizations. The study of stereotypes in various representational forms and communicative contexts that reinforces existing prejudices already clearly dominates scholarly research on media depictions of the ‘other’.¹¹

The second manner in which journalistic authors use stereotypes as a common textual language to write about ‘other’ cultures is very different indeed. These authors also make reference to a shared repertoire of cultural stereotypes relating to a specific ‘other’ culture. However, this is done in a very conscious manner that often intends to ‘play’ with readers’ expectations and preconceptions, referencing a stereotype and then ‘inverting’ it by juxtaposing it with a newer cultural generalization, a ‘remoulded’ version of an older stereotype or, indeed, a vignette questioning the validity of such a stereotype. New generalizations arise when, as the Anthropologist Bruner (1986: 151ff.) notes, “a radical shift in the social context” is evident to an observer and “there is a new reality to be explained” in linguistic, representational terms. Authors writing in this second manner display their own degree of sceptical potentiality in relation to their inherited repository of stereotypes; they seek also to elicit their readers’ sceptical potentiality, to emphasize the non-static nature of such dominating cultural generalizations that have become stereotypes.

3.4 ‘Playing’ with Readers’ Expectations: German Stereotypes in Derek Scally’s Irish Times Articles from Germany (2010-2015)

This is seen very effectively in a series of articles from 2010 to 2015 for the liberal Irish newspaper *Irish Times* written by its Berlin correspondent Derek Scally and based upon an Irish stereotype of Germany; ‘German efficiency’. Scally undertakes this in a very self-conscious manner, writing retrospectively (2015) that he had started “picking apart German efficiency” in late 2010 following the Irish EU-IMF bailout, when the prospect of increased German state influence within the Irish state appeared. Scally labels ‘German efficiency’ the “oldest cliché about our Teutonic cousins” (2010a), links this stereotype concretely to “punctual trains”, “powerful cars” and “pedantic Prussian paper-pushers” (2010b), while many Irish people, he believes, view Germany as “a well-oiled, orderly wonderland that effortlessly turns out cars, autobahns [sic] and airports” (2011). As a result, Scally insinuates, Irish people may also view German *people* in mechanistic, efficient terms. Quoting without commentary a Dublin German Studies academic, Irish people, he suggests (2010b), see ‘German efficiency’ as essentially “missing the human factor”.

Scally seeks however in each of these texts, from 2010 to 2015, to elicit his readers’ sceptical potentiality in relation to one element within their inherited repository of stereotypes, the stereotype of ‘German efficiency’, by juxtaposing this stereotype very explicitly with either a counter-generalization or a conflicting vignette. Thus, dehumanising ‘German efficiency’ is contrasted with a very large and fun party on the closed Autobahn in the Ruhr (2010a), “pedantic Prussians” are juxtaposed with supposedly more easy-going Rhinelanders and Bavarians (2010b), while the stereotype of efficiency is contrasted frequently with the newer generalisation of Germany actually having a “rusting,

crumbling infrastructure” (2014), with an array of highly *inefficient* infrastructure issues throughout the whole country being highlighted; from problems with the Berlin S-Bahn (2011), to the railway station in Stuttgart (2013), traffic issues in Cologne (2014), as well as the proposed new Berlin Airport (2013 and 2015). Costly infrastructure disasters in the capital city are also set against easy-going Berliners who, rather than becoming constantly riled, do not “bother getting annoyed about it anymore” (2015).

3.5 Some Approaches to Ideology

The recurring textual syntax, the specific and oft repeated meaning-bearing structure of journalistic narrative articles of ‘other’ cultures, may be seen, it is argued, as taking a distinct *ideological* form. Ideology is, of course, another highly complex concept that has elicited extensive and vastly differentiated debate. Attempts at collating definitions have resulted in broad and wide-ranging lists; thus the American Political Scientist John Gerring (1997) has come up with thirteen definitions of the term, while the British literary theorist Terry Eagleton (1991), in what he calls a conservative estimate, lists sixteen definitions. The Slovenian Philosopher Slavoj Žižek (2012), in the introduction to a recent volume that assembles the ‘state of the art’ thinking on ideology from the last two centuries of intellectual history, distinguishes three broad approaches to ideology within philosophy.¹² Žižek rejects, however, the notion of ideology as a type of false consciousness. The author (1999: 21) believes that ideology: “*has nothing to do with ‘illusion’* [original italics], with a distorted representation of its social content [...] a political standpoint can be quite accurate (‘truth’) as to its objective content, yet thoroughly ideological”. Instead Žižek (1999: 21) sees ideology as *constructive* of reality, as an “(unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itself”. For Žižek (1999: 36) ide-

ological belief and the construction of social reality are reciprocal processes, as belief “always *materializes* [original italics] in our effective social activity; belief supports the fantasy which regulates social reality”.

