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Towards a grammar of ecocultural identity

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Abstract: This chapter explores linguistic devices which are used to perform ecocultural identities, defined as identities which include consideration of not just humans but also other species and the wider ecological systems that sustain life. Of the many possible ecocultural identities available some have the power to influence people to care and protect other species and the ecosystems that life depends on, and these are considered to be 'positive'. The chapter analyses language features in the book *Land of the spotted eagle* by Luther Standing Bear in the search for language features which help to instantiate positive ecocultural identities. The methodology used is an adaptation of Positive Discourse Analysis, where texts are analysed for features that align with the values system (or ecosophy) of the analyst. The linguistic devices described in the chapter include metaphor, appraisal patterns, agency, pronoun use and semantic inclusion. The purpose of Positive Discourse Analysis is to describe linguistic features which could be selectively combined, with careful consideration of the context, to promote particular value systems; in this case to promote care for humans, other species, and wider ecological systems.

Keywords: ecolinguistics, ecocultural, identity, ecology, communication, environment, linguistics, discourse analysis, positive discourse analysis

Land of the spotted eagle: towards a grammar of ecocultural identity

Of course, it is easier to abuse or destroy one of 'them', than one of 'us'. History is replete with examples of people coming together to form groups which then attempt to harm or annihilate other groups. And the criteria for separating the groups is often paper thin – a different religion, perhaps a different sect of the same religion, a different skin colour, a subtle difference in ancestry. Dividing the world into groups requires *identity work*, where particular characteristics are selected and represented as being an overridingly important distinction separating 'us' from 'them'. It is also easier to care about and protect one of 'us', so who exactly the 'us' includes is a vital issue. Identity work is primarily carried out through language, and it is the linguistic construction of identity that I am exploring in this chapter.

The relationships between powerful and powerless groups of humans, between the oppressors and the oppressed, is the central theme of Critical Discourse Analysis. However, there has been an ecological turn in humanities and social science subjects, where consideration extends beyond humans to other animals, plants, rivers, oceans, forests and the ecosystems that life depends on. This wider ecological perspective brings an additional level of focus: the relationships of humans not only with other humans but with other species and the wider physical environment.

Identities can be considered to be nested at different levels. The first level is *individual identity*, where attention is on individual humans. The second is *social identity*, where individuals are recognised but are also seen as part of larger social groups. The final level is *ecocultural identity,* which includes consideration of individuals and groups but expands the groups beyond the human world to include other species and the physical environment.

The three levels of identity are not intrinsically positive or negative in themselves. A focus on the individual could be used to promote respect for people as unique and irreplaceable beings, but could also be used to promote the pursuit of selfish self-interest. A focus on social identities could be used to encourage people to work together towards the common good, but could also be used to encourage them to work against the interests of other groups. And while ecocultural identities could encourage respect and care for the wider community of life, they could equally lead to a view of other species as merely resources for human exploitation.

It is important, therefore, to consider carefully what makes an ecocultural identity positive or negative. That is a question for the ecological values system (or ecosophy) of the analyst. I am basing this chapter on an ecosophy which can be summarised in one word, *care!,* with the explanation mark having a normative meaning that care is something to be celebrated and promoted. The ecosophy is based on an "ethic of care" (see Tronto 1993), but one which extends beyond the human to include other species, future generations and the wider ecosystems that life depends on. I will therefore consider ecocultural identities to be positive if they promote care for individuals, social groups, other species and ecosystems; both those existing now and those who will exist in the future.

The predominant discourses which construct identity in industrial societies tend to be highly anthropocentric. This is problematic since identification beyond the human-only world is key to behaviour that protects the ecosystems that life depends on. Crompton and Kasser (2009) describe how 'Studies of environmental identity and connectedness with nature have indeed established that connectedness is strongly correlated with environmental attitudes and behaviours' (p.12). Thomashow (1995) examines evidence from psychological studies and concludes that 'there is evidence suggesting that people take action, or formulate their personality based on their ecological worldview' (p.4). Harding (2010) states that from a sense of ecological identity 'there arises a deep appreciation of the reality of interdependence, and from this comes the urge to be involved in opposing all sorts of ecological abuses' (p. 41). Perhaps Leopold (1979, p. viii) puts it best when he states that 'We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity. When we see land as a community to which we belong we may begin to use it with love and respect.'

