

# Towards the Ecology of Human Communication



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Edited by

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and Anna Drogoz

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## PREFACE

With this volume we intend to take the reader on a journey across several currently active areas of linguistic research. This intellectual tour starts at such mainstream, well-established linguistic fields as sociolinguistics, discourse studies, cognitive grammar, historical linguistics and cultural studies (in Parts One, Two and Three), and ends with the newly-born (or rather incarnated into a more expanded existence), vast and multidisciplinary ground of the ecology of language and communication (Part Four of the present volume). This collection of philosophical and methodological standpoints naturally falls into two meta-categories: linguistics done within the Newtonian paradigm and linguistics attempted within the post-Newtonian paradigm. In other words, this volume highlights a shift which is happening on the axis built by the colourful eclectics of the essays in the first three parts, and the niche post-Newtonian proposals comprising Part Four.

Both the title of the volume and the table of contents reflect a particular transformative tendency within present-day language and communication studies which we have noticed and would like to bring to the reader's attention. A new paradigm emerges out of a variety of linguistic proposals and methodologies: "ecological" linguistics.

In order to briefly, yet informatively, introduce the idea of a paradigmatic shift in linguistics that we account for in this volume, it is essential, first, to understand the profound influence of "the paradigm choice" on a scholar's methodology. Second, it is necessary to discern between two plateaus of science: the one built upon the Newtonian model of reality and the one built upon the models proposed in the last hundred years. The post-Newtonian world model was delineated by physics, and soon after was continued by the interdisciplinary advent of the "new sciences". As Marta Bogusławska-Tafelska reports in her chapter (Part Four), a paradigm can be clearly defined as a coherent world view, "a patterned set of assumptions concerning reality (ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology), and particular ways of knowing that reality (methodology)". Paradigms, thus, shape not only research methodologies, but also, at the most fundamental level, they shape people's modes of reasoning, ways of comprehending life, and/or behavioural decisions

(inside and outside the scientific domain). Paradigms thus constitute game boards on which we play out our lives.

In science, when we talk about two paradigms as two plateaus for scholarly efforts, we have to be aware of the impossibility of starting any dialogue between the two groups of scholarly voices. The shortest possible specification of the Newtonian model of reality is that it is founded on the preconceptions of an atomistic structure within all expressions of life, on the determinism of all life phenomena and on materialism at all levels of life, which are then arranged and pulled together by Newton's gravitational force. The methodology of science done within this paradigm contains rigidity and structure, and exhibits traceable features of boundaries/frames in all scientific models. The post-Newtonian model of reality, together with field theories of life, presuppose the holism/unity of all life processes, indeterminism and an energy-based nature of the world, with matter being some form of condensed, slowed down, or "frozen" energy. Methodologically, this encourages process-orientation in research in order to study the constant pulsation of life phenomena. To give examples, Harald Walach (2000) writes about a non-deterministic, open, triadic semiotic connection between object, sign and meaning, in which meaning is generated in a given relation, not being pre-determined by linear cause-effect bonds. Robert F. Port points to the open character of a unit of language, naturally going beyond structuralist, *Saussurean* levels of the language system such as phonology or grammar (2010). In addition, in the post-Newtonian world model, entanglement is identified as the basic ontology of the universe, with non-local life processes crossing "the Newtonian world model's limit of the speed of light" (cf. L. R. Milgrom, 2005; H. Walach, 2005).

Dialogue is not possible if the two groups of communicators-to-be are on two different gameboards, so to speak; however, complementary co-existence is achievable. In a sense, the Newtonian model of the world, with its set of rules and philosophy, constitutes an outer layer within the multilayer post-Newtonian model of the world. This will be a complementary option so long as there are players willing to play on this particular game board.

What is vital to notice is that there is no tension or competition among linguists about the primacy of this or that paradigm or method; even fundamental opposites have found their place in the mosaic of present-day communicational studies, which seems the best evidence of the deeper meaning of Bohr's principle of complementarity. The present volume has been constructed with such a unification of intent on the part of the editors and the authors of the chapters. Readers will find in this monograph many



approaches to human language and communication: analyses of processes and states, insight into inner pulsation and surface realisations of communicative choices, convention vs. creation, locality and non-local relations, and other complementarities which emerge in linguistics today. All of this variety moves towards the creation of a new pathway—as of yet seen only at a distance—a new linguistics which, as we predict, may develop dynamically in the years to come.

The present volume falls naturally into four parts. Part I, the most heterogeneous of the volume, collects studies of discourse in its diversity, including past and present discourses.

**Izabela Dixon** investigates the US and THEM schema, taking an interdisciplinary approach that combines Cognitive Linguistics, Axiology and Ethnolinguistics. She argues that the US and THEM schema has evolved from tribal stereotypes and has a cognitive structure, the foundation of which is FEAR. She also discusses mechanisms of the perception of “self” and “other” within the frame of basic values. On the basis of language samples drawn from on-line narratives of mostly recent events illustrating different ways of viewing “otherness”, the author demonstrates that there is a strong manipulative element which influences the way socio-political attitudes are formed. Because social and cultural distance is schematic and deeply-entrenched in the consciousness of many, it is argued that the divisive narratives which dominate contemporary discourse are a threat to social cohesion, harmony and even world peace.

