

Anna Wierzbicka

## 23 Two levels of verbal communication, universal and culture-specific

**Abstract:** The “naïve” (non-scientific) models of the human person embedded in everyday language differ a great deal across languages and often lead us to the heart of the shared cultural values of the speech community in question. Even within Europe the models of the human person embedded in different languages are quite diverse. Remarkably, all human cultures appear to agree that human beings have a body (that people can see) and “something else” (that people can’t see). The construal of this “something else”, however, differs a great deal across languages, cultures, and epochs. For speakers of modern English, this “something else” is usually interpreted as the ‘mind’; and in the era of global English, the model of a human being as composed of a body and a mind is often taken for granted by Anglophone humanities and social sciences (and even by cognitive and evolutionary science). Yet ‘mind’ is a conceptual artefact of modern English – an ethno-construct no more grounded in reality than the French *esprit*, the Danish *sind*, the Russian *duša*, the Latin *anima*, or the Yolngu *birrimbirr*. The reification of the English ‘mind’ and its elevation to the status of a “scientific” prism through which all other languages, cultures, indigenous psychologies, and even stages in the evolution of primates can be legitimately interpreted is a striking illustration of the blind spot in contemporary social science which results from the “invisibility” of English as a more and more globalised way of speaking and thinking. This paper demonstrates that the meanings hidden in such language-specific cultural constructs can be revealed and compared, in a precise and illuminating way, through universal semantic primes brought to light by NSM semantics (cf. e.g., Wierzbicka 2014; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014.) It also shows how the understanding of such culturally central concepts can lead to better communication across languages and cultures.

**Keywords:** intercultural communication, cross-linguistic semantics, NSM theory, universal human concepts, ‘soul’ and ‘mind’ across languages, cultural keywords and global understanding

### 1 Two kinds of concepts, universal and culture-specific

There are two levels of verbal communication, because there are two kinds of words: universal and culture-specific. Universal words have simple meanings with

precise counterparts in all, or nearly all languages. Culture-specific words are words whose meanings are complex and shaped by a particular culture and which do not have counterparts outside the circle of that culture. For example, evidence suggests that all languages have words with simple meanings such as ‘someone’, ‘something’, ‘do’, ‘happen’, ‘know’ and ‘see’, but not words corresponding in meaning to *lunch*, *babysitter*, *girlfriend*, *temperature* or *mind*. (See e.g., Goddard and Wierzbicka eds. 2002; Goddard ed. 2008; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014a and b).

In everyday interaction with speakers of one’s own native language one is usually not aware of any fundamental difference between these two types of words. One can become aware of it, however, in special circumstances when meanings need to be clarified: for example, for the benefit of children, or foreigners. Simple and universal meanings such as ‘do’ and ‘happen’, ‘know’ and ‘see’ provide a kind of safety net in human communication. When we need to explain precisely what we mean to someone who doesn’t have full command of our own verbal and conceptual lexicon we often find ourselves falling back on those simple and universal words which constitute the common ground for human understanding and which are more self-explanatory than more complex and more culture-dependent concepts and ideas.

Research conducted by many scholars, over many years, in the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) framework (See NSM Homepage) has brought to light 65 such simple and universal concepts, known as “semantic primes”, and a set of their shared combinatorial properties. The list of the English exponents of these primes, grouped into categories, is given in Table 1. (Comparable tables for many other languages can be found in Goddard and Wierzbicka (eds.) 2002).

Primes exist as the meanings of lexical units (not at the level of lexemes). Exponents of primes may be words, bound morphemes, or phrasemes. They can be formally, i.e. morphologically, complex. They can have combinatorial variants or allomorphs (indicated with ~). Each prime has well-specified syntactic (combinatorial) properties.

The acronym NSM comes from the phrase “natural semantic metalanguage”. The idea of a natural semantic metalanguage behind the NSM is that taken together with their shared mini-grammar, the primes provide a neutral, culture-independent metalanguage for articulating meanings and ideas at a level accessible to all human beings. This metalanguage is “natural” because unlike various artificial languages developed by formal semanticists, logicians or specialists in artificial languages, it is carved out of natural languages and, in principle, is intelligible to speakers of any natural language.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition to universal semantic primes (undecomposable “atoms of meaning”) NSM research has uncovered several dozen universal (or near-universal) “semantic molecules” (Goddard 2010, 2012; Wierzbicka 2011). These molecules are meanings composed of the primes but integrated into units which function as integral parts in the meanings of other, semantically more complex words.

**Tab. 1:** Semantic primes (English exponents) in comparable categories (cf. Goddard & Wierzbicka 2002, 2014a).

I~ME, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING~THING, PEOPLE, BODY	Substantives
KIND, PART	Relational substantives
THIS, THE SAME, OTHER~ELSE	Determiners
ONE, TWO, MUCH~MANY, LITTLE~FEW, SOME, ALL	Quantifiers
GOOD, BAD	Evaluators
BIG, SMALL	Descriptors
THINK, KNOW, WANT, DON'T WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	Mental predicates
SAY, WORDS, TRUE	Speech
DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	Actions, events, movement, contact
BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, BE (SOMEONE/ SOMETHING), (IS) MINE	Location, existence, specification, possession
LIVE, DIE	Life and death
WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	Time
WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	Space
NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	Logical concepts
VERY, MORE	Augmentor, intensifier
LIKE	Similarity

More often than not, however, verbal exchanges in natural settings rely to a very high degree on complex concepts which are shared by the speakers of a particular language and which seem to the interlocutors to be self-explanatory only because they are shared within their own cultural circle and because they are familiar to everyone within that circle.

A good example of a complex and culture-specific concept which is shared by the speakers of one language and which the speakers of this language usually take for granted is the English word *mind*.

---

Some semantic molecules are highly culture-specific (e.g., 'God', 'money' and 'paper' in English and many other languages), some, however, are universal or near-universal. Examples of the latter include 'man', 'woman', 'child', 'be born', 'water' and 'fire'. The meanings discussed in this paper rely almost exclusively on semantic primes. The only semantic molecule which briefly appears on the scene is 'be born', in the section of "The Yolngu theory of person".

In this chapter, I will reflect on the reliance of speakers of English on the word *mind* as a lens through which to look at the world and on the important role of this word (and the concept linked with it) as a shared coin in the Anglophone economy of communication. Since English speakers' self-understanding depends on the concept of 'mind', they also tend to interpret all other people through this concept, and in doing so, they appear to achieve mutually satisfying communication with other speakers of English.

In what follows, I will argue that such mutually satisfying communication with other speakers of English does not necessarily amount to a genuine understanding of how speakers of other languages think. Further, I will try to show that such genuine cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding can only be achieved at the level of communication based on universal concepts – such as 'think', 'know', 'want' and 'feel', and not at the level based on language-specific concepts such as 'mind'.

In addition to being taken for granted and frequently relied on by most speakers of English, the word *mind* appears to have an extraordinary appeal to Anglophone social scientists, and it often features in the titles of their books. To mention just a few examples, including some of my personal favourites: *Culture in Mind* (Bradd Shore 1996), *A Mind So Rare* (Merlin Donald 2001), *The Shared Mind* (ed. by Jordan Zlatev et al. 2008), *The Mind of the Chimpanzee* (ed. Elizabeth Lonsdorf et al. 2010), *Mind* (John Searle 2004), *Bilingual Minds* (Aneta Pavlenko ed. 2006), and so on. This appeal of the word *mind* in social science and popular science is understandable, given the academic and dry aura of the obvious competitor, the Latinate *cognition*. In contrast to the abstract, artificial and lifeless-sounding *cognition*, *mind* sounds concrete, natural and real. When they talk about 'mind', Anglophone scholars appear to be at ease with each other and seemingly with all their fellow human beings. The word appears to place thinking and knowing at the centre of our humanity and to suggest a reverential attitude to these attributes. Even a title like "The Mind of the Chimpanzee" sounds generous and humane, implying as it were a willingness to attribute our best qualities to our fellow primates and to dignify them in this way.

In that climate of understandable admiration for "the mind so rare" (Donald 2001) it is sometimes difficult to remember that in fact 'mind' is an Anglo/English invention and that appealing as it is, it is not one that points to the depths of our shared humanity. In this context, it is interesting to note the title of philosopher Allan Bloom's well-known book *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. The book deplores the fall of *soul* in the English universe of discourse and its virtual displacement by *mind*. Yet the main title itself relies also on the word *mind*: it seems to suggest that the 'American mind' was once open and now is increasingly closed, rather than that in the ethnophilosophy of speakers of English *soul* has been virtually replaced by *mind*. Bloom's choice of the title is hardly surprising: he

may well have felt that in order to connect with his English-speaking and English-thinking readers he had to speak to them in the idiom of ‘mind’, mentioning ‘soul’ only as an element of the background. The fact is that *mind* resonates today with speakers of English and consolidates their *entente* as a community of discourse, whereas *soul* usually does not, or does only in exceptional circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

Two caveats need to be made at this point. The first one concerns ‘false friends’ (‘des faux amis’) – words that are cognate and may share some semantic components but differ significantly in their over-all meaning and cultural significance, such as *mind* (English), *mente* (Italian), and *mens* (Latin), or *spirit* (English), *spiritus* (Latin) and *esprit* (French). The second caveat concerns the wide-spread tendency to treat the cultural descendants of some important common ancestors in a group of languages as semantic equivalents. Nothing illustrates this better than some words in modern European languages which have their source in the conceptual vocabulary of the New Testament or the Psalms, such as the English *soul*, the German *Seele*, the French *âme* and the Polish *duś* – all descendants of the Hebrew *nepesh*, the New Testament Greek *psyche* and the *anima* of the Vulgate.

The lexical successors of those foundational Judeo-Christian words in modern European languages underscore the shared cultural heritage with which these languages are associated – but also the different stamps that particular languages and cultures have put on that common legacy. (Cf. e.g., Wierzbicka 1992, Chapter 1). The great shift from *soul* to *mind* (as the main counterpart of the body) that can be observed in modern English is of particular interest in this context, as is also the subsequent absolutisation of the English *mind* as a keyword of contemporary science, as well as Anglophone social sciences and the humanities.

