Ethnocentrism in Journalism: A Case Study on the Japan-US Automobile Trade Disputes

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Abstract: This study aims to identify rhetorical features of a genre of news reporting known as Japan bashing, criticism based on unfounded claims about Japanese economic or trading practices often inflammatory in nature (Błażejowski, 2009; Morris 2011; Stronach, 1995), showing how U.S. mainstream media have inadequately reported on the trade disputes between the U.S. and Japan, essentially taking a one-sided approach. Cultural stereotyping tends to form the substance rather than facts that would justify their approach taken. This stereotyping—a matter of misperception—and how it is used by some journalists to inform the public becomes a vital study in the social sciences, especially for intercultural communication. That the selected news articles herein come from mainstream and respected publications at a time thought to be a "post-racial era" challenges the view that people of today are well-educated or advanced about intercultural or diversity issues. This study also identifies how our mass media have failed to properly inform about the trade disputes by the lack of investigative reporting. This study further hopes to contribute to intercultural relations by correcting misperceptions generally held about Japanese culture.

Keywords: Stereotyping, perception, othering, miscommunications, media, Japan bashing

1. Introduction

Political bashing connotes excessive or malicious criticism of another, some of which may be "motivated by bigotry" (Miller, 2013). Such highly charged or emotionalized criticism is likely to be long on histrionics but short on substance. So seem two ultimate case scenarios for the bashing of Japan over trade disputes as found in two leading US American media. Ultimate, herein, refers to "a best example" of Japan bashing-- seemingly irrefutable charges of Japanese wrongdoing--that apparently motivated the journalists to write their articles, which I have found during the decades of my observation of this trade dispute (e.g., Donahue, 1998). Moreover these charges come from expert journalists, indeed both had worked as bureau chiefs in Japan in their careers. One from the *Washington Post,* Hiatt (1989) argues that even if an American is already deeply knowledgeable of the Japanese language and culture—at a native level—they still will likely be closed out of Japan's market. In the other case from *Forbes,* Fingleton (2014) purports evidence not only of a statistically low level of foreign automobile imports allowed into the Japanese market but that the level has been invariant over decades, showing a concerted effort by "Japan, Inc." to keep its market closed. By revealing that these ultimate cases actually lack substance, this paper demonstrates how even the "fourth estate"

can succumb to stereotype and bias while neglecting the investigative reporting the journalist is expected to provide. If journalists, the very people trained to avoid misperception, falter in this regard, then these cases have much to say to students of intercultural communication, for perception is the prism through which all human communication occurs, intercultural or otherwise.

In a book I authored, subtitled; *Critical Cultural Analysis* (Donahue, 1998), I endeavored to develop principles of cultural analysis or comparison using Japanese culture as the basis. The purpose was to provide a training guide for international students of Japanese who took my course in Japan titled Japanese Intercultural Communication. This book aimed to sharpen perception for the study of Japanese culture. One of the important topics of cultural conflict was the trade frictions between Japan and the U.S., the two top economic markets in the world at the time. A belief existed that the Japanese government and Japanese companies ("Japan, Inc.") colluded in using underhanded means to beat out American manufacturers. Scholars, however, have been divided as to how much this was really the case.

Trade conflicts provide much chance for exercising perceptual management or intercultural analysis. For such, I revisit the Hiatt (1989) article to update my previous analysis in Donahue (1998), showing what happened since to the U.S. company caught up in the web of trade frictions with Japan at the time,, as well as providing a fresh look how some elite U.S. business executives lack intercultural awareness when they apply for patents in Japan, highlighting data from a U.S. government study on the matter. Furthermore, this present updating deals with a central complaint by the *Washington Post* about Japanese culture that heretofore could not be properly answered until now.