Anthropocentric metaphors in the language of science, specifically in the theory of evolution, constitute the focus of the chapter by **Anna Drogosz**. Her analysis, grounded in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, covers linguistic data from Darwin’s book *On the Origin of Species*, as well as contemporary evolutionary texts. This gives rise to the observation that anthropocentrism can take the form of explicit anthropomorphism (personification and projections from the social domain) or of theory-constitutive metaphors grounded in the human physical experience. This study reasserts that metaphorical language is indispensable in the language of science.

**Valentyna Ushchyna** investigates the link between language and identity in the theoretical framework of social constructionist approaches to discourse analysis. The study provides an understanding of the ways that expert identities are constructed in discourse. Identity is treated as the synergetic combination of stances taken by the speaker (writer) during his/her discursive activities. The main focus is on the role of epistemic stance taking in expert identity construction in risk discourse situations.

**Robert Lee** conducts a detailed comparison of intratextual variation in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle manuscripts, with the objective being to shed light on language change. The author argues that the F manuscript provides an opportunity to observe how a 12<sup>th</sup> century Canterbury scribe deals with source material from 10<sup>th</sup> century Winchester. This study shows in detail how a single lexical item from the Chronicle manuscripts, when tabulated for its various written forms, may indicate relationships between the various texts that would otherwise be less easily detected. The author observes that there is strong evidence, for example, that the F scribe had some affinity with the scribes of manuscripts B and C, either in spelling convention or in dialect.

While the previous essay explores past discourse, the study by **Czesław Kiński** and **Jacek Łagun** analyses a most contemporary text. Their analysis, embedded in the theoretical framework of impoliteness studies, investigates the phenomenon of banter realised in a song “All in the family” by an American nu-metal group. The objective of the study is to address the question of whether banter, a means of creating in-group identity, and thus a strategy of positive politeness, can be utilised for expressing both mock-positive and mock-negative politeness, or only one of these.

Working within the field of semantics, cognitive poetics and multimodal stylistics, **Olga Vorobyova** explores changes within the current linguistic episteme that have resulted in the emergence of a new, jigsaw paradigm pattern which serves as a manifestation of postcognitive eclecticism with an emphasis on multidisciplinary and the generalisation of research perspectives. Highlighting the phenomenon of tension as one such universal perspective, the author addresses the issue of sense- and nonsense-generation in terms of a “hypotension :: tension :: hypertension” scale as a mechanism for generating sense and nonsense in contemporary English fiction and multimodal discourse. In conclusion, the author argues that while sense is a product of semantic and/or structural tension release, nonsense might be provoked by either an excess or shortage of textual or discursive tension.

The second part of the book contains two essays on syntax analysis. In “Syntax and the compositional theory of meaning”, **Wojciech Rostworowski** discusses the compositional account of natural language designed in a formal truth-theory framework and the syntactic analysis required by such an account. In particular, the author observes that an adequate theory of meaning requires a *description*—and not only an *enumeration*—of elementary syntactic categories. Furthermore, such a theory is obliged to make some existential commitments with respect to

the syntactic features it describes. The study by **Iwona Góralczyk** and **Joanna Łozińska** attempts to contrast two strategies for processing apparently similar structures in which part of the message is missing. In one utterance, the missing information is supplied in full appreciation of the social, cultural and situational context. In the other, the reconstruction occurs automatically, tied solely to linguistic principles.

Part III presents the reader with the concept of rheology in language and linguistics. In the opening essay, **Stanisław Puppel** proposes a new model of natural language, highlighting its link with technology. The author introduces the notion of a linguistic opus and observes that technological or linguistic opuses, stored in linguistic space, may be either forgotten, go into a dormant stage or be continuously retrieved. A natural language which has reached a phase of development supported by technology has much better prospects for sustainability and should, therefore, provide assistance to the languages which have not yet reached that stage. “Opusology” then, as the author concludes, could be the name of a new discipline which would be concerned with the fate of both technological and technology-supported linguistic opuses in the open public space.

In her essay, **Malgorzata Haladewicz-Grzelak** assesses some achievements of the Neogrammarian School from the point of view of ecological linguistics, in particular, in relation to the work by Stanisław Puppel, the concept of the rheology of language and the *Opus pit* (the repository of the artefacts). The author highlights the semiotic aspects of phonology and also interprets linguistic changes and changes of paradigms as examples of the sustainability of ideas and of balanced development.