While I have been reflecting on the Anglo scholars’ love affair with ‘mind’ for over a quarter of a century (cf. e.g., Wierzbicka 1989), two recent seminars, given on two successive days at my home university, have blown fresh life into this topic for me. Thus, on May 28, 2013 Carsten Levisen from Aarhus University in Denmark presented a seminar (“European words re-invented”), in which he discussed semantic diversity of cultural key words across a number of languages, paying special attention to the English word *mind* and emphasizing the fact that *mind* has no exact equivalents in other European languages, or in creoles based on English (a point to which I will return later). Drawing on his own work on the meaning of the word *sind* (which he had explored in depth in his 2012 book: *Cultural Semantics and Social Cognition: A case study on the Danish universe of meaning*), Levisen illustrated the difference between the English *mind* and the Danish *sind* with the example of someone living near the Danish-German border. Other people could ask about such a person: “does he/she have a Danish ‘sind’ or a German ‘sind’?” but not “does he/she have a Danish or a German mind?” To quote from Levisen’s book:

---

2 As I am finalising this section, Australian newspapers report on the trial of a serial rapist, Adrian Bailey, accused recently of assaulting and killing a Melbourne television journalist. The victim’s

The closest Danish counterpart of *mind* is *sind*; they are, however, quite different constructs. The Danish *sind* cannot, like the English *mind*, be described as *inquiring* (knowledge) or *brilliant* (thinking). *Sind* is linked with identity and mentality. To exemplify, one can be *dansk et* ‘of a Danish *sind*’, as opposed to *tysksindet* ‘of a German *sind*’. A *sind* can be described as *lys* ‘light, bright’ or *mørk* ‘dark’ (one’s mental disposition). Unlike *mind*, the Danish *sind* can “move” and “boil” suggesting a feeling aspect. Roughly, we can say that *sind* combines the ideas of a person’s mentality, core identity, and his or her deeper feelings. Compared with the “intellectual” and “flexible” English concept of *mind*, Danish *sind* can be said to present a more “identificational” and “deterministic” construal of personhood. (Levisen 2012: 72)

The second seminar, given jointly by anthropologist Howard Morphy (an eminent authority on Aboriginal art in Australia) and linguist Frances Morphy was devoted to some semantic and cultural aspects of the Australian language Yolngu, and in particular, to what the presenters referred to as “the Yolngu conceptualisation of the mind”. The title of the seminar was “We think through our *morwat* (paintbrush) – conceptualizing mind cross-culturally”. When I queried the justice of looking at Yolngu language and culture through the prism of the English concept of ‘mind’, the presenters defended this approach by appealing to Wittgenstein’s notion of “family resemblances”. Presumably, the idea was that while not all languages have words for either ‘art’ or ‘mind’, there is enough “family resemblance” between words for “something like art” and “something like mind” across languages to justify the use of the words *art* and *mind* as basic tools in cross-cultural research.

But even if a phrase like “the Yolngu theory of art” is regarded as acceptable, at least as a convenient conceptual shortcut for speakers of English (and of other languages which have a word matching *art* in meaning), phrases like “the Yolngu theory of mind” or “the Yolngu conceptualisation of the mind” are problematic. In the case of art there are some physical objects which can provide a shared focus for cross-cultural discourse, but the subject-matter of the “theory of mind” is inherently invisible and intangible: in this domain more than in most others, construal is everything, and ‘mind’ is an English, not a Yolngu construal. (I will return to this point in the section on Yolngu.)

As discussed by Levisen (in his 2013 seminar and in his 2012 book), within the Danish speech community the concept of ‘*sind*’ is a shared coin in communication and cognition: speakers of Danish can communicate with one another using this coin (in conjunction with many other similar coins). In the English-speaking world, ‘mind’ is such a shared coin and in the Yolngu community, it is (as we shall see) the word *birrimbirr*. In each linguistic sphere, such shared verbal currency establishes a level of verbal communication which is language- and culture-specific, and

---

husband is reported as saying at the trial: “I think of the waste of a brilliant mind and a beautiful soul at the hands of a grotesque and soulless human being” (*The Australian*, June 12, 2013, p. v).

which binds speakers of a particular community as members of a single verbal economy.<sup>3</sup>

But there is another level of verbal communication, which is not language- and culture-specific. It is the level of simple concepts found as matching verbal tokens in any speech community, including speakers of English, Danish and Yolngu, tokens like ‘think’, ‘know’, ‘want’, ‘feel’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’. These simple and universal human concepts can enter in different communities into different configurations and thus become non-convertible items of the local cognitive and communicative currency.

In a recent article on emotions in a cross-cultural perspective the founder of “cultural psychology” Richard Shweder (2012) contrasts “contingent” concepts “packaged” in culture-specific ways in particular human groups from “foundational” or “basic” concepts such as ‘want’, ‘know’, ‘think’, ‘feel’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, declaring himself willing to build interpretive cross-cultural research on the basis of the latter. Referring to the work of the present writer, Shweder (2012: 383) writes:

Informed in part by Anna Wierzbicka’s (1999) corpus of research in which she nominates certain concepts as universally available across all cultural traditions, I am quite willing to conduct interpretive research on cultural differences in human mentalities relying on a theory of mind that presumes that all normal human beings wherever you go in the world want things, know things, feel things, and value things (as good or bad), and think about the things they want, know, feel, and value.

It is interesting to note that Shweder is engaging here at two levels of verbal communication at once. To reach his Anglophone readers, he uses the phrase “a theory of mind”, in relation to all humans. At the same time, he recognises that what is shared by human beings is concepts like ‘want’, ‘know’, ‘think’ and ‘feel’ (as well as ‘good’ and ‘bad’); that is, in effect, he acknowledges the existence of a deeper level of communication at which ‘mind’ is no longer a usable coin.

There can of course be no objection to the use of the phrase “theory of mind” as a convenient abbreviation when writing for Anglophone readers. It is good to remember, however, that this phrase constitutes an English-specific conceptual construct, and not part of the panhuman model of the human person or a legitimate scientific analytical tool for writing about people and peoples across the globe. At that level, only the simple and universal concepts like ‘think’, ‘know’, ‘want’ and ‘feel’ can provide shared stable reference points for verbal (as well as nonverbal) communication and mutual human understanding.

To reiterate the key point, most words don’t match exactly in meaning across language boundaries. This is why the set of 65 semantic primes which do match

---

<sup>3</sup> In some cases, some elements of ‘local currency’ are convertible into the currencies of neighbouring or otherwise closely related countries. For example, the English word *art* is convertible into the languages of other European languages, whereas the word *mind* is not.

exactly can play a key role in human communication as a bedrock of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding. Arguably, this set can also play a key role in the study of human communication, because it provides a common measure for comparing concepts embedded in different languages. The existence of such a common measure is particularly important in relation to cultural key words of particular languages, such as *mind* in modern English, *amae* in Japanese or *Pflicht* in German, which are both untranslatable and vitally important. (For detailed discussion of these words, see Wierzbicka 1997 and 2015).

## 2 Critics and opponents of the NSM approach

Since all the analyses and illustrations of the two levels of verbal communication that are going to be presented in the following sections are based on the NSM approach, it will be in order to note at the outset that, like other radical scientific theories, NSM theory has its critics and opponents, and to cite at least some relevant names and publications. Two points which deserve to be emphasised in this context are these: first, that the most persistent critics of NSM-based hypotheses and analyses have always been NSM researchers themselves, and second, that for the most part, the opponents of NSM seem to take a defensive stance, along the lines of “I don’t *have* to do what NSM claims *has* to be done”.

To begin with the critics, if the size of the postulated set of semantic primes changed dramatically over the years (from 14 posited in my 1972 *Semantic Primitives*, through 37 in *Semantic and Lexical Universals* (Goddard and Wierzbicka eds. 1994) to 56 in my 1996 *Semantics: Primes and Universals* and 65 in Goddard’s and my 2014 *Words and Meanings*), it was above all in response to challenges from the practitioners of NSM themselves. At the same time, I would like to acknowledge that a significant shift in emphasis – from a search focussed primarily on primes as such to a search focussed equally on primes and their ‘grammar’ – was prompted by a critical (as well as appreciative) review of my 1980 book *Lingua Mentalis* by an outsider: the prominent generative grammarian James McCawley, published in *Language* in 1983.

As for the opponents of NSM, the most constructive challenges have come, over the years, from fieldworkers who claimed that the field language of their expertise didn’t have a lexical exponent for one of the concepts postulated by NSM researchers as universal. For example, Jürgen Bohnemeyer (2003) claimed that Yucatec Maya has no words for BEFORE and AFTER; George Van Driem (2004), that the Himalayan language Nepali has no word for FEEL; Daniel Everett (2005), that the Pirahã language of Amazonia doesn’t have a words for ONE, TWO and ALL; Nicholas Evans (2007), that the Australian language Dalabon doesn’t have exponents of either KNOW or THINK; and Olesya Khanina (2008), that some languages, such as Spanish and Hmong, don’t have an exponent of WANT.



NSM researchers have always pursued such claims with great care, and responded to them with meticulous analyses of the relevant data and arguments. For example, a comprehensive defense of the claims about ONE, TWO, and ALL can be found in Wierzbicka 2005, 2012, and in Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014b; about BEFORE and AFTER, in Goddard 2001 and 2008; about FEEL, in Wierzbicka 1999 and Goddard 2008; about WANT, in Goddard and Wierzbicka (2010); and about KNOW and THINK in Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014b.

It is the hallmark of the NSM approach that it pursues both linguistic universals and linguistic diversity, and in fact insists that the two are inseparable, whereas other approaches tend to oppose these two emphases and to choose one over the other. Thus, some linguists choose to stress linguistic diversity and to reject linguistic universals (cf. e.g., Evans and Levinson 2009), whereas others (for example Ray Jackendoff and Paul Kay) put forward putative universals while rejecting any need for cross-linguistic testing of their universalist hypotheses. Jackendoff (2006) insists the the concept of ‘rights’ (as in “human rights”) is universal in human thinking, dismissing the absence of the word for ‘right/rights’ in most languages of the world as an irrelevancy, whereas Kay and his associates (e.g., Kay and Kuehni 2008) do the same with the concept of ‘colour’. Accordingly, linguists like Everett and Evans criticize NSM research for its insistence on semantic universals (such as ONE, TWO, ALL, KNOW, and THINK), whereas those like Jackendoff and Kay criticise it for its insistence on cross-linguistic grounding of any proposed semantic universals (and for its rejection of culturally shaped notions such as ‘rights’ and ‘colour’ as genuine universals). Both these lines of critique have been met with detailed responses in numerous NSM publications. (For a rebuttal of Jackendoff’s arguments, see, for example, Wierzbicka 2007, and Kay’s, Wierzbicka 2008a, b, 2014a, and in press).

