Introduction

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National Stereotyping – Identity Politics – European Crises. As its title indicates, the papers in this volume seek to address and analyse long-term cultural and historic discourses on identity and othering in Europe in their impact on recent European politics. This link between discursive traditions and current affairs has not received much scholarly or political attention, although it became highly influential in the experience of the post-2008 European crises, many of which are either ongoing or at least latent, ready to be reactivated at any time. The contributions to this volume examine how such crisis discourses were in many ways informed and structured by recourse to historically influential, deeply ingrained patterns of national and transnational ethnotyping and othering. Mostly in the service of an antagonistic identity politics of us versus them and demarcation and exclusion, politicians and opinion makers across Europe have revived, reactivated, and instrumentalised divisive auto- and hetero-images of European nations and people, as well as narratives of cultural conflict that go back many centuries. This *longue durée* of established auto- and heteroimages, of divisive narratives and patterns of interpretation as well as their actualisation and application in contemporary politics could be observed in many fields.

During the financial crisis since 2008 the bailout politics of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund for countries such as Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland were regularly interpreted as the imposition of a protestant work and frugality ethic by Northern countries, led by a pastor's daughter from the Prussian hinterland, on an undisciplined, self-indulgent or even lazy Catholic South.

In a similar line, the Ukraine conflict since 2013 has habitually been depicted in terms of a clash between Western forces of civilisation informed by Enlightenment values and represented by the EU, and a non-civic East, naturally drawn to despotism and violence, represented by Russia, with the Ukraine in the middle.

The rise of authoritarian leadership and illiberal democracies in countries such as Hungary, Poland, Russia or Turkey was underpinned and fostered by a neo-nationalist identity politics that re-mobilised nativist sentiment with crude ethnotypes and nationalistic interpretations of the past. Such essentialising models of identity are supported by a rhetoric which argues the uniqueness, if not superiority of one's own nation, its cultural model and traditional value system and calls for its defence against threatening and dangerous

outside influences such as liberalism, transnationalism, migration or other forces of globalisation.

Similarly, the neo-nationalist, euro-sceptic and xenophobic populist movements and parties which have been on the rise across Europe draw heavily on essentialising cultural identities and antagonistic ethnotypes.

In particular the rhetoric and politics of Brexit, which came to dominate European politics since the referendum in 2016, was fuelled by a nostalgic nationalist interpretation of past glory, exceptionalism and isolationist unilateralism.

Equally, the temporary opening of the European borders in 2015 with its substantial influx of refugees and migrants, the ensuing crisis and the subsequent problems of integration have been discursively framed predominantly as a loss of control and sovereignty and structured by crude juxtapositions of Self versus Other, a dynamics of inclusion and exclusion and projective mechanisms of scapegoating and fear mongering.

It is the contention of this book that the discursive processes at work here follow fixed patterns, have a great deal in common and need to be better understood. The underlying patterns and master narratives have a long history and draw on culturally constructed, but highly influential historical myths, cultural memories and identities, stereotypes of national characteristics, self-, hetero- and meta-images and processes of othering. Stereotyping and othering are enormously powerful, as they are anthropologically deeply rooted cognitive and affective practices necessary to make sense of the world by reducing complexities, providing orientation and creating a sense of familiarity. Their connection with history and identity and the way in which they connect collective and personal memory make them emotionally visceral, enable them to mobilise deep affects, link individual and collective experience and forge strong identifications. As a result they are both pervasive and influential, and paradoxically their very pervasiveness makes them appear 'banal' (in Michael Billig's sense of the word),¹ ambient, thus hiding their political potency in plain sight. Hence the need to analyse their presence, their historical roots, their representational power and their discursive logic.

This volume presents the papers delivered by distinguished specialists from a variety of relevant disciplines and from all over Europe at a conference held in March 2017 at the Trinity Long Room Hub (the Arts & Humanities Research Institute of Trinity College Dublin). Its contributions investigate these crucial cultural and historical dimensions behind recent European crises. They interrogate the uses and abuses of stereotypes and narratives of othering in crisis discourse from fields as varied as history, historiography, cultural history,

¹ See Billig (1995).

sociology, ethnology, imagology, stereotyping research, memory studies, media studies, identity studies, translation studies and literary analysis.

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The two most relevant and important methodologies applied in this volume are those of Imagology and Critical Discourse Analysis. They are represented by two of their leading theoreticians and champions, Joep Leerssen and Ruth Wodak respectively, but also employed by many other contributors.

