

SPRACHE JEZYK LENGUA KIELI LANGUE SPRÅK DIL 言語 LIMBĀ 언어
LINGUA ВЫБОР ЯЗЫКА 语言 GJUHA غلج TAAL ΓΛΩΣΣΑ SPRACHE JEZYK
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LANGUAGE & IDENTITY

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Language & power

How language skills change how confident you feel

Author, Picture & Layout: Sina Dippel

Does speaking a language make us feel stronger or better or even above someone else who is worse at speaking the same language? How does power through language shape our sense of identity abroad or in any intercultural situation?

Smettila! Non andare troppo vicino al ... ehm ...

When I was an au-pair in Venice, my host father, Federico, was older, male, and obviously better at Italian than me. I'd learned the language at school for some years and spoke quite well. But as soon as you encounter someone who's more fluent and more confident

speaking,
they'll

kind of automatically be leading the conversation. They'll be better at expressing their ideas and it'll feel as if the person was above you. At a higher level. With more authority. That was one of my big issues as an au-pair: authority. Not only with my host father, but also as I had to look after and educate three kids. This meant a lot of fun and love, but also telling them off, so that they didn't get too close to the ... errr ... fireplace! You see what I mean? By the time I found the right words

in the crucial moment, they'd already have touched the burning hot glass screen or munched the forbidden sweets or raced across the street without checking for cars.

Un'identità diversa

These are situations which you'd have completely under control in your home country, speaking your mother tongue, but which are much harder to cope with abroad. And that made me a different me. Not being able to counter one of Federico's silly jokes about my eating habits. Not being able to argue better than my 12-year-old host daughter, Emma, when she didn't want to do her homework or teased her little sister, Rita. Such experiences shape your identity when you're abroad. I was, for example, a slightly shier, slightly calmer me in Italy than when I'm in Germany. But don't worry! You'll get better. You'll learn the important words and strategies in order to cope with such situations. And it's not hard all the time. There are wonderful language-related moments, as well.

Non capisco niente, scusa!

The most hilarious moment was when Federico decided to improve his English. He asked me to speak to him only in English. So, I began with "Let's switch into English!" He seemed befuddled, looked at me and backed down: "Non capisco niente, scusa ... Ritorniamo all'italiano!" "I don't understand a word, sorry ... Let's go back to Italian!" What an interesting moment. Suddenly, I was above him and he even admitted it! I felt – without being rude – stronger, better, higher ... at least, for the brief moment I spoke a language I'm more confident in.

Allora, next time you talk to someone who has fewer language skills than you, remember what they feel like and be kind and helpful. And don't judge their personality too hastily!





Home is where my bed is

Life as the child of a diplomat

Author, Layout and Pictures: Hannah Langhaeuser

“Where are you from?” is a frequent question you hear while engaged in small talk. But when you’ve spent your whole life moving to different cities and countries every four years, it isn’t an easy question to answer.

My story

I grew up in many different places. My family and I moved from Munich to Canberra, then to Berlin. After three years back in Germany, we moved to Tokyo for four years and then back to Berlin again. In 2016, my parents and sister left for Rome. I came to live in Augsburg in 2017.

The big issue

One of the advantages of living your life in a ‘diplomatic bubble’ is that nobody asks a lot of questions, because the people you’re surrounded by have a similar background. Here in Augsburg, I wasn’t surrounded by people like me. For the first time in my life. It was here that I realized I couldn’t speak of my youth without triggering endless conversations. In my first semester, I told other students that I moved here from Berlin. They couldn’t believe it: “Don’t you go home every weekend?” was a common inquiry. Telling them that I don’t go home every weekend because my parents live in Rome didn’t have the effect I’d hoped for.

The way to do it

The quickest way to answer the question “Where are you from?” is for me to tell people I’m from Berlin. The worst way to answer is to plainly say “Nowhere, really”.

But the true answer should only be revealed when I feel like having a longer conversation.