As for seemingly defensive responses to NSM, space doesn’t permit more than a couple of illustrations. Given that NSM objects to the use of scientific jargon and academic English as a metalanguage for explaining how speakers of other languages think and what their meanings are, it has not surprisingly found itself vigorously opposed by “cognitive linguists” such as Dirk Geeraerts and his colleagues who do just that. Since in their own work, these linguists rely heavily on academic English to explain ‘human cognition’ across languages, NSM’s insistence on the exclusive use of simple and cross-translatable words as analytical tools is a challenge to their own methodology. Trying to counter this challenge, Geeraerts and colleagues call NSM a “reductionist approach” and an example of “reductionist thinking”, obviously using the word “reductionist” in a pejorative sense (see e.g., Kristiansen and Geeraerts 2007).

NSM paraphrases of meaning are indeed “reductive” – and NSM researchers have always presented the technique of “reductive paraphrase” as their key method and regarded NSM’s capacity to ‘reduce’ complex meanings to combinations of simple elements as a great strength of the NSM approach, rather than a

weakness and see equating “reductive” and “reductionist” as word play. To quote Goddard (2013: 251):

Although the individual components are simply phrased, NSM explications as a whole are often quite complex; to borrow an expression from Geertz (1973: 44), they are “complex but intelligible”. Geertz was echoing Lévi Strauss’s dictum that analysis does not consist in the reduction of the complex to the simple, but rather in the substitution of the complex but intelligible in place of what was complex and unintelligible. The point is that though phrased in simple, intelligible terms, an NSM explication does not in any sense reduce the semantic complexity of the original expression. Rather, it articulates the complexity: it shows what the complexity consists of.

As a second example of ‘defensive’ opposition to NSM I will adduce to work of the Nijmegen School of Cognitive Anthropology, as represented by Asifa Majid, whose critique of NSM is discussed in detail in my 2014 book *Imprisoned in English*. Very briefly, in her critique of NSM, Majid (2010) defends extensionist approaches to semantics which rely heavily on ‘visual’ approaches to meaning analysis, such as photographs, pictures, video clips, and the like. In my view, nothing can illustrate the poverty of such methods as ways of accessing meanings and ideas better than the domain analysed cross-linguistically in the present chapter. Since ‘souls’ (and ‘minds’) are invisible by definition, presumably not even the most committed adherent of extensionist semantics would propose to study them (and ethno-psychology and ethno-philosophy in general) through video clips and similar. By contrast, the NSM approach is equally applicable to ‘concrete’ domains such as ethnobiology, ethnogeography or ‘ethno-technology’ as to ‘inner’ domains such as the study of emotions, values, ‘minds’ and ‘souls’, and has been applied, in numerous studies, to all these domains.

On the whole, it would be fair to say that the strongest support for the NSM approach to languages has often been voiced in disciplines adjacent to linguistics, such as anthropology (D’Andrade 2001), cultural psychology (Shweder 2004), evolutionary science (Jones 1999, Fabrega 2013), psychology (Harré and Moghaddam 2012) and semiotics (Eco 1999), as discussed in detail in the chapter “Kindred thinking across disciplines” in my *Imprisoned in English*. To adduce just one brief quote here, D’Andrade (2001: 246) characterizes NSM as “[a] simple, clear, universal semantic metalanguage, a language made up of the ordinary little words that everyone knows. ... a potential means to ground all complex concepts in ordinary language and translate concepts from one language to another without loss or distortion in meaning”.

As one critic put it, NSM has “impossibly high standards”, and those linguists who oppose it tend to be disputing (in self-defense?) the need for such standards. As Asifa Majid (2010: 63–64) from the Nijmegen group characteristically put it in relation to one key methodological requirement of NSM, “this insistence ... comes only from practitioners of NSM; it is not a generally accepted requirement”. This is correct – and consistent with the general observation about NSM’s “impossibly” high standards.

I would like to conclude this section with two quotes, one from an insider and one from a critic. Thus, Goddard (2008: 1), writes: “The NSM approach remains controversial: many linguists have either a “love it” or “hate it” attitude towards it. Nonetheless, on objective criteria (longevity, range, publication outputs) it is indisputable that NSM is one of the most well developed, productive, and comprehensive systems of semantic analysis in contemporary linguistics.” Evans (2010: 516–517), in effect, agrees: “NSM practitioners have produced a vast body of semantic analyses across dozens of languages, and at present can lay claim to having developed the approach that has gone deepest into the possibilities of setting up a cross-linguistically valid set of basic semantic categories in which all meanings can be stated (...).” (The end of the sentence, which I am omitting here, reiterates Evans’ doubts about KNOW and THINK in Dalabon and WANT in another Australian language, Kayardild.)

### 3 The modern English concept of ‘mind’ and the Trinidad Creole ‘mine’

In my 1992 study of the English concept of ‘mind’ I wrote (see also Wierzbicka 1989):

The idea that *mind* is a folk concept reflected in the English language rather than an objective and universally valid category of human thought may seem surprising, if not impertinent. It is relatively easy to see that concepts such as those encoded in the Japanese words *kokoro* or *ki* (Lock 1984), in the Samoan word *loto* (Gerber 1985), or in the Ilongot word *rinawa* (Rosaldo 1980) are culture-specific. It is harder to realise, however, that the same applies to the concept encoded in the English word *mind*. Titles of scholarly articles, books, and chapters, such as “A folk model of the mind” (D’Andrade 1987) or “Western concepts of the mind from the Greek to the nineteenth century” (Murphy and Murphy 1969), reflect, I think, this error of perspective. They illustrate the familiar problem of the reification of essentially Western ethnopsychological categories that are then taken as the conceptual foundation of scientific inquiry.

In the course of that discussion of the English ‘mind’, I compared the English ethnopsychology of a person based on the folk concept of ‘mind’ with the German ethnopsychology based on two key words: *Geist* (usually translated into English as either ‘mind’ or ‘spirit’) and *Seele* (sometimes translated into English as ‘soul’ and sometimes as ‘mind’). Discussing the differences between the two ethnopsychologies, the Anglo/English one and the German one, I noted in particular the far-reaching consequences that they are believed to have had for the reception and interpretation of Freud’s doctrines in the English-speaking world, and I quoted Bruno Bettelheim’s (1983: 70) book *Freud and Man’s Soul*:

Of all the mistranslations of Freud’s phraseology, none has hampered our understanding of his humanist views more than the elimination of his references to the soul (*die Seele*). Freud

evokes the image of the soul quite frequently – especially in crucial passages where he is attempting to provide a broad view of his system ... Unfortunately, even in these crucial passages the translations make us believe that he is talking about our mind, our intellect. (1983: 70)

Looking at the English word *mind* in a historical perspective, I noted some revealing semantic changes, evidently related to changing ways of thinking in the English-speaking world. Thus, I suggested that “the older English *mind* seemed to be linked with values, whereas the modern one is morally neutral. Consequently, the innumerable references to a ‘noble mind’, ‘ignoble mind’, ‘innocent mind’, or ‘generous mind’ in older English literature sound a little strange and archaic to the modern ear”. I also noted that “the older *mind* had both a spiritual and a psychological dimension and did not have the predominantly intellectual orientation which it has now, with thinking and knowing dominating any other non-bodily aspects of a person’s inner life” (Wierzbicka 1992: 45). In conclusion, I “translated” the modern English concept of ‘mind’ into universal human concepts in the following explication:

***mind*** (1992/1989)

one of two parts of a person

one cannot see it

because of this part, a person can think and know

In the course of the intervening two decades, both the lexicon and the syntax of the natural semantic metalanguage have been perfected, and a 2014 explication would look different from the 1992 and 1989 ones, but the references to two parts of a person and to thinking and knowing would be preserved:

***someone’s mind*** (2014)

something

this something is part of this someone

people can’t see this something

this something is not part of this someone’s body

when this someone is thinking about something

something happens in this part

because this someone has this part, it is like this:

this someone can think many things about many things

this someone can know many things about many things

As mentioned earlier, in his recent seminar at the Australian National University, Carsten Levisen discussed the meanings of some important words in various creoles based on European languages, and in particular talked about the meaning of the word *mine* (from the English *mind*) in the Trinidad Creole, or “Trini” (as the language is locally called). In the abstract for his seminar, Levisen (2013) wrote (see also Levisen and Jogie in press; Levisen in press):

Word meanings do not emerge in a vacuum. They are revealing of speakers' value systems and the sociopolitical logics under which they emerged. Colonial European languages, such as English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese, and to a lesser extent German and Danish, have left a decisive mark on the world's languages. Yet sometimes the meanings of European words have been reinvented outside of the European context, most dramatically so in creole-speaking communities.

So what exactly does the word *mine* mean in Trinidad English, and what can this 'reinvented' European word teach us? Levisen did not provide a full explication of *mine* (a word which he is still exploring), but he noted that a 'good mine' does not mean in "Trini" what a 'good mind' means in English. In English if someone has a 'good mind', this implies, roughly speaking, that this someone is good at thinking, and also at acquiring knowledge. Someone with a "good mind" wants to know many things, wants to think about what he or she knows, and can think about it well. Whatever the fine details of the meaning of the phrase 'a good mind' might be, the focus on 'thinking' and 'knowing' seems indisputable. In "Trini", on the other hand, a person with a "good *mine*" is, above all, a good person. Thus, while a full semantic portrait of the word 'mine' awaits further exploration, it seems clear that both the construal of the human person and the central cultural concerns reflected in *mine* are different from those reflected in the (modern) English *mind*.

From a modern Anglo/English cultural perspective, a person can be seen as composed of a visible part (the body) and an invisible one (the mind) which enables the person to think and know. From a Trinidadian perspective, on the other hand, a person is seen as composed of a visible part (the body) and an invisible one (the *mine*) which enables this person to be a good person. These are two different "theories" of the human person. It seems clear that to speak of a "Trinidadian theory of mind" would be like speaking of an "Anglo/English theory of mine", and that while the latter may seem odd to speakers of English and the former, natural, in fact both are equally problematic.