The issue of the maintenance of linguistic sustainability in the context of teaching English in Polish schools is discussed by **Janina Wiertelwska** and **Zenon Grabarczyk**. They analyse selected communication models with special reference to Puppel's DRAAM (2004) ecological model of communication. Subsequently, a new paradigm of English language teaching in the triad–native language, globalising language and any other foreign language—is viewed from the ecolinguistic perspective. On the basis of the results of a survey carried out on 163 English teachers from Polish schools, the authors draw the conclusion that English teachers in Polish schools possess better cultural-linguistic-ethnic awareness than they did twenty years ago and most of them represent the opinion that English, as a globalising language, should be taught in the accompaniment of the native language and any other foreign language.

This part of the book ends with the contribution from **Marek Kuźniak**. The author offers a tentative way out of the body/mind dilemma that has

marked fundamental divisions in philosophy and linguistics. The solution proposed is a naturalist program based in cognitive linguistics, the focus of which is the examination of the physics of the external environment through metaphoric modelling. This leads to conciliatory effects where mental (rationalist) and materialist (empiricist) contributions are seen in perfect conjunction rather than opposition.

Part IV presents a general view on the new linguistics, with the much telling “eco” prefix in the terms “ecolinguistics” or “the ecology of language and communication”.

In her essay, **Marta Boguslawska-Tafelska** concisely lays out the essentials of the ecolinguistic paradigm in contemporary studies in language and communication. This constitutes a starting point for an attempt to delineate a dynamic, multimodality model of the human communication process. As a philosophical and methodological platform, ecolinguistics is specified here as a linguistic paradigm complementary to the mainstream linguistic paradigms of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, cognitive linguistics being at the forefront of these. While mainstream linguistic theories have been constructed within the Newtonian model of the world, ecolinguistics represents a new linguistics which has emerged out of a more recent, post-Newtonian world model.

**Olena I. Morozova**, in the subsequent chapter, tackles a dynamic and holistic approach to communication phenomena, concentrating on the mechanism of lying. Coming from the perspective of the ecological approach to natural communication, lying is presented as procedural and dynamic—as an enactment, a joint construal, and not as a stale result of the communication process. Its essence is best captured by the concept of parallax stance defined as a complex act of stance-taking in a situation involving a shift in the participants’ viewing of a certain fragment of reality.

**Jarosław Wiliński** compares and contrasts two different approaches to the study of the mind, language, and culture: the objectivist perspective and the ecological approach. At the same time, this chapter aims to show that ecological thought seems to offer a more coherent conception of language and provides more sensible solutions to the problems related to the nature of our mind, language, meaning, culture, and reality.

A fresh and inspiring ecological approach within the semiotics of culture is undertaken by **Malgorzata Haladewicz-Grzelak** in her second contribution to this volume entitled “A two-stringed orchestration of vacuous interlocutors in the Licheń pilgrimage centre”. This chapter inscribes into one of the leitmotifs of the volume by discussing the rhetoric of the resources (cf. Puppel, this volume) deposited in the Licheń

Pilgrimage Centre: both visual and written. In particular, emphasis is placed on tracing the so-called *interceptor* (vacuous interlocutor, a term introduced by the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics) of the message.

The volume ends with psycholinguistic reflections on the quantum mind written by **Monika Cichmińska**. This final chapter is devoted to the analysis of metaphors used by Arnold Mindell, the founder of Process-Oriented Psychology, in his books *Quantum Mind* (2012) and *The Quantum Mind and Healing* (2004) which allow the reader to understand a wide variety of relationships between the body and the mind. Mindell uses metaphors of quantum physics to explain not only these relationships but also the way in which the mind operates.

*Marta Bogusławska-Tafelska  
Anna Drogosz  
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## **PART I.**

### **DISCOURSE STUDIES: FROM THE PRESENT TO THE PAST AND BACK**





# US AND THEM SCHEMA: THE LANGUAGE OF DIVISION

IZABELA DIXON

## Abstract

The *survival of the fittest*—the Darwinian notion remains relevant. While this natural law can as easily be applied to humans as to animals, in human terms survival usually results in conflict, aggression and the struggle between the egos of individuals or the ideology of groups, often resulting in an unleashing of emotions.

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that *fear* and one of its counterparts, *aversion*, have cemented, but also severed, many social, cultural and political bonds. Historically, *group integrity* has generally stemmed from the fear of anything emanating from the outside or threatening the tribe from within. In the interest of safety, early ties were presumably formed for the purpose of mutual protection, especially since dangers must have been numerous. However, with the development of societies, competition for power and privilege within the tribe has led to the disintegration of even the strongest bonds.

The language of polarities, such as *othering*, *negativisation*, *vilification*, *demonization*, *animalisation*, *dehumanisation* and *enemisation*, that codifies the US and THEM schema provides certain insights into the nature of various internal rifts. Other related schemata are also investigated to explain why some people attempt to counteract systemic inequalities, while others succumb to the prevalent norms. The text explores the US and THEM dualism through two relatively recent examples of internal hostilities in the UK.