The contribution of this chapter is to describe how linguistic analysis can assist in the task of promoting positive ecocultural identities. My focus is on one book, *Land of the Spotted Eagle* by Luther Standing Bear, and I use Positive Discourse Analysis to reveal the linguistic devices that perform individual, social and ecocultural identities. The conclusion presents a short list of features that can be used to perform positive ecocultural identities but suggests that with further research it may be possible to provide a fuller grammar that speakers and writers can draw on.

Positive Discourse Analysis

Discourses are clusters of linguistic features which combine together to tell particular stories about the world (Stibbe 2015). Dominant discourses convey stories so frequently that they become common ways to view the world within a culture. Examples would be the stories that economic growth is the main goal of society, that competition is more important than cooperation, that success is defined in terms of salary or status, or that humans are superior to other animals or nature. The stories are not necessarily false but are just one possible outlook on the world which can be challenged and replaced with other ones. Of importance for this chapter are linguistic features which perform ecocultural identities, i.e., which represent individuals as part of social groups and part of the wider community of life. An example of a linguistic device that contributes to ecocultural identity is the metaphor of NATURE AS A WEB:

> Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. (Chief Seattle)

Within this metaphor, humans, other animals, and plants are all equally, equivalently, and identically threads within the web - humans are not different from, separate from or above the rest. The metaphor has great power to convey the entailment that by destroying the

natural world we are also destroying ourselves. As Raymond et al (2013, p. 540) point out in a study of metaphors that structure the human–environment relationship, 'humans are one part of a wider ecological system and have the responsibility to understand their impacts on the various components of the broader system'.

Furtwangle (Furtwangler 1997, p. ix) describes how the quotation above about the web of life is often attributed to Chief Seattle, but has a more hazy origin - a recollection quite some time after the event of the words of a simultaneous interpreter at one of the Chief's speeches. However, what matters primarily is not the origin of the metaphor but whether it is a useful linguistic device that can be employed in other discourses to influence the public imagination. An example of this is the way that a museum used this metaphor:

> Our planet is literally teeming with life. An amazing variety of habitats, people, plants, and animals— everything from penguins to peas and bacteria to buffalo—are all interconnected in a fragile web of life (Field Museum 2014)

Linguistic features such as this metaphor can be considered part of 'a grammar of positive ecocultural identity'. A grammar in this sense does not mean creating a list of 'ecologically incorrect' ways of phrasing things and a list of 'correct' alternatives that must be used. A path that echoes that of political correctness could stifle creativity and lead to the kind of twisted language that is easily ridiculed. An example would be the insistence on using the word 'anymal' to emphasise that humans are animals too (Kemmerer 2006), or clumsy expressions such as 'non-domesticated non-human' as an ecologically correct way to refer to a 'wild animal' (Dunayer 2001). Instead, a grammar of positive ecocultural identity would consist of a list of linguistic features that could be drawn on selectively and creatively in a diversity of forms of writing in order to inspire people to see themselves, and humans in general, as part of a wider community of life.

One path towards building a grammar of positive ecocultural identity is to search for discourses which already establish positive ecocultural identities, and then analyse them carefully to discover the linguistic mechanisms that they use to do so. There are many places to look, from innovative contemporary nature writing, to ancient texts from cultures around the world.