Thirty years ago anthropologist Catherine Lutz (1985) asked provocatively (in the title of a well-known paper), "Ethnopsychology compared to what?". Lutz' main focus was on emotions and on the tendency of Anglophone psychology to reify and absolutize English emotion terms. But clearly, what applies to emotions applies also to personhood: it makes good sense to ask how local conceptions of human person differ across languages and cultures but not how local conceptions of the mind do: like 'mine', 'mind' itself is one of those local (if now globally spreading) conceptions.

Essentially, this point was made many times before – in relation to the Russian *duša* (e.g., Wierzbicka 1992; Gladkova 2009), the Korean *maum* (Yoon 2006), the Malay *hati* (Goddard 2008b), and so on. But it is particularly striking to see how the English word *mind* itself can be reinvented and imbued with a new meaning, and a new ethno-psychology and ethno-philosophy. Perhaps Levisen's observations about this Trinidadian re-invention of the English 'mind' will help to finally

achieve what the earlier studies of concepts like *duša*, *maum* or *hati* seemingly failed to achieve: to de-naturalize the English word *mind* and to unseat it from its undeservedly privileged place at the heart of the Anglophone psychology, philosophy, and anthropology of the person.

## 4 The “theory of person” in late Latin (as evidenced in St Augustine’s *Confessions*)

An interesting example of a folk model of the person (inevitably lost in translation) is provided in St Augustine’s *Confessions*. A modern Anglo reader may well say that this book is an extended study of the author’s inner self, and the word *self* – as well as *mind* – often appears in various English translations of this late Latin masterpiece. But there was no ‘self’ in St Augustine’s Latin, and neither was there a ‘mind’. Instead, the key concept on which St Augustine relied was that embedded in the word *anima*.

Before proceeding with my analysis of this concept I must make three important points. First, I will be talking here about the use of the word *anima* (usually translated into English as ‘soul’) by one particular author (St Augustine), and in one particular work (his *Confessions*), and not about the use of this word in classical, or post-classical, Latin in general. Second, I am not interested in St Augustine’s views about ‘*anima*’, but only in how he actually used this word. Third, I will try to distinguish his use of *anima* when quoting the Psalms (where *anima* generally stands for the Hebrew concept of ‘*nepesh*’, to be discussed in the next section), from his own use of this word (to the extent to which the two can be distinguished). Intertextuality is a key feature of the *Confessions*, which were written in constant dialogue with the Psalms and the New Testament, while being anchored at the same time in St Augustine’s “pagan” Latin of the fourth century Africa and Europe, and this presents special challenges for the analysis.

As usual, the two universal semantic primes – I and BODY – give us a good entry point to St Augustine’s self-understanding: *ego* and *corpus*, and there are many references to these two throughout the work. In addition, however, there are four more protagonists: *anima*, *animus*, *mens*, and *cor*. Of these four, *cor* is the easiest one to understand through ordinary English. Perhaps the most famous line in the *Confessions* renders *cor* as *heart*, as it seems, quite successfully:

... fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te. (Book I, 1.1)

‘... you made us for yourself, and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you.’ (Pine-Coffin’s translation, Penguin Classics, 1975)

The same cannot be said, however, about the other three Latin constructs on which the *Confessions* rely: *anima*, *animus*, and *mens*. The Latin distinction between *ani-*

*ma* and *animus* is particularly difficult to render in ordinary English. Lewis & Short's (1962) *A Latin Dictionary* defines these words as follows: "*animus*: In a general sense, *the rational soul* in men (in opp. to the body, *corpus*); *anima*: the vital principle, the breath of life." The latter definition is followed with Lewis and Short's comment: "hence, *anima* denotes the animal principle of life, in distinction from *animus*, the spiritual, reasoning, willing principle".

A good example of the problems which arise when the translator needs to render St Augustine's meanings in English is presented by the dramatic story of Augustine's conversion, which St Augustine himself describes (in Henry Chadwick's accurate rendering) as "that grand struggle in my inner house". Some other translators introduce the modern English word *self* here – presumably, in an effort to connect with modern English readers. Thus, R. S. Pine-Coffin (1975: 170), in the Penguin Classics edition, writes:

My inner self was a house divided against itself. In the heat of the fierce conflict which I had stirred up against my soul [*anima*] in our common abode, my heart [*cor*], I turned upon Alypius. My looks betrayed the commotion in my mind [*mens*] as I exclaimed, 'What is the matter with us? What is the meaning of this story? These men have not had our schooling, yet they stand up and storm the gates of heaven while we, for all our learning, lie here grovelling in this world of flesh and blood! Is it because they have led the way that we are ashamed to follow? Is it not worse to hold back?

I cannot remember the words I used. I said something to this effect and then my feelings proved too strong for me. I broke off and turned away, leaving him to gaze at me speechless and astonished. For my voice sounded strange and the expression of my face and eyes, my flushed cheeks and the pitch of my voice told him more of the state of my mind [*animus*] than the actual words that I spoke. (Book VIII, 8.20, Pine-Coffin's translation, p. 170)

It is not possible to try to discuss here the meanings of all four *anima*, *animus*, *mens* and *cor*. The leading role belongs undoubtedly to *anima*. Crucially, it is only *anima* that St Augustine speaks of as the invisible ("interior") counterpart of the visible ("exterior") body, for example, when he describes himself as a "homo" ('human being'):

... et direxi me ad me et dixi mihi, 'tu quis es?', et respondi, 'homo.' et ecce **corpus** et **anima** in me mihi praesto sunt, unum exterius et alterum interius (...) sed melius quod interius. (Book X, 6.9)

'Then I turned toward myself and said to myself: 'Who are you?' I replied 'A man'. I see in myself a **body** and a **soul**, one external, the other internal. (...) What is inward is superior.' (Chadwick's translation, p. 184)

Similarly, God is addressed as "conditor universitatis, conditor **animarum** et **corporum**", that is, 'creator of the universe, creator of souls and bodies (Book XI, 31.41, p. 245). And one more example:

Deum nostrum, deum verum, qui fecisti non solum **animas** nostras sed etiam **corpora**, nec tantum nostras **animas** et **corpora**, sed omnes et omnia. (Book VII, 3.4)

*'... our God, the true God, who made not only our souls [animas], but also our bodies, not only our souls [animas] and bodies, but all rational things and everything.'* (Chadwick's translation, p. 113)

There are many sentences in the *Confessions* which suggest that St Augustine sometimes thought of his *anima* as a place. To mention just two, he says to God:

Angusta est domus animae meae quo venias ad eam (Book 1, 5.6)

*'My soul is like a house, small for you to enter.'* (Pine-Coffin's translation, p. 5)

... invoco te in animam meam ... (Book XIII, 1, 1)

*'I call you to come into my soul ...'* (Pine-Coffin's translation, p. 311)

Most of the time, however, St Augustine speaks of his *anima* as if it was *someone* rather than a place. He attributes to this someone a wide range of feelings, wants, and thoughts, and he can admonish this someone as one could admonish another person. For example:

Noli esse vana, anima mea, et obsurdescere in aure cordis tumultu vanitatis tuae. (Book IV, 11,16)

*'My soul, (...) do not be foolish; do not let the din of your folly deafen the ears of your heart.'* (Pine-Coffin's translation, p. 81)

Occasionally, St Augustine can also identify with his *animus*, and he says at one point "ego animus" ('I [the] *animus*'), translated in the Penguin Classics as "I, the soul". Yet he doesn't talk to his 'animus', as he talks to his 'anima'. It is the 'anima', the deepest, life-giving part of him, that he addresses: "tibi dico, anima" ("I say to you, *anima*"), a phrase omitted in the Penguin Classics translation, where the translator prefers to speak of the *anima* in the third person. And it is this life-giving *anima* that he likens with the source of all life, God:

... iam tu melior es, tibi dico, anima, quoniam tu vegetas molem corporis tui praebens ei vitam, quod nullum corpus praestat corpori. Deus autem tuus etiam tibi vitae vita est. (Book X, 6, 10)

*'And I know that my soul [anima] is the better part of me, because it animates the whole of my body. It gives it life, and this is something that no body can give to another body. But God is even more. He is the Life of the life of my soul.'* (Pine-Coffin's translation, p. 213)

While I cannot undertake a thorough investigation of St Augustine's use of *anima* here, I will nonetheless venture to draft an explication of this key concept, using a template developed for ethno-psychological concepts elsewhere (Wierzbicka 2014b).



**someone's *anima*** (Latin, as in St Augustine's "Confessions")

[A] [WHAT IT IS]

something inside this someone  
 this something is part of this someone  
 people can't see this something  
 people can't touch this something  
 this something is not part of this someone's body  
 because this someone has this part, this someone can live

[B] [WHAT CAN HAPPEN INSIDE THIS SOMETHING]

many things happen inside this something  
 these things can be very good, these things can be very bad

[C] [HOW THIS SOMEONE CAN THINK ABOUT IT]

this someone can think about this something like this:  
     "this something is like someone  
     it can feel something, want something, say something,  
     think something about something  
     I can say something to it"  
 at the same time this someone can think about this something like this:  
     "this something is me"  
 sometimes, this someone can think about it like this:  
     "this something is like a place inside me"

[D] [WHAT PEOPLE CAN KNOW ABOUT THIS PART OF SOMEONE]

people can know that this part of someone is something very good  
 at the same time, people can know that it is like this:  
     "something very bad can happen to this part of someone  
     if it happens, it is very bad for this someone"

When one looks at St Augustine's 'anima' from a cross-linguistic perspective, two aspects of it seem particularly noteworthy: first, frequent references to inner 'happenings', and second, the very broad scope of those inner happenings. Three examples, referring to emotions, thoughts and speech:

Et tumultuosis varietatibus dilaniantur cogitationes meae, intima viscera animae meae. (Book XI, 29.39)

'The storms of incoherent events tear to pieces my thoughts, the inmost entrails of my soul [anima].' (Chadwick's translation, p. 244)

Ecce est coram te, deus meus, viva recordatio animae meae (Book II, 9.17)

‘See before you, my God, the living memory of my soul [anima].’ (Chadwick’s translation, p. 33)

Nonne tibi confitetur anima mea confessione veridica metiri me tempora? (Book XI, 26.33)

‘My anima’s confession to you is surely truthful when my soul declares that times are measured by me.’ (Chadwick’s translation, p. 239) (Lit. “my anima confesses”).