The second ultimate case,--Fingleton (2014)--concerns an alleged closed market for imported automobiles into Japan, demonstrating how ongoing this U.S.-Japan trade dispute has continued to the present day. This *Forbes* article amounts to an ultimate case for Japan bashing because it presents statistical data showing an invariant four-percent restriction of the auto market in Japan for imported vehicles, a veritable glass ceiling for foreign companies there. Other remarkable claims are made as well that would likely transfix the public's attention. As formidable the claims may appear, close analysis shows that they rest on very little, as I attempt to demonstrate forthwith.

1.1. Case One: *Washington Post* Article: A Native Son Battles Japan's Trade Barriers

This article (Hiatt, 1989) presents a naturalized U.S. citizen who returns to his native Japan to sell a new technology, amorphous metals, to utility companies. He later, however, had to "retreat back to New Jersey, a beaten man," which this article uses as an ultimate case for Japan bashing. For this man's failure could not be attributed to a lack of knowing the language and culture—he was a native Japanese. A central issue was his company's patent protection in Japan, for there were various infringements and challenges made, suggesting unscrupulousness of the Japanese. Yet this man's same U.S. company, Allied-Signal (now merged to be part of Honeywell), years later had this to say about the same case prior to its recent corporate merger: "[Our] overall experience in securing patent protection in Japan has been favorable" (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993, p. 30). And its operations in Japan (Nippon Amorphous

Metals Co.) continue to thrive to this day. Although there may have well been some machinations on the part of "Japan, Inc." along the way, essentially the case is a non-story that was made into something more by the journalist's lack of judgment or investigative reporting. Rather than evidence how Japan. really was responsible for the man's apparent failure, the journalist inserts a framework of stereotypes about Japanese instead (see Donahue, 1998).

In regard to patents, while maybe not so with Allied-Signal, many U.S. companies have shot themselves in the foot in dealing with the Japanese patent office. In a nutshell they lacked intercultural awareness. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office (1993), a study of over 300 U.S. companies with patent experience in Japan, nearly 90 percent of these firms prepared their patent applications for Japan in the same manner as done in the U.S. Yet, many patent attorneys have found a main reason for difficulty in getting patents in Japan is that the application has not been tailored or formatted for Japan; that certain information important to the JPO lacks highlight. Also inadequate time is allowed for the patent attorney to have the application properly translated and prepared in Japanese style. Incredibly as it may sound, patent applications, which can run into thousands of dollars of expense and require years for the final decision, hardly ever are put through back-translation, a relatively unused practice (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993). Back translation is what the name suggests: The Japanese version is translated back into English, so as to compare it with the original English. Then one can gauge roughly how well translated the Japanese is, as well as, pinpointing serious error or misunderstanding in the Japanese language version. Understandably, "many U.S. patent attorneys and other patent experts do not believe that the Japanese patent system inherently discriminates against foreign applicants" (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993, p. 43). Certainly not if U.S. companies shoot themselves in the foot when applying for a Japanese patent.

We do not know how well Allied-Signal initially made its application for a patent in Japan. Because the JPO is relatively understaffed, it takes three or four times longer to process an application as compared to its U.S. counterpart (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993). Thus six years is not unusual a wait for a Japanese patent, making the situation ripe for possible cultural friction. Allied-Signal too possibly could have undermined itself by ignorance about intercultural matters. "When in Rome do as the Romans do" is a well-known maxim but not easily practiced. This maxim implies the importance of social accommodation to local custom and community.

In this regard, the journalist seems to miss its import, for assuming that Hasegawa, the native son, necessarily was bound for success in Japan. Even if this native son's fluency in Japanese remains completely intact, he still may unconsciously reveal to Japanese nationals that he no longer owes allegiance to *Nippon,* his native homeland. "When people of Japanese descent visit Japan as successful citizens of their new countries, it is all too clear to both themselves and the Japanese that they are not 'insider' Japanese but 'outsider' foreigners" (Reischauer, 1988, p. 399). As a result of his apparent rejection of Japanese ingroup membership, by virtue of having become American, Japanese nationals may naturally feel suspicious toward him. This suspicion particularly will become intensified in competitive contexts such as international business, not to mention an era of threatened trade war. The idea that Hasegawa could pass himself off as any other Japanese national is rather naive. Thus the journalist seems misled in building a case for

Japan's unfair trading based on this native son's experience.