For the Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973: 198) ideologies are not constructive of reality, but, rather, emphasize some aspects of reality over others, which may be suppressed or neglected. For Geertz, according to Zorin and Monnier (2001: 67), the trope and the metaphor “form the nucleus of ideological thinking, for it is precisely through the trope that ideology realizes the symbolic demarcation of social space that allows the collective and its members to make it “habitable”, to make it their own”. Geertz (1973: 216ff.) perceives ideologies as “cultural patterns” that “provide a template or blueprint for the organization of social and psychological processes”, and they “come most crucially into play in situations where the particular kind of information they contain is lacking”. For Terry Eagleton (1991: 9) ideology is to be found in language and its study “concerns the actual uses of language between particular human subjects for the production of specific effects”. Eagleton (1991: 7) also believes that an ideology’s ‘other’ provides it with a sense of consistent meaning: “For a term to have meaning, it must be possible to specify what, in particular circumstances, would count as the other of it – which doesn’t necessarily mean specifying something which would be *always and everywhere* [original italics] the other of it”.

John Gerring (1997) has established a conceptual framework compiling all of the attributes associated with the term ideology in the social sciences in an attempt to make the concept serviceable for scholars. Thus, he charts ideas relating to ideology’s location, subject matter, subject (who ‘has’ ideologies), position (‘in’ or ‘out-group’), function, motivation, and sixteen possible cognitive/affective structural elements. For

Gerring (1997: 983) any definition of ideology has to be context-specific, it is “not reasonable to try to construct a single, all-purpose definition of ideology” and “the task of definition we must leave to the writer”. Gerring (1997: 980) does, however, propose what he sees as core definitional attributes that retain a “virtually unchallenged” position within social science literature. Central here is the trait of “coherence”, as ideology, “at the very least, refers to a set of ideas – elements that are bound together, that belong to one another in a non-random fashion”. The notion of “coherence”, he also suggests, retains two corollaries, “contrast” and “stability”: “the one implying coherence *vis-à-vis* competing ideologies and the other implying coherence through time”.

3.6 Ideological Narrative Meaning as Textual Syntax

The notion of ideology used here draws upon these core elements of coherence, contrast and stability, as described by Gerring, as well as elements gleaned from Geertz and Eagleton. An ideology is seen as having a distinct ideational coherence that is established via its consistent use of a series of central tropes or metaphors, in the sense suggested by Geertz (1973: 216, 218) and Zorin / Monnier (2001: 67), that results in a specific type of (imagined) spatial or group demarcation linked ultimately to a sense of collectivity (‘this is us’, ‘that is them’). Ideology, therefore, comes especially into play within contexts where the specific type of information they contain is ostensibly *missing*, such as in writings dealing with ‘other’ cultures. Thus, ideology is seen here as essentially found within language, as Eagleton (1991: 9) argues. The tropes and metaphors form statements, while the statements, dispersed in time but having a particular regularity, form a distinct discourse¹³; here actually understood as a wider syntactic structure. “Contrast” may be perceived as central to the ideological syntax; a notion that

Eagleton (1991: 7) views, as we have already seen, in terms of the ‘other’. “Stability” or coherence over time is seen in relation to the consistent use of a specific series of tropes and metaphors that illustrate this sense of ‘otherness’. The subject matter of ideology as practiced here is politics – or, more specifically, geo-politics and the geo-political imagination that is linked to a collective sense of self.