**Key words:** social cohesion, US and THEM schema, metaphors

## Social cohesion and the US and THEM schema

The survival chances of isolated individuals were limited in the days when predatory animals roamed the landscape. Numbers provided people with strength and some semblance of safety: watching one's back is effective only when there is another person who can lend assistance. But predators were not the only source of peril. Successful communities which occupied land that offered them a sheltered location and an adequate food supply had to keep at bay other groups that had not yet found places where they could survive themselves with equal efficiency. Hostile tribes were possibly as dangerous as natural predators. It was during such times that the US and THEM schema became embedded in the human consciousness. Table below summarises the sources of bonds in relation to US and THEM:

**Table 1: US versus THEM: source of bonds.**

Source of bond	Vocabulary expressing US	Vocabulary expressing THEM
<b>familiarity or blood bond</b>	family, familial, familiar, next of kin, relative, kinsman/kinswoman, fraternity	alien, foreign, stranger, outlander, unfamiliar
<b>proximity</b>	close	distant
<b>association/affiliation</b>	insider, member, citizen	outsider, foreigner, newcomer

The integrity of early communities seems to have depended on homogeneity, which was secured by kinship and familiarity, when someone *familiar* could indicate a benign, amicable or intimately related person. As a result, joining such an insular community was probably extremely difficult and the status of the *newcomer* would always be that of an *outsider*—two derogatory terms. As (Table.1) indicates, the language that describes tribal bonds structures them according to proximity, affinity, and familiarity. These three basic categories relate to the distinction between the members of a community and those who did not originally belong to it.

Hostilities might also take place within a tribe. However socially coherent a community might be, it is nevertheless likely to be hierarchical, and this implies a categorisation of individuals according to their roles in

the system, with some having more important and others less significant functions. For example, state or private organisations are often discussed in terms of the body metaphor because of their *anthropomorphic* structure with a *head* and *members*. This configuration stresses the differences in importance among the participating agents (members) and their roles within the organisation, particularly because *head*, metonymically, stands for master, chief, boss, director, manager, and thus signifies importance. Members do not perform any executive functions. Businesses which employ people also categorise them according to what functions they fulfil, the difference being that the structure of business corporations is that of a pyramid. Divisions in remuneration, which is always high at the top, and low at the bottom, reflect the hierarchical nature of the corporation. The uneven distribution of wealth, as well as roles, causes differences which are likely to grow into deep divisions because grading people in any way encourages dissatisfaction and weakens social bonds.

Gray (2007: 9) claims that conflicts in society are usually deep-seated, complex and based upon divisions other than class:

In reality the roots of human conflict are more deeply tangled. *Class divisions* are only one of the causes of conflict, and rarely the most important. *Ethnic* and *religious differences*, the *scarcity of natural resources* and *the collision of rival values* are permanent sources of division. Such conflicts cannot be overcome, only moderated. The checks and balances of traditional forms of government are a way of coping with this fact. [Emphasis has been added]

Many conflicts do not respond to any form of control; as a result, for millennia almost all communities, at one time or another, have been affected both by inward and outward hostility and aggression.

The Tottenham riots of 2011 are a good example of inward hostility against a system which “others” people, as summarised below:

Drawing on his experience as a youth campaigner, Symeon Brown says young black men are ‘overpoliced as suspects, and underpoliced as victims’. But the impact could be subtle, he says. ‘You’re aware you’re being “othered”. You’re aware that you’re almost an enemy within the state, you’re a kind of danger.’<sup>1</sup>

The *othering* of people as in the above example is the act of creating social divisions between those who live in accordance with socially agreed

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/london-riots--one-year-on-owen-jones-commences-a-series-of-special-reports-7965142.html>

norms and those who are deemed to be socially maladjusted. Shifting the adjective *other* (as in other people or things) to a verb with a pejorative undertone indicates the speaker's need to verbalise the process of dividing people into US and THEM categories. *Other* indicates being different, as opposed to mainstream, and therefore deserving of criticism or even ostracism. In her work on racial profiling Fekete (2006: 35) comments on intrusive surveillance methods which involve suspicion:

Racial profiling involves the singling out of groups based on race for a different form of policing. This may take the form of surveillance and intelligence gathering on whole communities and raids on meeting places and places of worship, based on suspicion alone, coupled with the constant use of identity checks on the streets.

Such strategies are likely to contribute to the *othering* of ethnic groups as well as the ways such groups are perceived by a society.

Conflicts are powerful tools for some, but lead to the downfall of others. Tyrants and members of financial élites tend to thrive on conflicts, which may open up new avenues of opportunity for exploitation and business. On a societal level, sources of conflict relate to the various layers which categorise the US and THEM relationship, as summarised in the table below:

**Table 2: Sources of US and THEM inequalities**

<b>US and THEM</b>	<b>class</b>	class-related superiority issues based on an individual's privilege in society according to birth or education
	<b>ethnic</b>	native versus non-native; racial superiority issues
	<b>economic</b>	ruling élites; the haves versus the have-nots
	<b>religious</b>	Christian versus Muslim; Catholic versus Protestant; etc.
	<b>political</b>	majority versus minority parties; the government versus the grass roots
	<b>systemic</b>	the justice system (outlaws); moral codes; social justice/injustice; outcasts; state enemies (native or not)—anyone endangering the safety of the state or individual; etc.