The article comes to a conclusion by giving Hasegawa seemingly the last word:

> *"The Japanese have this strange custom," he said. "They have to do everything themselves. Why do they have to make scotch whiskey? Why do they have to make wine? They don't even have a grape suited to wine. I was born in Japan. I was brought up in Japan, but I still don't understand it."* (Hiatt, 1989)

If it is he who really said this--for reporters have been known to put words into the mouths of these whom they interview-- he however might otherwise feel proud today because this Japanese zeal for attainment shows worthy:

- DNA testing proves Japan has a native grape variety suitable for wine (Brown, 2010).
- This native grape wine wins a gold medal at a major international wine contest in London ("Japanese jubilation," 2013).
- In 2014, a Japan-made Scotch whiskey attains world's no. 1 rank for quality ("Japanese whiskey," 2014).

The ultimate charge of irrationality on the part of the "other" is when the target-group members cannot even understand each other. *The Washington Post* article has the ultimate stereotyping or othering—not only it condemns another people for being nonsensical but it is one of their own who says it. "Othering is the social, linguistic and psychological mechanism that distinguishes 'us' from 'them', the normal from the deviant (Johnson et al. 2004; Grove & Zwi 2006)" (Barter-Godfrey & Taket, 2009), which has become "the problem of the 21st century" (Haas Institute, 2017). By rhetorical strategy here, Japanese are subordinated to the West, but this journalist passes the responsibility for doing so onto his Japanese informant. Various implications interculturally spring forth but beyond present scope. For further analysis of this news article see Donahue (1998). Now we turn to the second ultimate case for Japan bashing, showing that the trade dispute is ongoing and how a reputable journalist like the previous one can rely solely on stereotyping in lieu of solid evidence for his claims against Japan.

1.2. Case Two: *Forbes* Article: What's Japan's Guiltiest Secret?

Fingleton (2014a), the author of this article, is a Japan watcher for nearly thirty years as a newspaper editor and as an author of several books about Japan "named among the ten best business books of the year by *Business Week* and Amazon.com" (Fingleton, 2014b). My mention about the author is to show that he is a veteran journalist of some repute, and so revelations about his present treatment of the trade dispute with Japan cannot be attributed to inexperience or naiveté. In a word, he is accomplished, which merits serious regard.

First, however, some background: Japan is a crowded country having the highest population density among major countries of the world (by "real population density" measure). The relative shortage of space greatly figures in everyday life there. Thus, small cars of high

fuel efficiency with low fuel emissions will rule the day. And that they do in the name of the "kei-car" (*keijidosha*), a micro car, which is so popular, this type of vehicle makes up nearly half of Japan's automotive market (Ingram, 2013; "The kei," 2015). The rub is that until very recently this kei car was found only in Japan. So foreign car manufacturers have by their own choice closed themselves out from half of the market there. Some critics contend that Japan arranges such, by preferentially treating the kei car in government policy for taxes and car ownership regulations. Well, of course, they should if Japanese society favors cleaner air, less congested roads, and economical transportation. Even without mentioning the famed quality of Japanese cars, foreign car makers already make it an uphill battle for market share there. So news that foreign car makers hold a relatively low share of Japan's car market must be placed in proper perspective.