So how do I identify?

After being confronted with this question and the reactions to my answer, I wonder if you need a hometown to form your identity. I believe identity is formed by many different factors, for example ancestors, job, family and friends, or hometown. I’ve never identified with a place, but always saw my family and friends as people who ground me and made me feel a part of something. Especially when I was growing up, I was surrounded by families living by the same clock we did, so I never really felt out of place. I also like to think that my home is where my bed is, meaning I can quickly feel at home after I change cities.

But I gained so much

People often ask me if it was hard growing up the way my siblings and I did. I usually tell them that I wouldn’t know, because I’m used to it. Not too long ago someone asked me if I felt happy to have been able to have this experience. And I’ve been thinking about it since. I wouldn’t be the person I am today without the experience of living abroad and I’m glad about having had the opportunity of discovering different cultures and countries, learning new languages and picking up bits and pieces of the country’s traditions. And I certainly am glad that I can find a home in every place I move to and am not tied to one ‘hometown’.

Le parole sono bombe

Intervista con il poeta Tommaso Meozzi 



Spesso quando si pensa alla poesia si pensa a Dante, Shakespeare, Baudelaire o Goethe, a qualcosa di vecchio, di antico, stampato ormai da secoli su un'antologia liceale e dimenticato lì, che ritorna utile solo quando si ha bisogno di una didascalia accattivante da

allegare ad un post su Instagram. Non sempre, ma spesso questo è quello che avviene, la poesia sembra ormai fuori moda, dimenticata, ma è davvero così? Anche io avevo questa sensazione, ma fortunatamente ho avuto il piacere di constatare che non è assolutamente così, anzi, la poesia è viva e vegeta e possiamo trovarla ovunque, anche dove meno ce lo aspettiamo.

Ebbene sì, chi lo avrebbe mai detto che avrei avuto il piacere e l'onore di intervistare un poeta italiano in carne ed ossa, in Germania oltretutto, e invece è successo e di certo non è stato banale o noioso come per alcuni potrebbe essere leggere un'antologia, anzi.

Questo poeta è Tommaso Meozzi, un professore, un poeta appunto, innamorato a tal punto della poesia da fare di essa il suo ossigeno, fondamentale per poter sopravvivere e la sua arma per combattere le minacce innumerevoli, il "senza nome" che accompagnano lui e tutti i noi, tutti i giorni.

Dopo un dottorato all'università di Bonn e due anni di esperienza come docente di lingua e cultura italiana, Tommaso è arrivato ad Augsburg, un po' per caso e un po' per fortuna, per continuare la sua carriera nell'ambito dell'insegnamento, del quale ama particolarmente

l'interattività e l'energia che gli viene trasmessa dai suoi studenti. Oltre che insegnare Tommaso ama viaggiare, la musica, soprattutto l'imprevedibilità ritmica del progressive metal e scrivere, scrivere e scrivere, *ça va sans dire*.

Le sue poesie sono racchiuse in numerose raccolte pubblicate nel corso degli anni come *La superficie del giorno*, pubblicata nel 2010 (Le Càriti, *Inquieta Alleanza*, pubblicata nel 2017 (Transeuropa, e *Dove sei*, pubblicata nel 2019 sulla rivista "Atelier" e sono un perfetto connubio di attualità, ironia e sentimenti. Scritti in italiano, la lingua dei sentimenti, i suoi versi riescono a veicolare messaggi molto intensi, in grado di portare i suoi lettori a riflettere su numerosi aspetti della loro vita quotidiana, come la società nella quale vivono, la gratuità dell'esistenza, l'individualismo, la crisi dei valori e il business dei sentimenti, e sono delle vere e proprie bombe di significato. Ad arricchire il tutto, delle metafore profonde e originali che contribuiscono a svecchiare il genere poetico, canonicamente considerato *altmodisch*, come direbbero in Germania, e permettono ad un pubblico molto vasto, non di soli amanti ed esperti, ma anche di giovani lettori, di potersi avvicinare al mondo della poesia senza dover consultare un'antologia e magari di iniziare ad apprezzarlo e amarlo, riflettendo, ponendosi dei quesiti e provando a cercare le risposte nella propria vita.