At the same time, very simple volitions, such as “ordering” parts of one’s body to move, are also attributed to one’s ‘anima’:

Faciliusque obtemperabat corpus tenuissimae voluntati animae, ut ad nutum membra moverentur quam iupsa sibi anima ad voluntatem suam magnam in sola voluntate perficiendam. (Book VIII, 8.20)

‘The body obeyed even the slightest inclination of the soul [anima] to move the limbs at its pleasure more easily than the soul [anima] obeyed itself.’ (Chadwick’s translation, p. 147)

Another noteworthy aspect of St Augustine’s concept of ‘anima’ is its ‘moral’ dimension (for want of a better term), that is, its sensitivity to good and bad – not only good and bad feelings but also good and bad wants and thoughts. Thus, Augustine can talk, ruefully, about his *anima’s* *superbia* (‘arrogance/pride’), and also, hopefully, about his *anima’s* power to reach for God:

... mortalitatis meae, poena superbiae animae meae. (Book II, 2.2)

‘... my mortality, the penalty of the pride of my anima.’ (‘... my mortal condition, the penalty of my pride.’ Chadwick’s translation, p. 24)

Per ipsam animam meam ascendam ad illum [deum meum] (Book 10 7.11)

‘Through my soul [anima] I will ascend to him [my God].’ (Chadwick’s translation, p. 185)

The idea that the invisible part of a person is itself like a person who feels and wants and that one can speak to it as one could to another person, links the concept of ‘anima’ as we find it in the *Confessions* with the way the human person was viewed in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Psalms. Since St Augustine was an avid reader of the Psalms and often wove quotations from the Psalms into his own sentences, it seems likely that the Hebrew concept of ‘nepesh’ (roughly, ‘soul’), rendered in Latin as ‘anima’, influenced his own self-understanding and his use of the word *anima*. At the same time, there are some remarkable differences between the Latin *anima* and the Hebrew *nepesh*. I will look at the Hebrew concept in the next section.

## 5 The Hebrew ‘nepesh’ and the New Testament ‘psykhe’

The ancient Hebrew ways of thinking about a person are clearly reflected in the Psalms (though not necessarily in translations of the Psalms into modern European

languages). To take just one example, in Psalm 26, the speaker, confident of his innocence and rectitude, invites God to test him: “Search my heart and mind”. Or at least this is what the New American Bible offers, implying that King David and his contemporaries saw the human person as possessing, in addition to the body, a heart and a mind, and that the mind, along with the heart, was the seat of a person’s good and bad thoughts.

In the Hebrew original of the Psalm, however, there is no mention of anything like “mind”. Instead, we get the words *lib-i* and *khilyot-ay*, whose literal meanings are ‘heart’ and ‘kidneys’. This is, in fact, how the King James’ Version, which stayed much closer to the original, rendered the verses in question:

Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity. (...)

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my reins [kidneys] and my heart. (Ps. 26, KJV)

References to the “heart” alone can be found, for example, in Psalms 4, 14, and 108:

You have put gladness in my heart,

More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. (Ps. 4, NKJV)

The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ (Ps. 14, NKJV)

O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise (Ps. 108, NKJV)

Above all, the Psalms are full of references and invocations to the speaker’s *nepesh* (roughly, soul), as in the following examples:

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.

My soul thirsts for God (...)

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance. (Ps. 42, NKJV)

Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. (Ps. 22, KJV)

How exactly were a person’s wants, feelings, and good and bad thoughts partitioned between the “kidneys”, the “heart” and the *nepesh* in the Hebrew Bible and Hebrew thinking in different periods is a large and complex topic which cannot be discussed here in any detail. The huge literature on the Hebrew Bible bears of course on this topic, but it doesn’t fully clarify it, partly because it often does not seek to discuss it in terms of simple and self-explanatory concepts such as ‘think’, ‘want’, ‘feel’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’. Two things, however, seem crystal-clear: first, there was no “mind” in the Hebrew ethnopsychology, that is, no invisible part of a person dedicated to thinking and knowing, and second, no special attention was given to “thinking” as such. Rather, the invisible and intangible parts of a person were construed in terms of a person’s propensity for good and bad thoughts, good and bad wants, and good and bad feelings.

As a first attempt to articulate the ethnopsychology reflected in the Psalms in NSM, I would venture the following explications:

***my kidneys (khilyot-ay)***

something inside me

this something is a part of me

sometimes this something says to me about something:

“it will be bad if you do this, it will be good if you don’t do it”

I can think about it like this: “this something is my kidneys”

***my heart (lib-i)***

something inside me

this something is a part of me

sometimes this something feels something, it can be something good, it can be something bad

sometimes this something wants me to do something, it can be something good, it can be something bad

sometimes this something says something, it can be something good, it can be something bad

sometimes this something thinks something about some things,

it can be something good, it can be something bad

I can think about it like this: “this something is my heart”

Turning now to the Hebrew “soul” (*nepesh*), I will note that, as the frequent invocation to “my soul” in the Psalms show, that “soul” is seen not only as “a part of me” (as in the case of ‘my heart’ and ‘my kidneys’) but also as an imaginary inner “someone” who can be addressed and with whom the speaker can be in a dialogical relationship. The speaker attributed his deepest feelings and aspirations to that someone to whom he could innerly speak and with whom he can identify. Accordingly, if I can think of my ‘heart’ as a ‘part of me’, I can think of my ‘nepesh’ as simply ‘me’.

For comparability with the other concepts discussed in this chapter, I will not try to explicate here the concept of ‘*napshi*’ (roughly, ‘my soul’), central as it is to the Psalms, but rather, present a full explication of ‘nepesh’ (roughly, ‘soul’). It is worth noting in this context that when the King James Version urges the readers to love God with all their soul (“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”, Deut 6.5, KJV), the Hebrew Bible urges its reader to love God with all their *nepesh* (*The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 1999).

**someone's *nepesh*** (Biblical Hebrew)

## [A] [WHAT IT IS]

something inside this someone  
 this something is part of this someone  
 people can't see this something  
 people can't touch this something  
 this something is not part of this someone's body  
 this something is something very good  
 because this someone has this part, this someone can live

## [B] [HOW THIS SOMEONE CAN THINK ABOUT THIS SOMETHING]

this someone can think about this something like this:  
     "this something is like someone  
     this something can want something very much  
     this something can feel something very bad,  
         sometimes this something can feel something good  
     I can say something to this something"  
 at the same time this someone can think about this something like this:  
     "this something is me"

## [C] [WHAT THIS PART OF SOMEONE IS LIKE]

[needs further investigation]

## [D] [WHAT PEOPLE CAN KNOW ABOUT THIS PART OF SOMEONE]

people can know that it is like this:  
     something very bad can happen to this part of someone,  
     other people can do something very bad to it  
     if this happens, it is very bad for this someone

Some of the most important features of a person's '*nepesh*' (in the relevant sense) are linked with the other senses of the word *nepesh*, as discussed, for example, in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Botterweck et al. 1999). Those other senses are glossed in the Dictionary as 'throat', 'desire', and 'life'. The sense of *nepesh* rendered in the King James Version of the Bible as 'soul' is variously glossed by the Dictionary as "vital self", "vital force", "psychic power" and "abundant personality". At the same time, the Dictionary comments: "Since *nepesh* means "vital force", it is reasonable to ask what happens to it after death ...*nepesh* is never given the meaning of an indestructible core of being, in contradistinction to the physical life, and even capable of living when cut off from that life" (vol. IX, p. 515).

If we compare the Hebrew *nepesh* with St Augustine's *anima*, one aspect which stands out most is the view of one's 'nepesh' as constantly threatened by other people, often expressed in dramatic images such as "my soul is among lions" (Psalm 54, KJV). As the *Theological Dictionary's* entry on *nepesh* notes, "Many texts have to do with saving life ... a large number speak of threats to life" (pp. 510–513). Relatedly, one's 'nepesh' often experiences very strong 'bad' feelings, such as fear, desperation and bitterness. Discussing this aspect of *nepesh*, Westermann (1997: 748–750) draws attention to the fixed expression *mar nepesh*, "embittered nepesh", which in his view is typical of the Old Testament understanding of *nepesh*. At the same time, one's *nepesh* is dominated by very strong wants, often described by the metaphors of thirst and hunger.

*Nepesh* is life-giving, very precious, and given to strong negative emotions and to intense wants but not so much to positive emotions (such as rejoicing and gladness), which belong, rather, to the domain of the Hebrew 'heart'. Good feelings attributed to the *nepesh* are usually related to escapes from dangers and terror, when one's *nepesh* gets 'restored'. The *nepesh* can be urged to rejoice (rather than to be cast down), but only the 'heart' seems to be described as actually rejoicing. The speaker beseeches God to 'deliver' or 'rescue' his *nepesh* from external attackers. This is different from St Augustine's appeals to God to 'heal' his *anima* from its own bad thoughts and wants.

Another difference between *nepesh* and *anima* is that while given to strong wants and feelings, *nepesh* does not engage a person's thoughts, as Augustine's *anima* does. Thoughts are associated with the Hebrew 'heart' (which is only 'a part of me') rather than with that life-giving, precious inner core which is really 'me'.

Arguably, the deepest link between, on the one hand, the *nepesh* of the Hebrew Bible, and especially of the Psalms, and on the other hand, the *anima* of St Augustine's *Confessions* lies in the dialogical character of both: both *nepesh* and *anima* are a person's partner in their internal dialogue, a dialogue in which a part of a person which this person can see as 'me' can also become a 'thou' and be intimately addressed.

Finally, it needs to be pointed out that while modern European languages carry a legacy of the Hebrew *nepesh* in their ethnopsychologies, they also carry the legacy of the New Testament *psykhe* – a word which presumably is the New Testament Greek rendering of the Hebrew (and Aramaic) word *nepesh* as used by Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in St. Mathew's Gospel Jesus says: "And do not fear those who kill the body but

---

<sup>4</sup> The semantic history of the Greek word *psykhe* awaits a thorough investigation, based on a rigorous semantic methodology. Bruno Snell's pioneering study *The Entdeckung des Geistes* (1946), translated into English as *The Discovery of the Mind* (1953), is rich and fascinating, but hardly precise or rigorous. Snell's claims that before the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Greek had no word for *body* are not supported by methodical semantic analysis, and the same applies to his overall interpretation of the early Greek ethnopsychology.

cannot kill the soul [*psykhe*]. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt. 10:28, NKJV) It seems clear that this use of *nepesh* (underlying the Greek word *psykhe* of the New Testament Greek) is in dialogue with the older *nepesh*. As we have seen, in that older use, a person ‘*nepesh*’ could be attacked and destroyed by one’s enemies (as, for example, in Psalms 22 and 35). By contrast, in the New Testament vision, one’s *psykhe* (= *nepesh*) cannot be killed by any attackers. Other people can’t even damage a person’s *psykhe* (= *nepesh*), only the ‘owner’ can damage it (by doing something bad). Since one’s *nepesh* (*psykhe*) cannot be killed, even after one dies, one can live (presumably, in another way). Thus, the link between *nepesh* and life, prominent in the *nepesh* of the Psalms, is maintained, but is also reinterpreted: it is not a person’s physical life (ended by death) which depends on this person’s *nepesh*, but the life which can be continued (forever) after the person dies.