With that said, let us consider what Fingleton (2014a) would call Japan's dirty little secret—its purported glass ceiling for foreign automotive companies by strictly limiting them to only a four percent share of the annual automotive market as depicted in Figure one, a depiction inescapable from his words: "[F]or decades the share of all foreign brands combined has been kept to just 4 percent " (Fingleton, 2014), meant not an average as later revealed. If true, this is surely the ultimate case for Japan's deceit, for Japan purportedly conspires to do so. Fingleton's assertion, however, is false—at least

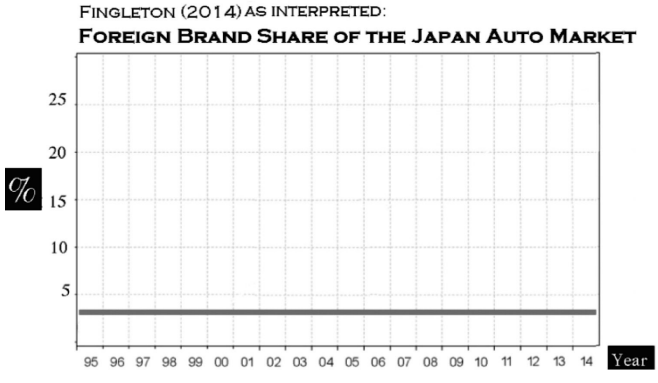

Figure 1

statistically. Intuitively, the same low percentage (four percent) consistently and invariably the same across economic conditions and foreign exchange shifts must show direct manipulation by "Japan, Inc." So where does Fingleton get this four percent figure? From the American Automotive Policy Council– a known Detroit lobbying group created by the Detroit automakers (Beene, 2015a; Clothier & Dougherty, 2015; Schmitt, 2012). And from where do they get it? They produce no source (American Automotive Policy Council, n.d.). However it is Fingleton--not the AAPC–who adds the ceiling aspect to it. Let's be clear about what he says. The four percent figure he uses is meant not as an average, for the word is never used in his article. He clearly means four percent as the same rate, year to year, a point clarified by his own words in the article and in his later comments: "held to four percent"; "constant" ; "consistently"

(regardless of economic conditions or changes in foreign exchange). Thus he claims that not only is there a glass ceiling for foreign car importers but by implication it must be Japanese government policy, for a car market so huge could not be expected to materialize so uniformly an unvarying rate for foreign car imports, not just in the short term but over decades. Indeed Fingleton affirms it: "[D]ecades have gone by in which …the aggregate foreign-brand share in Japan has consistently hovered at four percent of the market (despite huge gyrations in the yen's value on foreign exchange markets in that time)."[1]

As of this writing, however, the foreign share of Japan's automobile market is 10 percent (Schmitt, 2015; Semuels, 2017), more than double that of Fingleton's claim. In fact, for the last 20 years (1994 to 2013) the average foreign share of the Japan car market according to figures produced by the JAIA is six percent (JAIA, 2014). During the same period, in only one year did the rate fall below five percent. The source figures I cite here are widely used for the car industry (e.g., Bruce, 2014; Hays, 2013; JAIA, 2014; Jie & Hagawara, 2014; Jung, 2015; Schmitt, 2015). Thus not only does Fingleton underreport the facts about foreign import success in Japan's market, but he makes the astounding claim that car imports are held at an invariant level. Using his statistic so inappropriately seems close to bigotry or at least political bashing implying a myopic view of a foreign culture, Japan.

The actual eight or ten percent of the Japan car market held by foreign producers seems reasonable considering that Japanese automotive brands are of high quality and foreign automakers limit themselves to only half the market by not producing for the micro car (kei-car) segment ("In Japan," 2013). Detroit carmakers limit themselves even further by not offering right-hand drive vehicles in general, by not offering widespread showroom and service centers, by not participating in the major car shows there, and by not building cars in Japan, actions that European makers have otherwise taken to sell their cars (Elms, 2015; Greimel, 2014; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Hotakainen, 2014, 2015; Kubota, 2014; Sanger, 1992). "Detroit automakers haven't been interested in selling in Japan," concludes Ron Bookbinder, general director of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association USA (Hotakainen, 2015). "Japan is not a closed market," according to the Communications Director of Volkswagen Japan (Schmitt, 2012), a view echoed by even Louis Hughes, former president of General Motors Corporation's international operations, as well as by Francois Castaing, Chrysler Corporation's executive vice president for international operations (Reitmann, 1997). One must come to the sobering conclusion as Bergsten & Noland (1993) that Detroit complaints may be to "justify protectionism at home" ("United States-Japan trade," 1993), a point as possible today as it was then.