Insomma, se "le parole sono bombe" Tommaso è un bombarolo esperto, capace di detonare profonde riflessioni e forti sentimenti nei cuori dei suoi lettori. Le sue bombe non sono letali, al contrario, fanno esplodere emozioni, illuminano la mente e fanno vivere la lingua e sopravvivere la poesia.

Il firmato dell'intervista completa sarà pubblicato a breve sul sito interent: www.emag-augsburg.de.

You don't look German!

Where are you really from?



#vonhier-debate sample tweet from twitter-user, Said Haider

- und woher kommen Sie??
- eh, ich bin Deutscher.
- ich meine wo Sie geboren sind?
- in Hamburg.
- und Ihre Eltern!?
- die sind auch deutsch, leben seit +40 Jahren in Hamburg.
- und wo sind sie geboren?
- in Kabul.
- verstehe, dann sind Sie Afghane!
- : / #vonhier

What is small talk?

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines small talk as a 'polite conversation about ordinary or unimportant subjects, especially at social occasions'.

Ahhh... small talk is great. You meet someone and after a few minutes of small talk, you can often tell whether you'll like the other person or not. This is why people normally tend to avoid big topics like religion, politics... or origin. We're not at, let's say, a party in order to compare our ideologies! We go to parties because we want to dance, have fun and meet new people. And small talk is one way of getting to know these people. The big topics might come later.

The situation

Imagine going to a party in your hometown and every second stranger you meet asks you where you're from. Imagine this to happen not only sometimes, but quite frequently. You reply that you're from Germany and you're asked right away if your parents are from Germany as well. All this, just because your skin isn't white. Asking total strangers about their family history because of their appearance isn't small talk. It implies exclusion. A few months ago, thousands of television viewers witnessed something similar. A young girl with an Asian appearance went to a talent show and Dieter Bohlen, a member off the jury, asked her where she was from. Not satisfied by the child's answer (Herne – a city

near Dortmund), Bohlen asked the confused child again and again about her 'real' origin. This incident caused a debate on social media platforms and in print media as to whether those questions are unproblematic or simply impolite.

The debate

Since then, many German twitter-users have shared how they experience similar situations on a daily basis. Soon, articles were published and journalists joined the debate. Some even spoke of racism, others of an artificial outrage. The German science YouTuber, Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim, emphasised that we can never know how somebody feels being asked questions about their origin again and again. One person may feel slightly annoyed, while others already consider themselves insulted. Many see it as a constant reminder of their not being considered as German as others, even though they were born and raised in this country. It's funny, though, that the whole #vonhier-debate is one thing above all: German. In this country, it's often considered impolite to ask or share private information with a stranger in public, while many Americans may proudly discuss their ancestry for hours. It's clear that people who are socialised in Germany don't want to accept that this social convention often doesn't come into effect for them, just because they have a certain skin colour or surname. It's also clear that somebody doesn't want to talk about himself all the time. And doesn't having these feelings prove them to be as German as someone could be?

The solution?

So what should we do now? In my opinion, the solution is quite easy: save the big topics like religion, politics and origin for later. Just enjoy having a nice conversation with a new person. There's enough time to get to know each other. There's enough time to discuss ancestry or the meaning of life. And if you so dearly want to know about the other person's origin, I'm sure you'll find a polite way to bring up the topic.

Playwright, conscience, ... fish?

Why is English spelling so tough (speak: tuff)?

Linguists share a joke about the English language, and it goes like this: „fish = ghoti“. If you aren't rofl'ing after the first read, that's forgivable. Just pronounce the bold letters in the following words: enough, women, nation. See? F-i-sh is indeed gh-o-ti. And the world's main language for trade, entertainment and politics offers more opportunities for jokes – inconsistent word roots, a ridiculously large vocabulary, and the simple fact that English spelling is a nightmare.