Imagology as a method of analysing discourses of national character and patterns of prejudice and stereotyping developed in the 1950s and 1960s within Comparative Literature, mainly in France, the Netherlands, Austria and Germany; its emergence ran in tandem with Europe's post-war reconciliation project. By looking at representations of national character as prejudices, tropes and myths, it opened up their genesis, mechanisms, history and influences to analysis, offering a critical alternative to that national essentialism and ethnotyping, which had dominated the age of nationalism and of the two World Wars. Thus it was and still is a form of applied cultural studies in the service of the European peace project. From its literary beginnings, it has broadened out to the methods and theories of social psychology, prejudice research, media studies, mentality history, cultural memory studies and critical discourse analysis.

Focussing on the historical genesis and discursive structures and functions of auto- and heteroimages for identity discourses, imagology avoids an essentialist reading of its results by carefully triangulating the dimensions of text, context and intertext: the rhetorical and narrative function of ethnotypes within the text; the historical-contextual analysis of the text's production and reception history as situated in the ideological field and in the international relations of the given moment; and the provenance of the ethnotypes as tropes in their intertextual transmission, their constants and variables as discursive formulae. At each stage the internal logic and a priori assumptions of ethnotypes are critically deconstructed: the assumption of the nation's homogeneity across regional, gender, age-group and class differentiations; the assumption of its fundamental differentness from other (equally homogenised) nations; the assumption of its invariant characterological permanence over time. Whereas the working corpus of imagology was originally limited to literary representations, other modes of cultural production and reproduction are now included, notably narrative in film and audiovisual media, journalism, political discourse, tourism, design and museum displays.²

² See Leerssen (2000); Beller, Leerssen (2007); Leerssen (2016).

A number of general imagological insights into the dynamic of auto- and hetero-images are of particular relevance for this volume. The first is that the discourses of national character and ethnotyping are intrinsically geared towards exceptionalism, as they tend to emphasize difference and play down or overlook similarities, even though those are generally much more common. Leerssen calls the underlying fallacy of this discursive pattern “the a-priori denial of normalcy: the assumption that a nation is most characteristically itself in precisely those aspects in which it is most different from others.”³ The second point is that the oppositional cultural and temperamental matrix between people or social groups is applied in stereotypical and invariant oppositions such as the one between a cool, cerebral north and a hot, passionate south, between a civically-minded west and a despotic east, between a dynamically developing, societal centre and a tradition-bound, communitarian periphery. Such oppositions are geographically unspecific, and can be applied across and between continents, countries or regions as the case happens to fit a chosen frame and perspective. A given society or social group can be represented and temperamentally characterised, contingently, as western or eastern, as northern or southern, as central or peripheral, depending on the point of view. Other generic rhetorical markers that can be deployed to manipulate readers’ estimations of foreign characters are in the selective, opportunistic distribution of general human virtues such as familiarity, honesty, hospitality, courage in adversity, and a work-ethic reliability. Attributing such virtues to members of any nation will serve to render the nation (thus represented by its virtuous members) more sympathetic; and since the distribution of such moral markers is a central element in the narrative, actantial configuration of role patterns, it determines the narrative configuration of national characterisations. The underlying logic is that an individual of an exotic nationality is always perceived as representative of that nationality as a whole.

A final general insight is the pattern that the valorisation of temperaments is strongly dependent on external political factors. Tensions and crises in international relations tend to trigger a surge in antagonistic national stereotyping, while during calmer and more stable political times shared values and attitudes are being foregrounded and temperamental differences are viewed in a more benign light. In many ways this last observation provides the rationale for this volume. Imagology as a method developed out of a desire to overcome the catastrophic legacies of European nationalism and fascism: it is of renewed relevance today at this historical juncture where neo-nationalisms and neo-right movements are gaining fresh virulence.