These new ideas had profound impact on the semantic developments in European languages after the Christianisation of Europe and have left their imprint in the meanings of words such as French *âme*, Italian *anima*, English *soul*, German *Seele* and the Russian *duša* – different as these words are, semantically, from one another. (Cf. Wierzbicka 1992, Chapter 1). These developments cannot be discussed in the scope of this chapter, but at least a partial explication of the New Testament *psykhe* is in order.

### **someone’s ‘*psykhe*’ (New Testament Greek)**

#### **[A] [WHAT IT IS]**

something inside this someone  
 this something is part of this someone  
 people can’t see this something  
 people can’t touch this something  
 this something is not part of this someone’s body  
  
 this something is something very good

#### **[B] [HOW THIS SOMEONE CAN THINK ABOUT THIS SOMETHING]**

this someone can think about this something like this:  
     “this something is like someone  
     this something can want something very much  
     this something can feel something very bad,  
         sometimes this something can feel something very good  
     I can say something to this something”  
 at the same time this someone can think about this something like this:  
     “this something is me”

[C] [WHAT THIS PART OF SOMEONE IS LIKE]

this part of someone is not like anything else  
 people have this part, (other) living things don't have a part like this  
 because of this, people are not like (other) living things

[D] [WHAT PEOPLE CAN KNOW ABOUT THIS PART OF SOMEONE]

people can know that it is like this:  
     after someone dies, this part of this someone doesn't die  
     because of this, after this someone does, this someone can live in another  
     way  
     when this someone lives in this other way, this someone can live forever  
 at the same time, people can know that it is like this:  
     something very bad can happen to this part of someone,  
     if this happens, it is very bad for this someone  
     it can happen if this someone does something bad  
     other people can't do anything bad to this part of someone

## 6 The 'theory of person' in Australian languages Yolngu and Warlpiri

Turning now to the Yolgnu "theory of person", in their 2013 seminar on Yolngu which was mentioned earlier, Frances Morphy and Howard Morphy (who are very prominent experts on Yolngu language and culture) discussed a number of Yolngu words and phrases associated, in different ways, with 'thinking', linking them with the "Yolngu theory of mind".

But since Yolngu has no word for 'mind', the phrase "theory of mind" does not reflect an authentic Yolngu perspective on the make-up of the human being. "Theory of mind" is a powerful phrase, which, as noted earlier, has made a huge career in Anglophone psychology, philosophy and anthropology. It is not a phrase, however, that would allow us to look at human groups from a neutral, culture-independent perspective. On the contrary, it is a phrase which carries with it an orientation shaped by modern Anglo culture.

Yet an alternative banner is readily available, and also has an established tradition behind it: it is the banner of French anthropologist Marcel Mauss's (1938) classic paper "La Notion de Personne, Celle de Moi" ('The Notion of Person, that is, of I'). Anthropologists Geoffrey White and John Kirkpatrick took up the banner of "person" as a tool for cross-cultural research in their classic 1985 book *Person, Self and Experience: Exploring Pacific ethnopsychologies*, and so did some other anthropologists. But to many Anglophone social scientists, the evocative force of



the English word *mind* seems irresistible – perhaps illustrating that power that a language's cultural keywords<sup>5</sup> may exercise over the minds (!) of the speakers, including academics across a wide range of disciplines.<sup>6</sup>

In English, and in many other languages, thinking is associated with a visible part of the body, the head, and also – more idiosyncratically – with an invisible part of the person, 'mind'. In Yolngu, thinking is associated with different parts of the head, but it is not linked with an invisible part of the person. So the two "theories of person" are different. In the Anglo/English model, the two main parts of the person are the visible body and an invisible part construed in terms of thinking and knowing. In the Yolngu model, there are also two main parts: the visible body and another, invisible part; but in Yolngu, this invisible part is not construed in terms of thinking and knowing. Instead, it is focussed on what one might call a 'life-giving' part of the person (echoing the St Augustine's *anima*, which he saw as giving life to the body, and especially the Hebrew *nepesh*, in whose meaning the life-giving aspect is particularly salient). The key word in question is *birrimbirr*, defined by Frances and Howard Morphy (2013) as follows:

*birrimbirr*: soul; the animating force from the *wanjarr* [Dreaming, sacred realm] that enters the foetus at conception and returns to the *wanjarr* realm at death.

In a personal email, Frances Morphy has offered the following additional explanations:

*Birrimbirr* is the aspect of the person that returns to the ancestral well to join the ancestral spirit stuff that their conception spirit came from (so that the Yolngu almost but not quite have a belief in reincarnation – the emphasis is more on the ancestral spirit stuff constantly manifesting itself through conception rather than an individual spirit being reincarnated more than once). (7/6/2013)

As these explanations make clear, *birrimbirr* belongs to a "theory of a person" which is deeply embedded in the overall system of Yolngu cultural beliefs and ideas. Trying to get some understanding of this theory, we could posit the following components couched in simple words cross-translatable into Yolngu itself:

---

<sup>5</sup> For the notion of 'cultural keywords' see Wierzbicka (1997).

<sup>6</sup> While the French word *personne* and the English word *person* carry with them meanings that are not fully cross-translatable either (cf. Wierzbicka 2002: 68–74), they are very close to the universal concept 'someone', which is cross-translatable. So if we sometimes use words like *personne* and *person* as convenient reference points in cross-cultural research (bearing in mind that what we really mean is 'someone'), not much harm is done. This is not the case, however, with the English word *mind*, which is profoundly culturally shaped and has no equivalents in other languages, not even European ones.

***someone's birrimbirr***

## [A] [WHAT IT IS]

something inside this someone  
 this something is part of this someone  
 people can't see this something  
 people can't touch this something  
 this something is not part of this someone's body

this something is something very good  
 because there is this something inside this someone, this someone can live

## [B] [HOW THIS SOMEONE CAN THINK ABOUT THIS SOMETHING]

[needs further investigation]

## [C] [WHAT THIS PART OF SOMEONE IS LIKE]

this part of someone is not like anything else  
 (other) living things don't have a part like this  
 because people have this part, people are not like (other) living things

## [D] [WHAT PEOPLE CAN KNOW ABOUT THIS PART OF SOMEONE]

people can know that it is like this:

some time before this someone was born/this part of this someone was  
 part of a place where some people lived before  
 after this someone dies, this part of this someone can be part of the same  
 place

There are no references to 'thinking' in this formula, so the similarity with the English *mind* is really quite limited. Yes, there is a reference here – as in the explanation of *mind* – to an invisible part of a person, but this part is not construed in terms of 'thinking' or 'knowing'. Rather, it is construed in terms of a special place (territory, part of the land), to which the person is seen as intimately linked and as it were receiving life from.

This link of the invisible part of the person with the place, extending beyond the person's bodily life in both directions (past and future), is the most distinctive aspect of the Yolngu theory of person (and the ethnotheories embedded in other Australian languages). While there are clearly more links between *birrimbirr* and the Latin *anima* than between *birrimbirr* and the English *mind*, there are no links between *anima* and a particular territory: the only 'place' to which *anima* refers is a place inside the person, not any external place (a piece of land). From a cross-linguistic perspective this is the most unusual aspect of the Australian Aboriginal

“theory of person”, very salient, for example, in Margaret Kemarre Turner’s auto-ethnographical account *What it means to be an Aboriginal person* (2010).

I have only included in the explication a very brief reference to the “Dreaming” [*Waṇarr*], the “sacred realm” or the “ancestral spirit stuff”, because while some such notions are undoubtedly in the background, there doesn’t seem to be any evidence that they are fully embedded in the meaning of the word *birrimbirr* as such. In order to fully understand the concept of ‘birrimbirr’, in its cultural context, the reader of the explication would need to read also the explication of the word *waṇarr*. Whether or not a component referring to a special ‘sacred’ time is to be added to the definition of *birrimbirr*, there will be many references to both people and places in the explication of words like *waṇarr* (‘Dreaming’) in Australian languages, so the links between the “theory of person” and the “theory of the sacred realm” will not be lost sight of in the over-all picture (See Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2015).

To undertake any comparison, one needs a stable common measure, a *terium comparationis*. Such a common measure can be found in universal ethno-psychological concepts such as ‘think’, ‘know’, ‘want’, ‘feel’ and ‘die’. It cannot be found in language- and culture-specific ethno-psychological constructs such as ‘sind’, ‘mine’, ‘duša’, ‘anima’, ‘nepesh’, ‘birrimbirr’, or ‘mind’. Furthermore, it is only those shared and elementary concepts which allow us to pinpoint the differences within related words *within* one language, such as, for example, *soul* and *spirit* in English, *âme* and *esprit* in French, *Seele* and *Geist* in German, or *pirilirpa* and *man-garrpa* in another Australian language, Warlpiri, to which I will now briefly turn (without proceeding to explications).

Thanks to the existence of the monumental online dictionary of Warlpiri (Laughren et al. 2006) we have more material pertinent to the make-up of the human person in Warlpiri than in any of another Australian language. The most distinctive feature of this dictionary is its inclusion of a large number of “folk definitions” and illustrations formulated in Warlpiri by Warlpiri consultants. While in many instances these definitions and explanations are presented to the reader in translations contaminated by academic English, which distorts the indigenous meanings and understandings, a great many observations of the Warlpiri consultants are also rendered in fairly minimal English which can offer good insight into the meaning of what the Warlpiri consultant actually said.