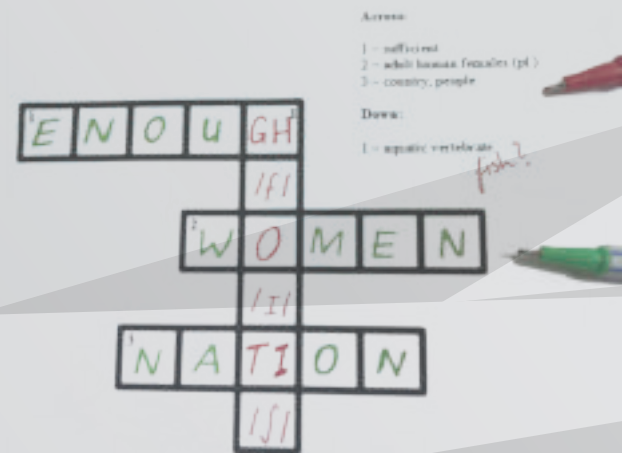
But it isn't just English that gives people trouble. What do Korean and Modern Greek have in common? They're both languages, duh. They're also minor languages that few people bother to learn – overly enthusiastic K-Pop fans come to my mind. And yet, these languages share a trait that English could gladly adapt: their spelling makes sense, at least most of the time. Feeling envious? It hasn't always been like this. Reading and writing seem like perfectly normal activities today, but analphabetism was – and still is – a huge problem in many societies. And even when language teaching is available to many people, they don't always get to learn the language actually spoken in their territory.

Orthography is the Seoul of a language.

Korean, for instance, has been around for almost two millennia, but Koreans had to wait until 1446 before they got their own writing system, Hangeul. Before, Korean had been written exclusively in Chinese characters exclusively, which was kind of pointless, considering Korean and Chinese are two completely unrelated languages. If you wanted to write Korean, you had to learn Chinese first.

Now, Using a Chinese character for a Korean word sounds easy enough at first glance; we could all agree to write the English word „fish“ as „X“ from now on, couldn't we? It only gets problematic when we try to use it in a grammatically correct sentence. Do we use an article, can we put an apostrophe-s after the character,

how do we form the plural? You can probably imagine the Koreans experienced similar problems. The Korean king Sejong finally developed a writing system (or had it developed) that matched his language – well enough, in fact, for it to still be around six centuries later. The effects were enormous and imminent: suddenly, people didn't have to learn an extra (foreign) language just so they could use their own. Through Hangeul, Korean writing became more efficient, more exact and more democratic



Become a super gyro in spelling!

But it's not just an Asian phenomenon. The official language of Greece, along with the southern part of

Cyprus, is Greek. Sounds easy? Trust me, it isn't. You probably heard of Ancient Greek in school; maybe you've even had a chance to learn it. Ancient Greek is artsy, rich and frankly unspeakable. Still, it was the only point of reference for Greek people for a long time. The Greek had little control over what is now Greece for several centuries, since they were a part of the Ottoman Empire. Apart from that, Greek speakers were spread over Anatolia, Egypt, the Caucasus and the Balkans, so there was no way to have them all sit down around a table and discuss language policies.

When Greece as a country finally happened, the main discussion only began: Katharévousa or Dimotikí? Intellectuals and authors rooted for Katharévousa, i.e. Ancient Greek with only a few adaptations to make it usable in modern times. These people saw themselves in line with the Greek Golden Age and thought a bit of glory, culture and unnecessary inflection probably couldn't hurt. However, when Katharévousa was established as a standard, it made most of the population illiterate. That was because workers, housewives and partisans hadn't read Homer and had no idea how to pronounce a language that had been dead for centuries.