What is pivotal in all this is something that the mainstream media ignore: The American economic market is not a free market. Free trade does not exist in the world; it is but an ideal (Das, 2004; Wonnacott, 1987). "Along with China, the U.S. car market actually is one of the most protected" (Schmitt, 2015). For example, U.S. safety standards,not any more rigorous than the international standards of UNECE/ECE (Durban, 2014; Orlove, 2014) recognized by

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[1] Eamonn Fingleton, (n.d.), author comment to GMainwaring, "A second reply to GMainwaring," comment forum at Fingleton (2014). Accessed May 19, 2014: http://www.forbes.com/sites/eamonnfingleton/2014/04/20/whats-japans-guiltiest-secret-hint-its-not-the-comfort-women/

most of the world but not the U.S. and Canada (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2014), require retooling by importers into the U.S. that hikes their costs an estimated 26 percent (Benka & Krist, 2014). Another example is the so-called "chicken tax," "the 25-percent tariff placed on imported commercial vans and pickup trucks" (Stewart, 2015). "Critics of the tax say it has priced [these vehicles] out of the market, shielding the Detroit 3's biggest profit machine from robust foreign competition" (Beene, 2015b).

Commonly ignored also are the historical political arrangements made between Japan and other countries by which auto imports were mutually restricted: As of the 1980s when Japan ascended to become the top producer of automobiles in the world, "Japanese automobile exports [became] restricted in virtually every major industrialized country of the world" (Internationalization of the Automobile Industry, 1985, p. 7). Restrictions were made according to the total number of units or as a percentage of a country's domestic car market (Internationalization of the Automobile Industry, 1985). Any present restrictions on auto imports into Japan must be weighed in light of such history and protectionist barriers that still exist in the U.S. and elsewhere.

A rare report on U. S. protectionism from a mainstream media pointed out that in general the U.S. "violate[d] some of the same trade principles it want[ed] others to follow" (ABC News, 1994), as well as that trade barriers to foreign products cost American consumers billions of dollars (Levin Institute, 2015). Being the world's largest economic market, at least until recently, accords the U.S. power in negotiations that most other nations do not have. The image of Detroit CEOs accompanying then-President George H. Bush on a diplomatic mission to Japan in January 1991, instead to pursue auto complaints, was unusual for diplomacy, and was called "a silly dog and pony show, grandstanding for American voters in an election year" (Wolfe, 1992). This dog and pony show followed by an 80 billion dollar bailout for the Detroit automakers under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama (Amadeo, 2015; Shepardson, 2014) surely suggests government protection. However, the idea that protective barriers could exist for the Detroit automakers seems hardly ever considered by mainstream journalists over the now decades-long dispute between the U.S. and Japan. The mainstream media view is as if the U.S. is completely open for imported vehicles. Any complaint or grievance against Japan then can become enlarged and free from scrutiny because "our side" is assumed to be a free-trader, devoid of trade barriers. Typically, the U.S. journalist reports a complaint about a Japanese non-tariff barrier without further specification about the barrier (e.g., Bases, 2015). Critical listening seems lacking by which journalists would seek clarification from government officials or businesspeople about their use of "market barrier" or it being "closed." When specified, such as retooling needed for imported cars into Japan, the journalist tends to neglect to mention that retooling is also required for imported autos into the U.S. market (e.g., Hotakainen, 2015). Few are the reports that mention that Detroit, for years and years, refused to offer cars with left-hand drive to match the Japanese custom. A decidedly one-sided approach seems taken by most mainstream journalists. Surely neither side is innocent but hardly can a dispute be understood, let alone reconciled, if approached unfairly. On the whole, mainstream media has lacked the balance, not to mention investigative journalism, necessary for the complexity of international trade disputes.