3 Leerssen (2016), p. 17.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has proven to be equally important for the topics discussed in this book, as it approaches language as a social practice and focusses on the way power is mediated, enacted, reproduced or challenged through language and text. Rooted in the linguistic turn and Critical Theory and combining detailed and qualitative linguistic analysis of a wide array of text types and communicative situations and media with sociological and political macro-theories of societies, CDA offers a set of theoretical and analytical tools for the interdisciplinary interrogation of the relationship between textual and communicative discursive practices and social formations. CDA has a distinct engaged or even activist dimension, as its critical aim is to make hidden power structures and their underlying ideological assumptions and prepositions visible and in this way raise awareness about discursive power relations.⁴ Over the last 25 years the study of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination in ethnocentric, nationalist and racist discourse has become an increasingly important field within Critical Discourse Analysis. Ruth Wodak and her research group in particular have turned their attention to political rhetoric especially of neo-nationalism and new movements on the extreme right, anti semitism, xenophobia, identity politics and narratives of the past, the very issues taken up by this volume.⁵ For its analysis she and her collaborators have developed a specific approach within CDA, the Discourse-Historical Approach DHA, which integrates elements of historiography, political science and sociology.⁶ Of equal importance for a number of contributions in this volume is the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis in recent years widened its scope to include a number of media and discursive fields that have an increasing influence on public opinion and political positions around the issues at stake in this volume such as journalism, reality television, television more general, film and also new social media.⁷

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The contributions of this volume divide into five parts. Part 1 investigates how national histories and historiographies contributed to the identity politics of European countries and served their political objectives; Part 2 analyses the discursive and performative practices of the neo-nationalist and populist right; Part 3 discusses strategies of othering and of exclusion/inclusion between East

4 See for example van Dijk (2001); Flowerdew, Richardson (2017).

5 See for example Wodak (2017).

6 On DHA see Reisigl, Wodak (2009); Reisigl (2017).

7 See section 5 of Flowerdew, Richardson (2017).

and West; Part 4 examines the role of media such as journalism, prime time TV and social media in disseminating, reinforcing and also countering stereotypes; Part 5 describes how literary fiction critiques and counteracts processes of stereotyping and othering that have become prevalent during the economic crisis.

In Part 1 'Historiography and Identity Politics' *Stefan Berger* examines the complex relationship between national historiographies and processes of national stereotyping. Drawing on a pan-European comparative project on national historiographies under his coordination, Berger presents five case studies from across Europe, which demonstrate how academic history-writing in the 20th century frequently relied on binary stereotypes (positive national auto-images and negative hetero-images). Professional historiography often legitimised self-serving politics by providing academic credentials to ingrained prejudices. This tendency outweighs attempts by academic historiography to critique or counteract such stereotypes. Berger looks at how British and German historians fed into hate propaganda during World War I, how German Inter-war *Volksgeschichte* helped prepare the ground for racist expansionism during the Nazi-period, how the re-writing of national histories across Europe was instrumentalised for Cold War ideologies, and how Eastern European master narratives were re-nationalised after the fall of Communism.

Zenonas Norkus and *Aelita Ambrulevičiūtė* pick up the topic of the influence of national historiography on recent foreign policy by presenting a case study on the link between Lithuanian national history and its political positions around the Ukraine crisis. They analyse how Lithuania's very proactive stance on an Eastern expansion of EU and NATO, which contributed to the tensions in the region, was underpinned, legitimised and strengthened by recourse to its late-medieval and early-modern imperial past, when the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was the dominant regional power in Eastern Europe. They demonstrate how these identity narratives and memory discourses were carried by influential political figures in the re-established Republic of Lithuania, driving the country's foreign policy with this vision of once and future grandeur as a predominant broker and promoter of democracy and Western values. That position revived old East-West antagonisms and not only antagonised Russia, but also annoyed other neighbouring states, especially Poland.

Daniel Carey traces and illustrates some historical aspects of British exceptionalism, which proved to be such a powerful force in the Brexit referendum and its aftermath. He discusses the sixteenth century English Reformation as the seedbed of continuing attitudes, leading to the anti-EU agenda to 'take back control' and assert sovereignty against foreign influences. Literary sources to complicate and counteract the exceptionalist narrative start with Daniel

Defoe's *The True-Born Englishman* (1701), which already contests notions of national character by pointing to the enriching and heterogeneous influences of various invaders, refugees and migrants. Carey also detects related arguments for hybridity in *Robinson Crusoe* and goes on to demonstrate that already in the Renaissance a number of Shakespeare plays such as *Richard II* and *Henry V* similarly complicate and contest nationalist narratives. Carey's reading argues that such historical and literary perspectives offer insight both into the forces that drive Brexit as well as the simplifications and fallacies that drive the debate.