It took the Greek government a pretty long time to allow for Dimotikí to be used in schools, newspapers and the administration. Dimotikí, while it was less artsy and had more Turkish loanwords than most people liked, was a naturally developed standard that reflected how people actually spoke. The government finally decided to use a koiní, a mixture of both varieties, as the official orthography and abandoned the most unrealistic features of Katharévousa. Traces of both varieties remain in Modern Greek – a language that

is stably rooted in the past, yet leaning towards the future. The Greek, unlike the Koreans, didn't have to get rid of foreign influence, but of their own over-the-top nostalgia to create a realistic writing system.

Plenti of ghoti in the sea...

Now, let's have another look at the English language. Like Katharévousa, English uses a spelling that represents a centuries-old pronunciation and can be very misleading today. English orthography has a million different rules (or none at all, depending on your point of view), and there's a ton of exceptions. That's because older varieties of English, as well as Latin and French, have shaped English spelling more than Modern English has. As a result, read, tear and Leah all use different pronunciations of the letters <ea>, while rhyme, time, benign share the same sound although they're written differently.

Let's be realistic – when even the UK and the US can't agree on a common orthography, there's no way we could get over fifty countries and territories to get behind a more radical change – like Anglic, a modified English orthography suggested by Swedish linguist Robert Eugen Zachrisson in the early 20th century. You see, the problem has been around for quite some time, and still it doesn't seem like English orthography will change the tiniest bit. Let's not waste our time – we'll just have to continue to write „know“ instead of „no“, „queue“ instead of „kyu“ and „fish“ instead of „ghoti“. That's just life.

P.S.: Did you like this article? A second part is being published on our website while you're reading these lines. Quick! What are you waiting for?



Naked

What it's like when you don't understand a thing

Author & Picture: Noemi Hehl | Layout: Sina Dippel

During my time in Vietnam – a period of 10 weeks to be precise – I often felt naked. Not because I wasn't wearing any clothes. I was fully dressed most of the time, although with the heat it actually would have been nice to have less fabric on my skin. The reason I felt like this is a different one and it has to do with, surprise, surprise: language!

Parlez-vous vietnamien?

I currently speak four languages, though if I'm honest with you, that might be a bit exaggerated. I'm not sure if you could count my sparse knowledge of French as "speaking a language". Even so, I've been very well able to communicate in many countries I have travelled to, so far. However, this changed when I flew to Vietnam for my internship in Hanoi, because sadly, Vietnamese isn't one of the languages I speak.

I didn't manage to learn much Vietnamese while I was there either. I tried desperately to master the correct pronunciation for the word "German" in Vietnamese but failed miserably. However, I wasn't the only one struggling with the language. I met several Europeans who had been living in Vietnam for years and still didn't speak Vietnamese! Something that was incredibly hard for me to understand, because without at least a bit of access to a country's language, you end up being as helpless as a baby. Naked and speechless. I experienced that first hand.

The strip

Before I left Hanoi to head back home, one of my colleagues took me to the hospital to get one of the good massages they do there. It turned out to be the best

massage ever, but it was also the most awkward moment in my life. It started with the fact that I was separated from my colleague who had been translating for me, because men and women were treated in different rooms. I was led into the women's area, where an older lady tugged my clothes, signalling that I should get undressed.

She was merciless! I even had to take off my underwear! I was then shoved into a shower and later asked to put on nothing else but panties made out of super thin, almost see-through fabric. Certainly, nothing that made me feel clothed. During my massage, my masseur had to pull at my body parts as if I were a puppet, every time she wanted me to move because I didn't understand what she was saying. Everyone around us was already smirking, trying to suppress their laughter. It must have been a very strange sight!

Naked to the core

I can tell you, I've never felt more naked in my life. Not only was I literally naked, but I was also feeling very helpless. Because I was the only European person, I was the centre of attention. Everyone wanted to get a glance at my strange European body. And I couldn't say a word! Couldn't explain to them why I was there. Couldn't start a conversation to distract myself from the embarrassing situation. Couldn't understand what they were saying about me.