2. Fingleton's Rhetoric

Fingleton's (2014a) view appears one-sided by his unconscionable use of his trade statistic. What could account for this? Perhaps his taking up Detroit's cause is an attempt to counter the view by a rival media, *Wall Street Journal*, for claiming:, "Japanese markets are 'among the world's most open'" Fingleton (2013). The rival media competition could have spurred him to view a glass ceiling for foreign car importers in Japan. Whatever the reason, he seems convinced that the trade dispute is entirely Japan's, fault, and so he relied solely on a Detroit political lobbyist from whom he borrows a single trade statistic to buttress his claim. But not before equating the alleged Japanese wrongful trading practice with Japanese war crimes during the last great war (see Table 1). Taking advantage of the news about international frictions related to the "comfort women" during the war and other wartime issues with Japan, Fingleton poses to the reader that Japan hasan't even deeper secret, that being its alleged closed market for imported automobiles. And how is it even a secret – a trade issue that has caused nations to be at loggerheads for the past thirty years? He claims that Japan's national government

Table 1. Equating War Crimes with Wrongful Trading Practice

Fingleton claims that the Japanese government controls what foreign correspondents write about to the extent of allowing them to report about Japanese World War II crimes while managing to keep "secret" Japan's alleged rigged system of car trade, implying that Japanese authorities feel more guilt about Japan's purported unfair trading practice than its World War II war crimes:.
[title] What's Japan's Guiltiest Secret?: (Hint) It's Not The Comfort Women [Start of article] For anyone who follows East Asia, here's a question: what is Japan's guiltiest secret? The "comfort women" scandal? The Nanking massacre? Official homage to war criminals at the Yasukuni shrine? No, no, and no. If by a guilty secret we mean something that Japan *really, really* wants to sweep under the rug, none of the above comes even close. ...Japan does have secrets and big ones – secrets it strives with unique ingenuity and success to keep out of the Western media. Top of the list is something ... hidden in plain sight: the Japanese auto market. ...[T]he Japanese auto market remains one of the world's most closed. [Photo of a war memorial shrine with this caption:] The Yasukuni Shrine: always in the news but at least no one is talking about the car market. The most important single fact about the Japanese auto market is that for decades the share of all foreign brands combined has been kept to just 4 percent. ...Now let's consider the comfort women scandal and other widely publicized manifestations of Japan's "failure to come to terms with its past." ...While the foreign press busies itself with the often completely contrived issues of the war-time past, it has less time and energy to delve into issues on which the Tokyo authorities really want to maintain radio silence. ...On issues that the [Japanese] authorities really want to sweep under the rug, the *Japan Times* and Kyodo cooperate fully. Besides the auto market issue, another key issue that has traditionally been censored in Tokyo is Japan's stonewalling on compensation to war victims. In sharp contrast to Germany, Japan has paid virtually nothing to victims of its war crimes – a fact that for decades was kept almost completely sub-rosa in the Western press. (Things have been liberalized somewhat in the last few years, now that most of the victims are dead.) [End of article]

influences foreign correspondents, as well as foreign residents there, to exercise self-censorship about this supposed dirtiest of Japanese secrets:

> *The Japanese authorities keep the foreign press on a remarkably tight leash and, with virtually no exceptions, foreign correspondents are induced to censor themselves. As a practical matter, Tokyo wields a panoply of carrots and sticks in controlling what Japan-based foreigners say to the outside world and most long-term foreign residents are overt or covert agents for Japan's public relations agenda. Foreign correspondents are no exception.* (Fingleton, 2014)

And the evidence provided? None other than telling the reader to do a google search for his four-percent-statistic. "When did you last read that in the *New York Times*?", he asks. Could it be because it is untrue? Apparently overlooked„ which explains why he then further references trade complaints against Japan made by his main and only source, the Detroit lobbyist we saw earlier. "[These complaints] received virtually no coverage in the U.S. press," he states. Could it be because a political lobbyist by definition is biased? Another point apparently missed. This is not a cub-reporter but as was noted, an accomplished journalist, one having been a bureau chief in Japan reporting on business and economics there, among his other achievements. Given his high profile and his extraordinary claims, this article by Fingleton (2014) seems apt for treating as an ultimate case for Japan bashing; a case long on rhetoric but short on details.