3.7 An Excluding Westernism: The Ideological Textual Syntax of Berthold Seewald’s Articles on Greece for *Die Welt* (2015)¹⁴

A series of articles written by the journalist Berthold Seewald for the conservative German newspaper *Die Welt* in the first six months of 2015 display a very clear textual syntax. Seewald is the chief cultural-historical journalist for this newspaper and his remit entails the writing of historically oriented articles that contextualize contemporary events. Following the election of the left-wing Syriza government in Greece in January 2015 Seewald wrote a number of articles on Greek history in which he sought to explain aspects of Syriza’s political ideas and rhetoric from a historical perspective. While semantics do not feature very prominently – although connecting Greece with notions of emotionality and irresponsibility do probably touch on wider ‘southern European’ cultural stereotypes circulating in Germany (Seewald: 2015a) – a coherent ideological narrative meaning, a textual syntax, dominates these articles. This may be seen as an excluding westernism, at times an excluding Europeanism, which establishes a dichotomy of tropes counterpointing the ‘western’ or the ‘European’ with Greek institutions, experience and history. Implicitly, of course, these texts are supportive of a conservative German discourse dominant during this period that threatened a so-called ‘Grexit’ – Greece’s exclusion from the Euro zone. The coherent ‘othering’ of Greece in an explicit ‘western-

izing'-'Europeanizing' manner in these texts supports the possible exclusion of Greece using, thus, (quasi-) historical arguments.

Seewald sees Greek history and experience as being essentially 'other' to most of Europe, as the dominating religion in Greece is Christian Orthodoxy. The Schism between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism in 1054 established the foundations of a Greek-Russian friendship, with both countries outside of the borders of the "supremacy of the Pope, under whose shield Europe was formed" ("päpstlichen Suprematie, unter deren Schirm sich Europa formte") (Seewald: 2015b). The loss of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 further cemented these divisions between "the Orthodox and the Catholic-western world" ("orthodoxer und katholisch-westlicher Welt") creating resentments within Greek society which, Seewald believes (2015b), have lasted to the present-day and may be mobilised at any time. Recent political actions by Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras against EU sanctions and in favour of Russia have reactivated these historical sympathies among the Greek people, which are essentially, Seewald suggests (2015b), in favour of the "predominance of Orthodoxy and against western modernity" ("Vormacht der Orthodoxie und gegen die westliche Moderne"). Greece is a place, Seewald believes (2015e), in which "anti-western traditions" dominate what he calls the "mentality", while the mystical-spiritual Orthodox tradition, unlike Roman-Catholicism, never found its way to a sense of extended solidarity. Indeed, gifted rabble-rousers in Greece have often, according to the author (Seewald: 2015b), used this anti-western feeling to attack a variety of processes, including modernization, Enlightenment thought, rationalism and capitalism.

Seewald explains to his readers how Russian-friendly elements have historically been highly influential in Greece, these groupings looking to charismatic

leaders and establishing a political culture that owed more to honour, looting and war rather than the equality of democracy (Seewald: 2015c). These pro-Russian elements in 19th century Greek society were contrary to the benign modernizing efforts of the Bavarian-born King of Greece, King Otto, while anti-western feeling later became an important element, Seewald believes, in wider Greek nationalism (2015c). This historical context is still highly relevant for contemporary Greece as he emphasises (2015c) that: "The heritage of the "Russian party" is still very much alive within various facets of Greece" ("Das Erbe der "russischen Partei" ist in vielen Facetten Griechenlands höchst lebendig"). Seewald sees the reign of King Otto in Greece, instigated he emphasises by Bavarian Philo-Hellenic feeling, as an attempt to bring Greece back into "the expanse of Abendland civilisation" ("den Kreis der abendländischen Zivilisation") (2015d). Thus, German historical agents are seen here as essentially western and European whereas Greece is positioned outside of the imagined social space of a western-European "Abendland civilisation".

Greece has also remained, according to Seewald (2015f), outside of highly important cultural-intellectual historical developments which are culturally constitutive of European culture, and which are also seen in the "humanistic aura of the European idea" ("humanistische Aura des Europa-Gedankens"). As Greece remained under Ottoman control for nearly four hundred years, from 1453: "Humanism and the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment, revolution and the secularisation of the Roman-Latin world remained here on hold" ("So blieben Humanismus und Renaissance, Reformation und Gegenreformation, Aufklärung, Revolution und Säkularisation der römisch-lateinischen Welt vorbehalten") (Seewald: 2015f).