Obviously, that was an extreme situation, but for me it made it very clear how essential language is to protect ourselves. Without being able to communicate, we feel helpless. Language is like a shield. We can use it to protect ourselves. And we can also use it to attack.

Who I am, who I'm not, who I want to be

Author & Pictures: Leyla Bayraktar | Layout: Lucia Pröll

Identity issues?

Are you European? I would certainly label myself as a European. Which is way easier than the following question: are you German? There was a time I would have answered: Yes! But I'm not so sure about that anymore. If I'm German, why does everyone, as soon as they hear my name, ask where I'm from? It's weird. I was raised in Germany by a German mom, and Turkish dad. So I guess I'm half German and half Turkish. But how can I consider myself half Turkish if I can't speak Turkish fluently, or know barely anything about Turkish customs?

A little history lesson!

I grew up in a small town called Memmingen. We have about 44,000 inhabitants. In the middle ages our city was one of the most important trading posts in southern Germany. The salt road and the Iller river ensured that a lot of people settled there. One of the tributaries of the Iller is called the Memminger Ach. This stream is about 36 km long and was originally used for the removal of slaughterhouse offal. As you can imagine, that was a really filthy issue. To clean the Ach, different craftsmen guilds were allowed to remove and eat the fish. So they could empty the stream and clean it. And that, my friends, was the birth of the famous Fischertag!

Schmotz, Schmotz, Dreck auf Dreck,...

...*Schellakönig, wüaschte Sau.* (traditional Fischertag song)
The Fischertag is a traditional festival in Memmingen, where men (yes, only men) jump into the Ach and catch fish. 30,000 to 40,000 people visit the Fischertag to watch the spectacle. The fishers either have to be born in Memmingen or must have been living in Memmingen for more than ten years – they also need to be member of the Fischertagsverein. When the fishing is over, everyone who caught a big fish takes it to the scaling point, and finally the Fischerkönig (the one with the heaviest fish) is announced in a big parade. Afterwards, the water is drained, so the riverbed can be cleaned and water is released again, as well as new young fish.

Save the date: 07-20-2019 8:00 a.m. There's a big party the evening before, so it's really worth visiting.

Travel in time!

But we can offer more. As Memmingen was an important trading base, a lot of people stayed there to rest. Just like General Wallenstein, who stayed there a few years during the Thirty Years' War to find some rest. Later, The cityr started to appreciate his residence with the Wallensteinfestspiele that was included the big Fischertag (every four years). Wallenstein is the biggest medieval festival in Europe with more than 4500 local performers. The participants live in camps for a week. They wear clothes from the sixteenth century, eat simple food they make on their own and they aren't allowed to have their mobile phone for the entire time. As a visitor, you can walk around, and watch staged fights and knight tournaments. I can't wait for next year when it takes place again.

Save the date: 07-19-2019 until 26-07-2019



I'm a Memminger!

When I'm surrounded by all the other Memmingers and hear them talk in our own dialect, it just feels like home. It seems like it doesn't matter what country you're from, what matters is you're from Memmingen. And that's what I am and all I want to be: a Memminger.



Torn between two cultures

Author: Tobias Lorenz | Pictures: Jon Moore | Layout: Caroline Schmidt

"It's a very difficult era in which to be a person, just a real, actual person, instead of a collection of personality traits selected from an endless Automat of characters." A quote taken from the novel "Gone Girl" that so accurately describes our modern society. The people around you will quickly label you as one of the few characters everyone knows from pop culture. So you know how to play that person at least and fit right in to society... but what if you and your ascribed character don't quite match up?

Let's start at the top.