By implication, Fingleton's rhetoric besmirches Japan: The upshot of his claim about censorship of the press by the Japanese government is that Japan would rather hide protectionist trade practices than the scandalous war crimes of the past, an even graver mark against the Japanese. His calculus seems to show a lack of morals by the Japanese. As he states early in his article thusly,

> *If by a guilty secret we mean something that Japan really, really wants to sweep under the rug, none of the [war crimes] comes even close. Japan actually often goes out of its way to publicize these issues [about war crimes]. ...[What it really wishes secret] is hidden in plain sight: the Japanese auto market.* (Fingleton, 2014, italics, in the original)

He implies that monetary, materialistic matters have greater import to the Japanese than do humanistic values; that guilt runs deep in the hearts of Japan not from mass murders of the past but from the alleged violation of fair play in international trade. "Japan actually often goes out of its way to publicize these issues [about war crimes]," he says, so as to keep the attention of the foreign press away from greater or guiltier wrong doing. To "publicize" and "go out of the way" to do so suggests that Japan might even be proud of these war crimes. Or that they could be so guiltless about war crimes as to go out of their way to publicize them. If so, how unfeeling could such people be that they could ignore the pain of others? [See Donahue (2013) for the contrary, a relevant war-related case.] A horrible calculus it is that makes trade rules weightier than human suffering. Only the cold and heartless could weigh matters as such; a way befitting a machine-like people. This calculus dehumanizes the Japanese, setting them apart from the

rest of us; or in other words, othering them. It reduces them to an other status, on the order of economic animals, a people so materialistically inclined that all that matters is the monetary or the market share. Such a calculus could not be more antithetical to intercultural-mindedness. So we see in one fell swoop how a possibly arcane topic of trade friction can involve human perception, language, culture, and thought—in a nutshell, intercultural communication.

3. Conclusion

International trade frictions became headline news once again with the start of the Trump Administration in the U.S. Although, a fact that the U.S. had had relatively the lowest tariffs on average among major countries in the world, including Japan (Matthews, 2018), this is deceptive because it was not true for all economic sectors, notably one of the largest – the auto vehicle market. Japan's zero tariffs on imported cars best those for the U.S. (Semuels, 2017), and something else generally ignored by American mainstream media is what Schmitt (2015) describes as the "several rings of defense" of tariffs and non-tariff barriers that surround the U.S. car market, making it "one of the most protected" in the world. It would be folly, therefore, to assume that because the U.S. has long promoted free trade, that it must necessarily be the aggrieved party in trade disputes, especially those for car vehicles and high-tech products.

Because of the contentiousness of these important economic matters, news journalists can naturally succumb to ethnocentrism when reporting the news about their own or favored country. Moreover, because journalists are trained or expected to report impartially, their failure to do so can become an object lesson that many can learn by. With this rationale, this paper endeavored to demonstrate how ethnocentrism can emerge in journalistic articles. While but two articles, they appear as ultimate cases for bashing Japan as well as coming from expert journalists on Japan (bureau chiefs for their respective media there). The intention is not to make this a study of mass media as a whole, but rather of how journalists can emit ethnocentrism in their reporting, and that so complex an issue as the U.S.-Japan trade dispute requires much more investigative reporting by the mainstream media than heretofore evident. The American public seems under fantastic belief that the country's automotive market is wide open for imports when that is not the case, which hardly bodes well for intercultural understanding. (Many of the Japanese brand cars seen on American highways today were not imported but actually made in factories in the U.S.)