The English “word-finder” leads the dictionary user from the English word *soul* to the Warlpiri word *pirilirpa*, and it is clear from the material included in the dictionary that *pirilirpa* is indeed the main counterpart of the body in the Warlpiri model of the human person. Thus, the main folk definition of *pirilirpa* states: “*Pirilirpa* is what we have that is alive inside us – Aboriginals, Whites – here on this earth.” The invisible inner part that all people (and apparently only people) have inside them is clearly linked, in the Warlpiri speaker’s mind, with being alive – a link underscored by the gloss “life-force” frequently used by the English transla-

tions of the Warlpiri comments. Thus, in a long story of various bad things that can happen to a person's *pirilirpa*, in which the word *pirilirpa* occurs ten times, the English translation renders it six times as 'soul', and three times as 'life-force'. The following extract can give the reader the flavour of the consultant's comments:

Pirilirpa is what is in the belly. If you are sleeping, someone might come up to you, or might shout at you, yell out, and you might wake up all of a sudden. You might say to someone, if another person comes up to you, about how you feel, "I seem to be in a bad way. I have become weak. I am feeling poorly. (...) Another person can ask you, "Did people shout at you?" "Yes, I think they spoke to me. It woke me up very rudely." "Well, Maybe your soul [*pirilirpa*] has gone up into the sky. And that is why you have become unwell, why you are feeling tired, because you have no life-force [*pirilirpa*].

The link between a person's *pirilirpa* and their staying alive is also underscored by the fact that after a person dies, their invisible inner part is no longer called *pirilirpa* but something else: *manparrpa* (glossed in English as "ghost, soul, spirit, shade"). For example, the Warlpiri consultant comments: "The ghost [*manparrpa*], that is the soul [*pirilirpa*] of a dead person, can go into a lizard or a gecko." More typically, however, a person's *pirilirpa* (also referred to as *kuntu*) goes back into the land:

From a dead body, that soul, spirit [*pirilirpa*, *kuntu*], where does it go then? It goes up into the sky, or perhaps the soul [*kuntu*] goes back into its own country. His own land and Dreaming that belongs to him. Like he goes back to the big water-source of his own country.

The material concerning *pirilirpa* included in the Warlpiri dictionary suggests a meaning either identical or very close to that of the Yolngu *birrimbirr*. It is true that the Warlpiri consultant's comments describe in detail various bad things that can happen to a (living) person's *pirilirpa* when it leaves this person's body (while the person is asleep) whereas no such information is provided by the Yolngu dictionary. This is likely, however, to be due to the incompleteness of the relevant entry in the Yolngu dictionary, since similar comments are included in lexicographic or ethnographic descriptions of many other Australian languages. If further investigation of Yolngu establishes such components are present in the meaning of *birrimbirr*, too, then of course they would need to be accommodated in some form in a lexicographic portrayal of this word, too.

## 7 Cultural key words and dictionaries of endangered languages

Most of the world's languages are dying out. Twenty years ago, Michael Krauss (1992) estimated that as things are going, within a hundred years more than a half of the world's 6,000 languages could be extinct; by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,

most of the remaining languages will be endangered, and likely to be lost in the following century. Globalisation, displacement, and the needs of communication between native speakers of different languages are resulting, all over the world, in languages falling silent. In the era of massive language loss and endangerment, it is surely a matter of great urgency to undertake similar soul-searching in the area of bilingual lexicography of indigenous and endangered languages.

In his dictionary of Yolngu, David Zorc (1986: 29) glosses *birrimbirr* as follows: “soul, human spirit (goes to the Land of departed spirits to be reincarnated).” It seems clear, however, that the word *reincarnated*, which is part of the established European conceptual vocabulary, sends wrong signals here. Furthermore, such references to concepts alien to indigenous speakers close off the dictionary from its potential indigenous users (e.g., Yolngu teachers). Such wrong signals and unnecessary barriers can be avoided if instead of complex and culturally alien concepts like ‘reincarnation’ the dictionary were to rely on simple and universal concepts such as ‘die’, ‘live’ and ‘be born’.

It goes without saying that in a bilingual dictionary produced in English, the glosses have to be written in English words. They do not have to be written, however, in words shaped by the Anglo/English universe of meaning and by the European repertoire of cultural references (such as, for example, *reincarnated*).

This example illustrates a more general problem of how cultural keywords should be treated in the dictionaries of indigenous and endangered languages. The prevailing tradition expects such words to be glossed in the conceptual language of the English-speaking (and English-thinking) lexicographers. This means that the lexicographers are communicating with their readers on the culturally-shaped level of communication (Anglo), which is out of touch with indigenous thinking and which may exclude indigenous people as potential users of the dictionary. Of course the lexicographer **needs** to communicate with the Anglo/English reader, but this can be achieved through cross-translatable words, keeping the glosses accessible, in principle, to indigenous readers, too.

For example, in a language revitalisation workshop, when the meaning of a cultural keyword such as *birrimbirr* needs to be explained to young people for whom Aboriginal English or Kriol is the main language, a definition phrased in terms of ‘die’, ‘live’ and ‘be born’ is likely to be more helpful than one framed in terms of words and phrases like “reincarnated”, “foetus”, “conception”, “animating force” or “departed spirits”.

Similarly, in a language documentation project, when academic researchers and indigenous consultants are trying to put on record endangered cultural key concepts, a discussion framed in cross-translatable words such as *die*, *live* and *be born* allows both greater accuracy of the resulting definition and a better chance of mutual understanding between the researcher and the consultant. (See Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014b; Wierzbicka 2014a, Chapter 11.)

It should also be noted that in order to define cultural keywords like *birrimbirr* outside European thinking, the lexicographer would sometimes need to depart

from the traditions of European bilingual lexicography not only in the metalanguage but also in the expected structure of the dictionary entry. For example, could some version of the explication of *birrimbirr* presented here (phrased in simple English and cross-translatable into Yolngu) be included in a future dictionary of Yolngu? And if not, what is the best way of salvaging endangered cultural meanings such as that of *birrimbirr* in the dictionaries of endangered languages? To my mind, this is one of the urgent questions that linguists dedicated to the cause of recording endangered languages need to address. (Cf. Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014b. For an earlier attempt to raise such questions in relation to Australian lexicography, see Wierzbicka 1983).

More than fifteen years ago the *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary* (1991) under the editorship of John Sinclair and Patrick Hanks was bold enough and imaginative enough to

... break with a long established tradition in the style in which the entries are written. Over the years, originally for reasons of space, dictionaries have established dozens of stylistic conventions. (...) The compilers of this dictionary have considered each convention carefully, and rejected all but a few of them because of the trouble they cause. (Sinclair 1991: xvi)

Arguably, in the era when most languages of the world are either critically endangered or dying out similar boldness is called for in the area of bilingual lexicography. The matter is outside the scope of this chapter, but just to give one brief example of how the problem could be approached with the help of NSM techniques, I would suggest two possible solutions to the question of how to deal with a word like *birrimbirr* in a multi-purpose bilingual dictionary. The first is a compromise solution, half-way between the indigenous meaning and an ‘anglicised’ interpretation of that meaning. The second includes a full NSM explication, with a reference to the ‘sacred realm’ (*Wanarr*) and a cross-reference to the entry on *Wanarr*.

1. *birrimbirr*: a person’s spirit; it comes from the spirit of the place and after the person dies, returns to the same place. (See *Wanarr* ‘Dreaming’.)
2. *birrimbirr*: something inside a person, it is part of the person; because a person has this part, this person can live; people can’t see this part; people can’t touch this part; before the person was born, this part was part of a place where some people lived before, after this person dies, this part will be part of the same place. (See *Wanarr*.)

## 8 Conclusions

There are two level of verbal communication because there are two levels at which people ‘articulate’ the world (to pour a new meaning into the old phrase ‘double

articulation”). When the world is being articulated into ‘things’, ‘living creatures’, ‘places’, and ‘people’, this is the universal level of construal, which enables a universal level of communication. Similarly, when ‘things’ are described as ‘big’ or ‘small’ or when ‘someone doing something bad’ is being distinguished from ‘something bad happening to someone’, we are at the level of construal compatible with universal human communication. When, on the other hand, there is a talk of ‘reincarnation’, ‘life forces’, ‘animating forces’, ‘self’ or ‘mind’, communication happens on a different level – the level of a particular community of discourse. If we distinguish between these two levels we can recognize both the cultural shaping of all languages (leading to their conceptual diversity) and the existence of conceptual universals, embodied lexically (and therefore tangibly, verifiably) in all, or nearly all, languages of the world.

Despite the caricatural portrayals of Humboldt’s, Boas’, Sapir’s and Whorf’s thinking which have dominated linguistics for decades (cf. Pavlenko 2014; Wierzbicka 1992), such ‘double articulation’ is consistent with the deepest ideas that these great scholars expressed (at least at times) in their own work. Their main interests were different from those of Leibniz, who initiated a search for what he called “the alphabet of human thought” (*alphabetum cogitationum humanarum*), but the two lines of thoughts are not incompatible. In fact, despite their great emphasis on the diversity of languages and thought-worlds embedded in them, Humboldt, Boas, Sapir and Whorf all recognized, in different ways, the existence of a conceptual core shared by all of them. Thus, Humboldt, whose inspiration came from in-depth study of the sacred Javanese language Kawi and who was deeply impressed by the enormous diversity of languages, nonetheless wrote:

To be sure, a midpoint, around which all languages revolve, can be sought and really found, and this midpoint should always be kept in mind in the comparative study of languages, both the grammar and lexicon. For in both there is a number of things which can be determined completely *a priori*, and which can be separated from the conditions of a particular language. On the other hand, there is a *far greater* number of concepts, and also grammatical peculiarities, which are so inextricably woven into the individuality of the language that they can neither be kept suspended between all languages on the mere thread of inner perception nor can they be carried over into another language without alteration. (Humboldt 1903–36 [1836], v. 4, pp. 21–23; emphasis added).

There is no conflict between acknowledging the enormous conceptual diversity of languages and recognizing the existence of a small shared core. If there can be two levels of verbal communication among people, it is because a culturally-shaped level can be erected, in every human community, on the foundations provided by the ‘hard-wired’ ‘alphabet of human thoughts’ and by the combinatorial properties of the individual ‘letters’. Or so the NSM theory argues and the present chapter seeks to illustrate.