Perhaps even more astonishingly See-

wald manages to place modern Greece outside of another, highly important intellectual-cultural element of common European heritage, namely the intellectual achievements of *ancient Greece*. Many of the highly-educated European statesmen of the 19th century were Philo-Hellenic, and were convinced “that the inheritance of Ancient Greece had initially transformed them into good Europeans” (“dass sie erst das Erbe der antiken Griechen zu guten Europäern gemacht hätten”) (Seewald: 2015g). It is, however, according to Seewald (2015g), a grave mistake to connect this heritage to modern Greece, as the modern Greeks are not the descendants of Pericles and Socrates but actually “a mixture of Slavs, Byzantines and Albanians” (“eine Mischung aus Slawen, Byzantinern und Albanern”). Thus, while he earlier implicitly excluded Greece – drawing also on the problematic ideas of American Samuel Huntington (Seewald: 2015e) – from ‘the West’ and ‘Europe’ on highly conservative and simplistic grounds that view dominating religious orientation and ‘culture’ as synonymous, he engages here in a ridiculous type of racist thinking in order to place Greek culture outside of ‘the West’ and ‘Europe’.

4. Conclusion

This article has shown how perspectives from Intercultural Studies and a (Cultural Studies-oriented) Media Studies may be merged in a productive manner, enabling scholars to write the cultural history of depictions of the ‘other’ within media texts, in a more multifaceted manner. A semantic-syntactic approach, as outlined here, would allow scholars to analyse large amounts of text over extensive periods of time with a view towards establishing the uses and, possibly, changing functions of distinct stereotypes, as well as the potential range of ideological narrative meanings journalists convey, whether consciously or not, to their readership. A cultural history approach, however, should remain

just one aspect of a multidimensional Intercultural Media Studies. A philosophical and ethical perspective upon the global nature of our now borderless media, which authors have labelled respectively the Philosophy of Information, Intercultural Information Ethics, and Global Information and Computing Ethics (Luo and Lenehan: 2014 171ff), also constitutes an indispensable element within Intercultural Media Studies. Indeed, in the era of extensive globalization and mass migration when events do not just simply *happen* but are simultaneously *mediated* and *communicated* to a mass audience across cultures, if we are to rethink the notion of interculturality, a wide Intercultural Media Studies perspective should have a significant role to play.

5. References

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6. Endnotes

1. The theoretical arguments contained here first appeared in the author's Habilitation thesis, which was published in monograph form in 2016. See Lenehan (2016).

2. For a good overview of the various approaches to stereotype research in the Anglo-German context see: Konrad (2006: 5-103).

3. Stuart Hall defines representation generally as "the production of meaning through language". See: Hall (1997a:

10). This definition is here extended to all symbolic forms.

4. See Said (2003: 7) and Bhabha (2002).

5. "(...) bei denen die emotionale Komponente dominiert, sie sind emotional aufgeladen, ja diese emotionale Geladenheit stellt offensichtlich den wichtigsten Informationsgehalt dar". All translations are by the author.

6. See Imhof (2002).

7. See the discussion of the Polish as 'Indians' and 'savages' and the Germans as 'pioneers' in the work of Gustav Freytag: Hahn / Hahn (2007): 28-9.

8. For a philosophical view of metaphor and meaning that emphasizes literal meanings, see Davidson (1984).

9. For a theory of culture as a plurality of collectives, see: Hansen (2009).

10. See Trahar (2009) and Gunaratnam, (2011).

11. For recent examples of this approach from various representational and communicative contexts see: Hafez /Schmidt (2015), Fu (2014), Kuang (2014) and Girke (2014).

12. Žižek sees these approaches as: 1) "Ideology 'in-itself' "; the notion of ideology as a composite of ideas trying to convince us of its 'truth', yet actually serving some particular power interest, 2) "Ideology 'for-itself' "; the material existence of ideology in specific practices, rituals and institutions and 3) "Ideology 'reflected into itself' "; the disintegration and dispersal of ideology, as it becomes a vaguely connected, heterogeneous and localized set of procedures. See: Žižek (2012): 10-14.

13. For the approach to discourse that is relevant here see Foucault (1994): 32, 38.

14. Thanks to Greek-based journalist Damian Mac Con Uladh whose Facebook and Twitter posts relating to Germany and Greece opened my eyes to this specific intercultural context.