In Part 2 'Identity Politics of the Neo-Right' Karel Šima's contribution offers a wide-ranging overview of the identitarian movement across Europe, its political aims, underlying ideologies and forms of political activism since 2012. He analyses how the movement has, to great effect, copied the activist protest forms and identity politics of leftist social movements, appropriating them for their far-right political agenda. The movement successfully employs social media and political performance to appeal to a young generation and to maximise its visibility. Šima's analysis demonstrates how the identitarian movement has embraced the concepts of metapolitics and cultural hegemony, borrowed from Gramsci, and sees culture and collective memory as their main battleground. He shows how the movement has simultaneously adapted cultural references both from pop culture and mainstream European conservatism, folk culture and 'banal nationalism' to appear youthful and energetic while at the same time projecting an image as conservative defenders of European values and traditions against the threatening forces of globalisation and liberalism.

Ruth Wodak analyses the discursive strategies of Austria's extreme-right Freedom Party, the FPÖ, as a characteristic example of similar tendencies among other neo-nationalist, populist and xenophobic parties in Europe. She highlights in particular the construction and propagation of a highly normative and exclusivist nativist notion of nation and people, which is portrayed as constantly besieged, not only externally by migrants and transnational institutions such as the EU, but also internally by increasing diversity and gender politics. Her analysis shows how the FPÖ's confrontational campaign style, partly by means of social media, uses continuous provocation and scandalisation with the aim to normalise and mainstream its radical positions. These tactics proved particularly successful during the short-lived coalition between the FPÖ and the Austrian Peoples Party, the ÖVP under Chancellor Kurz from December 2017 to May 2019.

In Part 3 'Strategies of Othering' Hercules Millas investigates the highly ambivalent attitudes in Greece and Turkey towards 'the West' and, as part of this, the antagonistic relationship between these two countries within the East-West

continuum. His point of departure are critical positions in Greece and Turkey towards the EU during the financial crisis and the refugee crisis respectively. He traces what he calls 'Levantine Occidentalism' in history and current affairs: an anti-Western discourse that is in part a reaction to long-standing Western Orientalism, but also serves manifest aims in current political and economical bargaining with the EU. Millas' wide-ranging contribution focuses in particular on contradictions and unresolved ambivalences in Greek and Turkish positions towards the East, such as the fact that they both see themselves as part of Europe and have embraced, at various junctures, an agenda of Western-style modernisation, while at the same time rejecting European influences as alien and corrupting. Of particular interest for him is also the subsidiary East-West conflict between Greece and Turkey, which is as much cultural as it is political. Overall, the comparison of their respective positions makes a rich case study for shifting significations on the spectrum of auto- and hetero-images.

After clarifying in theoretical terms how the study of historical myth can be a fruitful approach within imagology, *Zrinka Blažević* takes the exposed position of Croatia on the Balkan route during the refugee crisis as her point of departure to analyse the multiple uses, functions and meanings of the *antemurale Christianitatis* myth in Croatia's historical imagery and cultural memory. The heroic self-image of Croatians as guardians of Western civilisation and as a bulwark in the defence of Christendom against an Islamic threat has been a central part of Croatian identity narratives since the sixteenth century. While nineteenth-century Slavophilia furnished an alternative counter-myth (Croatia as a civilisational bridge or crossroads), the bulwark trope was reactivated at various junctures both during Tito's Yugoslavia and since 1990; today it is a cornerstone of anti-immigrant rhetoric in Croatian right-wing circles. Blažević's analysis stresses the considerable symbolic and ideological potential of the myth as well as its polysemic and multimedial qualities.

In Part 4 'Stereotyping in the Media' *Luc van Doorslaer* addresses the underrepresentation of journalistic discourse in imagology and explores the potential of translation studies to analyse how journalism produces and distributes political and cultural stereotyping. Given the omnipresence of journalism in the media world and its enormous influence on public discourse this is an important field of further studies, especially as 'default stereotyping' and simplistic binary dichotomies are becoming, as van Doorslaer demonstrates, more prevalent in journalism the less journalists are informed about the subject on which they write. The focus in translation studies on processes of intercultural transfer and also of selecting, de-selecting, re-editing and rewriting offers great potential for better understanding stereotyping in journalism, as

these processes are also central to journalistic practice. He illustrates this with examples from sports journalism and the stereotypical representation of Germany in the British and Turkish press; the contribution closes with a call for a more systematic investigation of this promising new interdisciplinary field of enquiry.