## References

- Bettelheim, Bruno. 1983. *Freud and man's soul*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Bloom, Allan. 1987. *The closing of the American mind: How higher education has failed democracy and impoverished souls of today's students*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Bohnenmeyer, Jürgen. 2003. NSM without the Strong Lexicalization Hypothesis. [Special issue on "Natural Semantic Metalanguage"]. *Theoretical Linguistics* 29(3). 223–226.
- Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary. 1991. London: Collins.
- D'Andrade, Roy. 2001. A Cognitivist's View of the Units Debate in Cultural Anthropology. *Cross Cultural Research* 35(2). 242–257.
- Donald, Merlin. 2001. *A Mind so Rare: The evolution of human consciousness*. New York: Farrar Strauss and Giroux.
- Evans, Nicholas. 2007. Standing up your Mind: Remembering in Dalabon. In Mengistu Amberber (ed.), *The Language of Memory in a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, 67–96. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Evans, Nicholas. 2010. Semantic Typology. In Jae Hung Song (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Typology*, 504–533. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Evans, Nicholas & Stephen C. Levinson. 2009. The myth of language universals: Language diversity and its importance for cognitive science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 32(5). 429–448.
- Everett, Daniel. 2005. Cultural constraints on grammar and cognition in Pirahã. *Current Anthropology* 46(4). 621–646.
- Fabrega, Horacio Jr. 2013. *Conditions of Psychiatric Interest in Early Human History*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Gladkova, Anna. 2009. *The discourse of duša in Russian language and culture*. Paper presented at 'Cross-culturally speaking, Speaking cross-culturally' conference, Macquarie University, Sydney, August 6–8, 2009.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2001. Lexico-semantic universals: A critical overview. *Linguistic Typology* 5(1). 1–66.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2008a. Natural Semantic Metalanguage: The state of the art. *Cross-linguistic semantics* 102. 1–34.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2008b. Contrastive semantics and cultural psychology: English *heart* vs. Malay *hati*. In Sharifian, Farzad, Rene Dirven, Ning Yu & Susanne Niemeier (eds.), *Culture, Body, and language: Conceptualizations of internal body organs across cultures and languages*, 75–102. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Goddard, Cliff (ed.). 2008. *Cross-linguistic Semantics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2010. Semantic molecules and semantic complexity (with special reference to "environmental" molecules). *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 8(1). 123–155.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2012. Semantic primes, semantic molecules, semantic templates: Key concepts in the NSM approach to lexical typology. *Linguistics* 50(3). 711–743.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2013. The semantic roots and cultural grounding of "social cognition". *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 33(3). 245–256.
- Goddard, Cliff and Anna Wierzbicka. 1994. Introducing lexical primitives. In Cliff Goddard & Anna Wierzbicka (eds.), *Semantic and Lexical Universals. Theory and Empirical Findings*, 31–54. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Goddard, Cliff & Anna Wierzbicka (eds). 1994. *Semantic and Lexical Universals*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Goddard, Cliff & Anna Wierzbicka (eds). 2002. *Meaning and Universal Grammar: Theory and empirical findings*, 2 Volumes. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.



- Goddard, Cliff & Anna Wierzbicka. 2010. 'Wanting' is a Semantic and Conceptual Universal (response to Khanina). *Studies in Language* 34(1). 108–123.
- Goddard, Cliff & Anna Wierzbicka. 2014a. *Words and Meanings. Lexical semantics across Domains, Languages and Cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goddard, Cliff & Anna Wierzbicka. 2014b. Semantic fieldwork and lexical universals. *Studies in Language* 38(1). 80–127. For additional reference see p. 479a.
- Harré, Rom & Fathali M. Moghaddam. 2012. Psychoneurology: The program. In Rom Harré & Fathali M. Moghaddam (eds.), *Psychology for the Third Millennium: Integrating Cultural and Neuroscience*, 2–21. London: Sage.
- Humboldt, Carl Wilhelm von. 1903–36. *Wilhelm von Humboldts Werke*. Berlin: B. Behr.
- Jackendoff, Ray. 2006. On Conceptual Semantics. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 3(3). 353–358.
- Jones, Doug. 1999. Evolutionary Psychology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28. 553–575.
- Kay, Paul & Rolf G. Kuehni. 2008. Why colour words are really colour words. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14. 886–887.
- Khanina, Oleshya. 2008. How Universal is 'Wanting'? *Studies in Language* 32(4). 818–865.
- Krauss, Michael. 1992. The world's languages in crisis. *Language* 68(1). 4–10.
- Kristiansen, Gitte & Dirk Geeraerts. 2007. On Non-reductionist Intercultural Pragmatics and Methodological Procedure. In Horn, Laurence R. & Istvan Kecskes. *Explorations in Pragmatics: Linguistic, cognitive, and intercultural aspects*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Laughren, Mary, Kenneth Hale & Warlpiri Lexicography Group. 2006. *Warlpiri-English Encyclopaedic Dictionary. Electronic files*. St Lucia: University of Queensland.
- Levisen, Carsten. 2012. *Cultural semantics and social cognition: A case study on the Danish universe of meaning*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Levisen, Carsten. 2013. European Words Re-invented. Presented at the Centre of European Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 28 May.
- Levisen, Carsten. In press. Personhood Constructs in Language and Thought: New evidence from Danish. In Zhengdao Ye (ed.), *The Semantics of Nouns*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levisen, Carsten & Melissa Reshma Jogie. In press. Trinidadian Theory of Mind. *International Journal of Language and Culture*.
- Lewis, Charlton & Charles Short. 1962. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lutz, Catherine. 1985. Ethnopsychology compared to what? explaining behavior and consciousness among the Ifaluk. In Geoffrey White & John Kirkpatrick (eds.), *Person, self, and experience: Exploring Pacific ethnologies*, 35–79. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Majid, Asifa. 2010. Words for Parts of the Body. In Barbara Malt & Phillip Wolff (eds.), *Words and the Mind: How words capture human experience*, 58–71. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1938. Une Catégorie de l'Esprit Humain: La Notion de Personne, Celle de "Moi" (The Notion of Person, that is, of I). *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 68. 263–281.
- McCawley, James D. 1983. Review of *Lingua Mentalis: The Semantics of Natural Language* by Anna Wierzbicka. *Language* 59(3). 654–659.
- Morphy, Howard & Frances Morphy. 2013. We think through our morwat (paintbrush) – conceptualizing mind cross-culturally. Presented at Anthropological Seminars Series, Australian National University, Canberra, 29 May.
- NSM Homepage. <http://www.griffith.edu.au/humanities-languages/school-languages-linguistics/research/natural-semantic-metalanguage-homepage> (accessed 24 March 2015)
- Pavlenko, Aneta. 2014. *The Bilingual Mind. And what it tells us about language and thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saint Augustine (Bishop of Hippo). 1975. *Confessions*, Robert S. Pine-Coffin (trans.). London: Penguin Classics.
- Saint Augustine (Bishop of Hippo). 1991. *Confessions*, Henry Chadwick (trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Shweder, Richard. 2004. Deconstructing the emotions for the sake of comparative research. In Antony S. R. Manstead, Nico Frijda & Agneta Fischer (eds.), *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium*, 81–97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shweder, Richard. 2012. The cultural psychology of natural kinds and deconstruction of emotions: A comment. *Emotion Review* 4(4). 382–386.
- Sinclair, John. 1991. Introduction to *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*. London: Collins.
- Snell, Bruno. 1953. *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, Thomas G. Rosenmeyer (trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Snell, Bruno. 1955 [1946]. *Die Entdeckung des Geistes: Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen*. Hamburg: Classen Verlag.
- Turner, Margaret Kemarre. 2010. *What it means to be an Aboriginal person*. Alice Springs: IAD Press.
- Van Driem, George. 2004. Review. In Cliff Goddard & Anna Wierzbicka (eds.), *Meaning and Universal Grammar – Theory and Empirical Findings*. *Language* 80(1). 163–165.
- Westermann, Claus. 1997. Hebrew “Nepeš ‘soul’”. *Theological Lexicon of the OT [Old Testament]*, 3 Vol. Peabody, Mass.
- White, Geoffrey & John Kirkpatrick (eds.). 1985. *Person, self, and experience: Exploring Pacific ethnologies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1972. *Semantic Primitives*. Frankfurt: Athenäum.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1983. Semantics and lexicography: Some comments on the Warlpiri dictionary project. In Peter Austin (ed.), *Papers in Australian Linguistics* 15, 135–144. Australian Aboriginal lexicography. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1989. Soul and mind: Linguistic evidence for ethnopsychology and cultural history. *American Anthropologist* 91. 41–58.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1992. *Semantics, Culture and Cognition: Universal human concepts in culture-specific configurations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1996. *Semantics: Primes and Universals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1997. *Understanding Cultures through their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, Japanese*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1999. *Emotions across language and culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2002. Semantic primes and universal grammar in Polish. In Cliff Goddard & Anna Wierzbicka (eds.), *Meaning and Universal Grammar – Theory and Empirical Findings*, Vol. 2, 65–144. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2005. Commentary on Daniel Everett’s Cultural Constraints on Grammar and Cognition in Pirahã: Another Look at the Design Features of Human Language. *Current Anthropology* 46(4). 641.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2006. *English: Meaning and culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2007. Theory and Empirical Findings: A response to Jackendoff. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 4(3). 399–409.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2008a. Why there are no ‘colour universals’ in language and thought. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14. 407–425.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2008b. Rejoinder to Paul Kay and Rolf G. Kuenhi. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14. 887–889.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2010. *Experience, Evidence and Sense: The hidden cultural legacy of English*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2011. The common language of all people: The innate language of thought. *Problemy Perediaschi Informatsii* 47(4). 84–103.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2012a. Understanding others requires shared concepts. *Pragmatics and Cognition* 20(2). 356–379.

- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2014a. *Imprisoned in English*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2014b. Exploring the model of the person embodied in English, French, Biblical Hebrew, New Testament Greek, Yolngu (Australia), and Uduk (East Africa). Paper presented at the Symposium on the Make-up of the Human Person, Australian National University, Canberra, 11 July 2014.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 2015. Can there be a Common Knowledge without a Common Language? German *Pflicht* versus English *Duty*. *Common Knowledge*.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. In press. The meaning of color words in a cross-linguistic perspective. In Andrew Elliot (ed.), *Handbook of Color Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yoon, Kyung-Joo. 2006. *Constructing a Korean Natural Semantic Metalanguage*. Seoul: Hankook Publishing Co.
- Zorc, David. 1986. *Yolngu-Matha Dictionary*. School of Australian Linguistics. Darwin Institute of Technology.