Stereotypes and – on a broader scale - labels go hand in hand. Once you've been labelled something, there are corresponding stereotypes to go with it. And if you think about it, you'll probably come to the conclusion that stereotypes have a rather negative connotation. That's where our good old friend 'psychology' says hi and tells us that stereotypes don't have to be bad per se. Some sociologists would define them more as tools to make our life easier or help us not get overwhelmed on a daily basis; filtering out unnecessary information and sorting the bits you get about a person straight into the right box. This is a sure-fire way to pigeonhole people into something they might not even remotely resemble just because of your first impression. A stereotype is nothing more than a recurring pattern you see in people, specifically within the same subcultures – most notably the once influenced by pop culture.

And our growing society loves to create more and more subcultures for everything. Platforms like Instagram use the as their main selling point, only they call them hashtags. A phrase that has moved out of the digital world into our real and analogue world. #SoModern pairs.

Let's have a look at something more practical, shall we?

A great example of the abovementioned theory (let's call it, for ease's sake) is high school and it's oh-so-infamous cliques. You'll have the sport jocks, the nerds, the cool guys and gals, the teacher's pets and so on. I readily bet that as soon as you read this list, you had a really clear image of each group and some very distinct associations to go with them. At school and as a teenager you try to find yourself and who you want to be. I did, too, of course. At times, I was the teacher's pet, at others a nerd; I've never truly felt like I belong to any one of these groups. Back then, I was scared to embrace my nerdiness, as some of my friends were bullied simply because of their reputation. But I was spared this fate simply because I could help our cool guys with their maths homework. Sound oddly familiar, doesn't it? At some point, you just grow sick of it and try to peer over the horizon to find something new. No really, right there across the schoolyard they were: mysterious dark figures, some of them shrouded in black and others in jeans vests. They called themselves Goths and Metalheads.

Fast forward a few years

It would take me a few years to truly find my place in this sub-culture. And just like you, when you read this, I had my own prejudices towards them. I grew up in a small town on the countryside, where punks represented everything wrong with society. Lazy people just trying to screw the system. Goths can't be up to any good – they're probably planning their next dark mass in the woods. Metalheads, who all have to be some sort of Nazi. Over the years I came across all of these ideas. I can't count the times I've been called a Nazi on one hand anymore. To some degree, I even understand where this is coming from. A very common greeting within the Metal scene can look to outsiders like a Hitlergruß. To people that have no knowledge about the famous "Metal Fork", such greeting will not increase their empathy and open mindedness towards this group of people. And I don't blame them. In countries like Sweden, where the Goth and Metal scene isn't just a sub-culture but an integral part of mainstream, you'll be facing a completely different mentality. Not only does (what feels like) half the country have the same mind-set, but the stereotype 'Metalhead' has no negative connotations. It's the same phenomenon as our regular TV show stereotypes from the introduction. When you're constantly confronted with it, you'll automatically know the ins and outs and don't have to make false assumptions.

Stereotypes can't be avoided in an ever-growing society. It helps sort one's first impressions, which

can easily be influenced by whatever subculture you feel part of. The rock scene is not alone in this, but so is the Hip-hop scene as well. Generally, all sorts of artists, hipsters or even the LGBTQ scene. Naturally, once you start to embody one of these or any other lifestyles, people around you will glance at you and judge you as one of the many of your scene... including all the stereotypes associated with them. It only becomes a problem once you encounter so much negativity because of your way of living and you feel like an outsider. The moment when you feel cast out.

Home is where your family is? Heart is?

So, at some point during this term, the questions "Where is your home?" and "Where do you feel home" came up. To me, the answer to these questions would be completely different, though. I grew up in Germany, have my home here, my family and all the things that matter to what I would assume most people define as their home. Yet, I've never quite felt like it's the place I want to be for my entire life. I only truly 'felt' home in 2015/16. The time when I lived and studied in several parts of Sweden. This was the country where I could be exactly the person I wanted to be, and shaped my way of life in many different ways. Too many to list them all here, but the point I'm trying to make is that I felt accepted there. Not just like another weirdo trying to rebel against a Catholic village in the heart of Bavaria. Ironically, this is just another sweeping overgeneralization of an entire country and almost a stereotype in itself. I guess you just can't escape them no matter how hard you try.