Wulf Kansteiner turns his attention to another highly influential medium, prime time television. He detects and describes processes of othering in Germany's longest running and most popular crime series, *Tatort* or *Scene of the Crime*, and in his analysis links these to prevalent attitudes during the so called refugee crisis of 2015. He discusses the constructions of alterity in a number of highly ambivalent instalments from the early 2000s which thematize issues of migration and the place of Jews in contemporary German society. Even as this critically acclaimed and socially engaged series intended to raise viewers' awareness and compassion for the plights of migrants coming to Germany, it was predicated on a plot structure which requires victims and perpetrators, and is thus forced to cast migrants in one of these roles. The efforts to turn the crime series into a self-reflexive study of racism in German society are thus subverted by its genre conventions, and unintentionally xenophobic or antisemitic prejudices can be raised. Kansteiner in conclusion calls for a 'mobility turn in memory studies and the politics of memory', a new approach that values migration memories within the German host culture and beyond.

Social media are the new digital public sphere and as such prime opinion-makers. Their influence in distributing, enforcing and amplifying national and other stereotypes can hardly be overestimated, but requires more detailed empirical analysis. *Raúl Sanchez Prieto's* contribution presents and tests a practical, empirical text-linguistic approach. His corpus-based case study investigates Facebook conversations about Spain during the financial crisis in six selected countries from Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe. His approach, which combines text-linguistics with sentiment analysis research, effectively identifies the presence, prevalence and actional nature of both positive and negative stereotypes.

The contributions in Part 5 'The economic crisis in literature' discuss the potential of contemporary fiction to offer a critical counter-discourse to the financial crisis of 2008 and the austerity politics imposed as a consequence by the EU and the International Monetary Fund. *Ana María Fraile* considers the nuances of how fictional narrative can represent the economic, political, social and cultural effects of recent European upheavals. She discusses five Spanish crisis novels, published between 2012 to 2015, which show how the EU's crisis management during the economic crisis and its aftermath reactivated and

mobilised stereotypical constructs of the relationship between Spain and other European countries such as Holland and Germany. These novels reflect self- and hetero-images about Spain but also, most notably, meta-images, which reflect how a nation believes to be perceived by others. Fraile discusses how these texts employ satire and irony as well as a critical mobilisation of cultural memory. She argues that these novels go beyond mere critique and analysis and also offer a narrative ethics of resilience in times of crisis, which might contribute over time to overcoming ingrained stereotypes and offer more optimistic perspectives of a common European citizenship.

In a similar vein *Aidan O'Malley* examines three recent novels by the prominent Irish author Paul Murray that constitute a humorous panorama of contemporary Ireland by charting the ascent and supposed death of the so-called Irish Tiger. With inward migration from Europe being a defining feature of the boom years that preceded the economic crisis, O'Malley demonstrates how these novels employ non-Irish European characters to dramatize the Irish iteration of late capitalism. Stereotyping fundamentally renders reality fictional, and in Murray's novels the reader witnesses how the stereotyping of European immigrants was essential to the operations of the phantasmagoric Celtic-Tiger Ireland; amongst other things, it translated them as exploitable. However, as this contribution also shows, the comic exaggerations employed in the satirical representation of this spectral dynamic in Murray's most recent novel, *The Mark and the Void*, gesture back towards, and repeat, the stereotyping the novel is explicitly critiquing.

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The conference on which this book is based was a flagship event of Trinity College's university-wide interdisciplinary research theme *Identities in Transformation*.⁸ This research theme, established in 2013, is a collaborative platform for investigating shifting identities in Ireland, Europe and the world in a period of accelerating change. In doing this, it serves as a forum for public humanities and seeks to contribute to addressing urgent societal challenges of our time.

The conference was held in conjunction with the Social Sciences and Humanities Working Group of the Coimbra Group of European Universities. As a network of 41 leading European universities the Coimbra Group brings together perspectives and expertise from all over Europe. Its Social Sciences

⁸ More information on the *Identities in Transformation* Research Theme can be found at <https://www.tcd.ie/trinitylongroomhub/themes/identities/>.

and Humanities Working Group investigates in particular questions of cultural identities and memory cultures, of migration, integration and inclusion and related challenges facing Europe.⁹ The Research Theme and the Working Group provided rich and fruitful contexts for the investigation of the topics that this volume engages with.

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9 The Coimbra Group is an association of 41 long-established, multidisciplinary and research-intensive universities from across Europe. For more information see <https://www.coimbra-group.eu/>.

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