Each of the above categories invokes an US and THEM schema that is characterised by inequality and division. Accordingly, each category has a lexicon that mostly involves bipolar distinctions:

- class system: ABOVE/BELOW (special schema); ARISTOCRATIC/COMMON; SUPERIOR/INFERIOR; MASTER/SERVANT; SOMEBODY/NOBODY; REFINED/CRUDE; ENLIGHTENED/IGNORANT; PRIVILEGED/UNDERPRIVILEGED; etc.
- ethnic/racial division: ABOVE/BELOW; SUPERIOR/INFERIOR; MASTER/SERVANT; SOMEBODY/NOBODY; REFINED/CRUDE; ENLIGHTENED/IGNORANT; WHITE/NOT WHITE; NATIVES/NON-NATIVES; etc.
- economic divisions (based on wealth): HAVES/HAVE-NOTS; ÉLITE/COMMON; PRIVILEGED/UNDERPRIVILEGED; RULING/SUBORDINATE; etc.
- religious: BELIEVERS/NON-BELIEVERS (THE FAITHFUL/INFIDELS); CHRISTIANS/MUSLIMS; THE RIGHTEOUS/SINNERS; THE DEVOUT/BLASPHEMERS; etc.
- political: RIGHT/LEFT; REACTIONARY/LIBERAL; etc.
- systemic: INSIDER/OUTSIDER; THE LAW-ABIDING/CRIMINALS; THE ESTABLISHMENT/PLEBS; CITIZENS/THOSE ON THE MARGINS; GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC; etc.

Within these dichotomies and opposing categories further language can be generated to refer more specifically to people, and usually in an evocative and derogatory manner, for example, criminals as *villains*, *perpetrators*, *outcasts*, *pariahs*, etc.

Viewing one's identity in terms of social distance can be justified when particular personal criteria are applied:

Identity and difference are words in common currency. [...] Identities in the contemporary world derive from a multiplicity of sources—from nationality, ethnicity, social class, community, gender, sexuality—sources which may conflict in the construction of identity positions and lead to contradictory fragmented identities. Each of us may experience some struggles between conflicting identities based on our different positions in the world, as a member of a particular community, ethnicity, social class, religion, as a parent, as a worker or as unemployed. However, identity gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live [...]. (Woodward 1997: 1)

Personal identity plays an essential role in the process of social estrangement and isolation, especially when it offends any highly-esteemed mainstream value. Van Dijk (1987: 196) confirms this view

suggesting that when negative comparisons are based on various social categories (as summarised by Woodward above) *differentiation* is likely to take a negative course.

The hierarchical organisation of a society also allows artificially created differences to grow into deep divisions. If, for example, ordinary people feel misunderstood and regard themselves as heavily burdened by the government and authorities, they will start to see themselves as occupying a different category. The US and THEM dichotomy then encapsulates a feeling of frustration towards those who make the decisions that govern their lives and cause them hardships. The following extract from an on-line article by Paul Lewis, Tim Newburn, Matthew Taylor and James Ball shows how the social injustices and divisions that led to the riots in Tottenham and four other British cities could be considered in terms of an US (the pressurised) and THEM (the élite) schema:

Rioters identified a range of *political grievances*, but at the heart of their complaints was a pervasive *sense of injustice*. For some this was *economic*: the lack of money, jobs or opportunity. For others it was more broadly *social*: how they felt they were treated compared with *others*. Many mentioned the increase in student tuition fees and the scrapping of the education maintenance allowance [*economic*]. [Square brackets and the emphasis have been added to highlight specific notions.]<sup>2</sup>

This extract also shows how the category of being OTHER works both ways as it may be applied to those not engaging in unlawful behaviour as well as to the rioters:

$$X_{(-)} \leftarrow \text{-----} \bullet \text{-----} \rightarrow Y_{(+)}$$

$X_{(-)}$  represents the socially underprivileged who have been allocated negative labels;  $Y_{(+)}$  corresponds to people who live according to common social rules and who, therefore, are valued positively. *Othering* will always occur at either end of the axis, as well as in the middle by any subjective observer. According to an axiological schema RIGHT is UP, while LEFT is DOWN (Krzyszowski 1997: 50). This way of schematising these two values stems from a long Christian-based tradition of associating rightness with something correct, morally acceptable, or true: the righteous<sup>3</sup>. People of low moral standing belong to the LEFT category and are seen as sinister, malevolent, evil and malicious. Additionally, in more

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/05/anger-police-fuelled-riots-study>

<sup>3</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2005.

recent times, the Cold War period was characterised by negative associations as well as deep-seated fears of all leftist views and political systems. In the context of riots, rioters are subversive and therefore a threat to that which has value and moral quality in society; therefore, rioters cannot belong to the RIGHT category of people.

### **Metaphors of respect and disdain**

As Kövecses (1990: 118) points out, where there is power and authority there is respect:

The example of authority leads us to cases that include such social positions as the president, the queen, the king, the minister, the ambassador, the governor, the manager, the Pope, the director, the general, and so forth.