These two articles from prominent media appear to have irrefutable claims about Japanese protectionism in international trade—ultimate cases for Japan bashing. Rather than using facts to demonstrate how Japan practices wrongful trade, these articles use rhetorical strategies, including stereotyping, to bash Japan. The lack of intercultural sensitivity or critical awareness seems evident on the part of the two journalists. They seem to approach the U.S.-Japan trade dispute one-sidedly by giving no hint that protectionism is an element found in nearly any economic market including their own home countries. From this position nearly any complaint by a foreign businessperson will likely become more serious than it should. Such journalism fails because it lacks the balance that the reading public needs to be correctly informed. The public likely becomes under the illusion that the U.S. has a free market—absent tariffs and non-tariff barriers. Such false notions hardly bode well for intercultural relations.

These news articles also demonstrate how the discourse of trade and economics can employ cultural or ethnic stereotyping for rhetorical purposes that instill ethnocentric notions in people's minds. Besides stereotyping, we find the two articles in the present study apply othering strategies by which the "other" is dehumanized or at least set apart negatively from "self" (or ingroup):

- Hiatt (1989) implies that Japanese are so illogical that they themselves cannot understand the other; as with the idea that the native son could not understand why Japanese want to produce Western products themselves.
- Fingleton (2014a) claims that the alleged Japanese protectionism is the guiltiest of Japanese secrets, even more so than wartime crimes; which if true, suggests that Japanese favor materialistic values over humanistic ones.

See Donahue (1998, chaps. 10 & 11) for closer analysis of Hiatt's (1989) article, as well as North American telecasters in TV news broadcasts, how journalists draw from a stock of cultural metaphors that frame the Japanese using the basest of stereotypes. In these broadcasts the ABC telecasters, for example, are cheery but as soon as they find some of the Japanese telecasters too reticent for small talk, the North Americans resort to rude joking utilizing ethnic stereotypes during their international broadcasts together, such as "mysterious Japanese" and "dull Asian." I posit that such stereotyping is not part of the individual's usual cognition but becomes triggered by the stress of cultural conflict or difference. Similarly trade frictions may have led Hiatt (1989) and Fingleton (2014a) into taking a one-sided approach, for they present nothing more than unsubstantiated claims .

Similarly, the U.S. elite business executives in the U.S. GAO study (U.S. General Accounting Office,1993), many of whom were with billion-dollar corporations, approach Japan with the high ethnocentrism that they apparently had had, by neglecting to consider Japanese formatting for patent applications, failing to use back-translation to ensure mutual understanding, and by generally assuming that their own cultural standards could win the day. We then should not be surprised that cultural frictions occur and complaints are made about the other side. Granting that the practices of the Japanese government bureaucracy can lead to possible malpractice by the bureaucrats, the astute businessperson internationally will not give the other side extra reason to do so. But that is exactly what many U.S. executives in the GAO study did not do by not being fully prepared for approaching a foreign culture—Japan. And why GAO had to admit that in the main Japanese officials did not discriminate against foreigners (but of course it can happen as it does anywhere in the world). Through these cases of elite businesspeople and journalists, we see that even highly educated and worldly people can lack intercultural skills; or at least have yet to fully develop them. That is precisely why the field of intercultural communication emerged and continues to grow.

Lastly, a caveat: Because nearly all the individuals criticized for ethnocentrism in this paper were US Americans should not be taken as characteristically American. I for one have taught intercultural communication and sociolinguistics to various peoples from around the world, and I have not found any particular nationality to be immune from ethnocentrism. Certainly I have not found US Americans to be in any way more susceptible to ethnocentric

notions than other nationalities even after accounting for political correctness and SES (socioeconomic status) differences. I hope the cases presented are viewed as human behavioral tendencies rather than of a certain nationality. All people have some degree of ethnocentrism; that's what makes us human. By recognizing this fact, when professionals go internationally, whether they be elite executives or accomplished journalists, they would do well by affording themselves preparatory training that intercultural trainers can provide.

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