In these cases, power arises from the relative position of the individual occupying the position. This individual will be the OBJECT OF RESPECT and the social position that lends power to the individual will be the CAUSE OF RESPECT.

Respect for power and authority figures is inculcated by the Bible and defined in social and legal codes. In all societies there are rules of conduct which regulate the social distance between people in authority and those lower down the social ladder. Social distance resulting from the hierarchical structure of society evokes the UP/HIGH versus DOWN/LOW conceptualisations where BETTER IS UP and WORSE IS DOWN (Kövecses 1990: 109-110). The vertical spatial arrangement grades society members according to the well-established criteria of wealth, knowledge, influence and, perhaps, achievement.

Respect is a positive emotion, particularly when it is mutual. Within a community, mutual respect among its members would secure peace (i.e. respect for kinship) and safety (i.e. respect for life). Clearly, however, one-way respect tends to breed inequality.

Showing respect can take physical as well as verbal forms of expressions. Kövecses (1990: 119-120) calls particular respectful behaviours FORMS OF POLITENESS. These would involve:

TAKING HAT OFF, BOW, KNEELING, DISTANCE, VISITING, WAYS OF LOOKING, DOING HONOUR/CEREMONY, and FORMS OF POLITENESS. Given the general metonymic principle THE BEHAVIOURAL REACTIONS OF AN EMOTION STAND FOR THE EMOTION.

In his study of “respect” metaphors Kövecses (1990: 111-118) identifies a number of axiological concepts and metaphors which structure the discourse of respect, these being, among others, power, esteem, and commodity:

- THE OBJECT OF RESPECT IS UP/HIGH;
- THE RESPECTER IS DOWN;
- OBJECT OF RESPECT IS DEITY;
- PEOPLE ARE COMMODITIES;
- RESPECT IS A COMMODITY (MONEY);
- POWER/CONTROL IS UP;
- THE PERSON WITH POWER IS UP;
- ESTEEM IS A(N ECONOMIC) VALUE (A PERSON IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE);
- SELF-ESTEEM IS A(N ECONOMIC) VALUE (A PERSON ESTIMATES HIMSELF TO HAVE);
- THE OBJECT OF RESPECT IS A (VALUABLE) COMMODITY;
- SIGNIFICANT IS BIG;
- STRENGTH IS POWER;
- KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

The metaphors of respect demonstrate that according to the UP/HIGH schema, respect comes from those who occupy a lower position and who by their lack of standing are weaker.

The moral codes of western communities are built largely upon Christian values such as duty, self-denial, respect for authority and being of a humble spirit. Meekness and self-effacement were particularly seen as expressions of readiness to serve others and so appreciated by the Church as they were seen as ways of showing brotherly love and an obliging and submissive heart.

The very idea of self-overcoming suggests that the self has a part that is to be overcome. And overcoming this part of the self often requires what we call ‘moral strength.’ This concept is an obvious metaphor, the metaphor being MORALITY IS PHYSICAL STRENGTH. The part of the self that is overcome is constituted by things that we consider evil or wrong. [...] This presupposes the existence of a more basic maxim: THE OTHER IS FIRST; THE SELF IS SECOND; or THE OTHER SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY OVER SELF. All the wrong things can be thought of as violations of this maxim. (Kövecses 1990: 117-118)

Christian values, which were useful tools in feudal times, have survived in the consciousness of modern people by being codified in such concepts as



wealth, knowledge (education), social position and master/servant relationships. Overcoming oneself and putting others first are the qualities that will inevitably be highly regarded (in hierarchical systems). They do, however, offer opportunities for exploitation.

Social distance is marked by the use of authoritarian language by those in power and self-deprecating language by those having no authority. Occasionally those who belong to an underclass identify with derogatory descriptions of themselves, especially to emphasise their unfortunate situation: *we are nothing but scum (trash)*, or *we're just plebs*. The use of such language shows how destitute and how isolated in their struggle socially or economically deprived people may feel. As a consequence of being relegated to menial positions, the metaphorical concept of self-effacement becomes firmly established in the way people think about themselves in relation to those in authority:

#### SELF-DEPRECATATION IS KNOWING ONE'S LOWER POSITION (VALUE)

I'm a *nobody* but Joe is *someone*!

I guess I'll have to *do more boot-licking* to get promoted;

Sue is *sucking up* to her boss to get a bonus;

To be admitted into the club Sarah *curried favour* with its chair;

Can you do this for me? I'm *rubbish* with computers;

*Getting on the right side of* George can gain you many advantages  
in this job;

*Buttering up* your boss will pay off one day;

Herman *wormed his way into* his supervisor's *favour*—now he gets  
much better working conditions than anyone else;

Don't you think that *ingratiating* yourself *with* your superiors is  
quite demeaning?

Deferring to people in authority takes various forms. Sometimes, when people actively seek recognition and acceptance from figures of authority, they humble themselves and become particularly submissive. This is often exploited by their superiors while at the same time it becomes a bone of contention among the colleagues of such people, as demonstrated by the following metaphor:

#### BEING EXCESSIVELY DEFERENTIAL IS BEING OBSEQUIOUS

The Unions should not challenge this decision; surely they *know*  
*their place*;

Many managers expect their secretarial staff to *dance attendance* on them;

Those who do not *bow* and *scrape* are not likely to stay in this company long.

US and THEM divisions can also be seen in the use of double standards and offensive forms of address as well as by showing a lack of respect when referring to people who occupy a less elevated social position. This contrast becomes apparent when the language of contempt is employed, as was believed to be the case with Andrew Mitchell, the former Conservative chief whip. In mid-September 2012, the chief whip supposedly addressed a police officer in a derisive manner, as reported by Jason Groves and James Chapman below:

Police stood by reports that Mitchell—furious at being told to get off his bicycle and use a pedestrian gate rather than Downing Street's main gate—had called officers '*morons*' and '*plebs*'. [...] Mitchell, 56, was reported in the Sun to have told officers: '*Best you learn your f\*\*\*ing place. You don't run this f\*\*\*ing government. You're f\*\*\*ing plebs.*' John Tully, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, said the remarks were 'outrageous'. He had made inquiries and he believed the newspaper's report. 'I know what the officers have told me, and what was reported in the Sun this morning is absolutely what happened,' he told Sky News. Although he had not spoken directly to the officer concerned, he had spoken to federation representatives.

He added: 'He [Mitchell] should resign. As a cabinet minister, it's unacceptable for someone of his standing to use such disrespectful and abusive language to a police constable, let alone anyone else. If the shoe was on the other foot and my officer had said those things he'd be out of a job now. It's *double standards*.' [...] Joanne McCartney, Labour chair of the London assembly's police and crime committee, said: 'It seems it's one rule for the public and another for those running the country. Perhaps the prime minister should do more than accept a simple apology. [Emphasis added]<sup>4</sup>

*Double standards* indicate the application of two different sets of rules to two different sets of people. In most cases this static phrase emphasises social distance between the people involved. The above example structures the US and THEM schema according to place in the social hierarchy

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/sep/21/tory-chief-whip-andrew-mitchell-police>

(UP/GOOD, DOWN/BAD)–a high government official is above a police constable, as shown by the correspondences below:

<b>US (positive valuation)</b>	<b>THEM (negative valuation)</b>
MEMBER OF H.M.'S GOVERNMENT	→ POLICE OFFICER
HIGHER RANK (ABOVE)	→ LOWER RANK (BELOW)
COMMANDING MORE RESPECT	→ COMMANDING LESS RESPECT
MORE PRIVILEGED	→ LESS PRIVILEGED
HAVING POWER	→ HAVING TO OBLIGE

This particular incident reveals a complex socio-cultural issue involving, among other things, a sense of elitism based on education, social standing and class. Those occupying high positions may have an exaggerated sense of pride and authority, which they may want to express by “showing” someone *his or her place*. Social distancing involves an expectation of complaisance and a humble attitude. The incident described in the example had quite far-reaching consequences and, in the end, the chief whip stepped down. This shows that in principle modern social norms rule out such distinctions and see them as inappropriate.

### **Emotive responses to otherness: fear, mistrust, aversion (or) US and THEM and national identity**

The discursive construction of social groups has to be viewed as the fundamental process of macro-strategy to create sameness and difference (between US and THEM) and thus precedes all other textual/visual devices to produce and reproduce national identities. (Wodak 2006: 105)

On a conceptual level, the US and THEM schema firmly entrenched in many languages signposts a different aspect of human nature–disdain for otherness to the point of the exclusion of and disassociation from those categorised as *deviants*. The governing mechanism is simple: lack of familiarity breeds fear, mistrust, and aversion and, therefore, rejection. This kind of exclusivity calls for a set of norms that establishes identity markers. According to Woodward (1997: 11-12), in the formulation of identity people rely on (among many other factors): particular conceptualisations, belongingness, kinship, symbolic marking (for instance the national flag), social and material conditions (agreeing on what is taboo, or who the enemy is), and various classificatory systems (“us and them”). These could be supplemented by how strongly people

feel about their language, territory, appearance (in ethnically homogeneous countries) and shared knowledge. For instance, territorial borders and their *inviolability* have been a major issue with regard to state security and international integration. Those who do not observe countries' borders may be labelled *intruders*, *encroachers*, *invaders*, *aggressors* or *trespassers*.

National identity and nationalism, both of which play a significant role in the construction of the US and THEM schema, are particularly sensitive within the context of ethnicity. The use of the metaphor *melting pot* to apply to a multiethnic society is often somewhat erroneous as harmony between racially divergent groups cannot always be *forged* or *smelted*: when issues involving, for example, cultural assimilation get “heated,” hostilities or even riots are likely to ensue.

Racial prejudices stem from negative attitudes that are “based on lacking, insufficient, or biased models” (van Dijk 1987: 195) which have been shaped by narratives portraying foreigners as nonconformists and outsiders:

People judge groups relative to what may be called the ‘social principles’, that is, the basic goals, norms, and values of their own in-group. If a particular out-group is assumed to have properties that are (thought to be) incompatible with these principles, these properties are evaluated negatively. In other words, prejudiced attitudes imply fundamental (‘principled’) negativisation of differentiation and categorisation. (van Dijk 1987: 197)

Negativisation takes various forms that distance a particular nation from foreigners: these can involve such subjective processes as *demonisation*, *vilification*, *dehumanisation*, *animalisation* and *enemisation*. The contrasting pronouns US and THEM also indicate a distance where the pronoun *them*, or sometimes *they*, imply otherness, particularly when pointing towards *these/those people* (van Dijk 1987: 104). Having studied “topics in prejudiced discourse” in the Netherlands and the United States, van Dijk (1987: 61) proposes the *Simplest Schema for the Thematic and Cognitive Organisation of Ethnic Prejudice*:

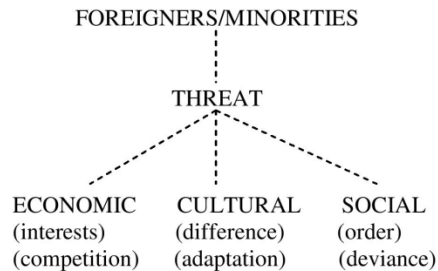


Figure 1: van Dijk's (1987: 61) Simplest Schema for the Thematic and Cognitive Organisation of Ethnic Prejudice

This diagram specifies the areas in which ethnic minorities pose a threat to the cultural and national identity of the host nation.

Fear and threat seem to underlie prejudiced discourse, particularly in times of increased mobility and in the face of laws allowing the flow of foreign labour. The steady influx of foreign workers into Great Britain has become a cause for concern among some British politicians of the right and their sympathisers, who envisage the recrudescence of the problems that characterised the early days of mass immigration from the former colonies. The fear of foreigners who come and supposedly take people's jobs and claim social benefits has taken the shape of a new type of racism referred to by social-scientists as xeno-racism:

It is a racism that is not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial territories, but at the newer categories of the displaced, the dispossessed and the uprooted, who are beating at western Europe's doors, the Europe that helped to displace them in the first place. It is a racism, that is, that cannot be colour-coded, directed as it is at poor whites as well, and is therefore passed off as xenophobia, a 'natural' fear of strangers. But in the way it denigrates and reifies people before segregating and/or expelling them, it is a xenophobia that bears all the marks of the old racism. It is racism in substance, but 'xeno' in form. It is a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. It is xeno-racism. (A. Sivanandan, Director, Institute of Race Relations, in Fekete: 2001, on-line)

This new face of racism has extended the boundaries of an ethnically *other* class of people to THEM-foreigners who want something that belongs to US-natives. Consigning other groups of Europeans to the status of undeserving newcomers is not, however, a novel concept among historically insular populations.

## Conclusion

There are many components of socio-cultural cognition which contribute to the formulation of group attitudes towards “otherness”. Culture, within the bounds of a particular social structure, is a central integrative element which helps members of a group define their identity markers, as pointed out by Sharifian (2009: 166): “[...] a cultural schema is an emergent property resulting from the interactions between the members of a cultural group”. The US and THEM schema is a complex blend of perceptions and emotions.

On the primary level, otherness, and the emotions of fear and aversion that it arouses, causes natives to distance themselves from foreigners and lays the foundations for the schematisation of US and THEM based on ethnicity. It would be a misconception, however, to assume that an ethnically homogeneous community is necessarily harmonious and peaceful.

Apart from the fear of foreigners, the concept of US and THEM is also founded in inequities directly resulting from the usually hierarchical structure of a given community and the values that it inculcates and imposes. The schema that supports this structure and which polarises communities is based on social valuations involving, among others, HIGH/LOW, RIGHT/LEFT, GOOD/BAD, and SUPERIOR/INFERIOR concepts. Socially and culturally heterogeneous communities suffer from internal rifts, which occasionally result in violent outbursts such as the previously mentioned Tottenham Riots of 2011.

The perception of *sameness* and *otherness* within a given community is, to a certain degree, encoded in the norms and values accepted by the majority of its members. These norms and values form the basis for a nation's cultural identity and stem from particular models founded in traditions, religion and other elements of social structure.

The way people perceive and evaluate self on the broad canvas of the social structure of a particular country is not without significance. This is because US and THEM valuations correspond to the underlying “class” system, which governs people's roles and functions within a community. Possible US versus THEM connections may be drawn at every level of social interaction where SUPERIOR/INFERIOR distance can be applied along HIGH/LOW lines of authority and the axiological values they have been allocated in a given cultural context. Hence, such bipolar divergences involving, for example, government officials/police officers, politicians/grass roots, police authorities/mobs, employers/employees, and many others, inevitably result in US and THEM relationships.