This approach to analysing texts in the search for new stories is a form of *Positive Discourse Analysis* (Martin 2004, Bartlett 2012, Stibbe 2017a). Positive Discourse Analysis is similar to Critical Discourse Analysis, an approach which looks closely at linguistic features to reveal how they structure unequal power relations between groups (Fairclough 2013). Positive Discourse Analysis, however, has a clear focus on discourse which 'inspires, encourages, heartens; discourse we like, that cheers us along' (Martin 1999, pp. 51–52). The aim is to

analyse texts and discover linguistic features which tell positive stories about the world, and then promote these features in order to contribute to beneficial change in society. Bartlett (2012), for example, uses Positive Discourse Analysis to describe how Amerindian communities in Guyana use language in useful ways that help them reclaim their heritage.

This section has described Positive Discourse Analysis as a framework that can contribute to the search for new stories to live by, and the next section applies this framework to one particular text.

Land of the Spotted Eagle

In this section I analyse the linguistic features in the book *Land of the Spotted Eagle* by Luther Standing Bear (2006 – originally published in 1933) in the search for forms of language which help establish positive ecocultural identities. The aim is not to try to create a full grammar of positive ecocultural identity from just this one text, but rather to demonstrate Positive Discourse Analysis in action, create an initial starting point, and then encourage others to analyse other texts from around the world to contribute to, amend and develop the grammar.

The reason for focusing on the work of Luther Standing Bear is that he is one of a very few writers who grew up within a traditional Native American oral culture, then learned English, and used the English language to convey the wisdom of the culture. Standing Bear is one of a small group of Lakota writers such as Ohiyesa (Charles Eastman) and Zitkala Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) who 'used autobiographical storytelling to preserve traditional values and to challenge their readers' preconceptions of what it meant to be "civilized"' (Eick 2013). *Land of the Spotted Eagle* particularly suits the goal of building a grammar of ecocultural identity since it is an extended non-fiction account which explicitly comments on relationships between the Lakota and the natural world (pp.192-25).

Of course, the book itself cannot be seen as a transparent representation of oral Lakota culture. For a start, the text is written down, written in English, and written with an active goal of overturning stereotypes and encouraging respect for the Lakota people. As Ellis points out in the forward of the book: 'Standing Bear presents a very positive view of Sioux life, but occasional errors exist and some statements remain controversial' (Ellis, in Standing Bear 2006, p. xviii). However, the fact that the text is written in English is important, since we are interested in forms of language which can be practically used as an alternative to hegemonic discourses in industrial societies. Standing Bear has already done the work of taking indigenous wisdom and using the resources of English to express it in ways that counter the dominant stories of industrial society. It therefore provides a useful source for resisting dominant discourses in English speaking industrial countries.

Method

The research question is quite simply 'What linguistic features in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* perform positive ecocultural identities?'. Identity performance consists of using language to divide the world into groups, placing the self and others in separate groups, and representing the groups positively or negatively (see the 'ideological square' in van Dijk 2008). The performance of identities is ecocultural if it acknowledges the existence of both humans and the more-than-human world, and positive if it additionally promotes *care* for humans, other species and the ecosystems which life depends on (according to the ecosophy of *care!*).

In conducting positive analysis there is a danger of romanticising indigenous cultures and constructing an unrealistic 'Ecological Indian' (Garrard 2012), i.e., attributing ecological behaviours and attitudes to Native Americans which were not actually part of their cultures. Garrard (2012) points out that 'The Ecological Indian is clearly a stereotype of European origin' (p.135), and 'at its cruellest, the Ecological Indian represents a homogenisation of … 600 or so distinct and culturally diverse societies' (p. 136). It is necessary therefore to be clear at the outset that the task is one of searching for linguistic resources that can be useful for instantiating and promoting positive ecocultural identities, without claiming that these are the *only* forms of identity performance in the text examined or that they are representative of wider Native American cultures. There may well be negative aspects of the text, e.g., where plants and animals are treated as resources, but exploring and commenting on these is beyond the research question.

Practically, the method includes close reading of the whole text and examining a wide range of linguistic features from pronoun use, vocabulary choice, and presuppositions to metaphors, framings, and evaluations. These are the typical linguistic features examined in any discourse analysis (Fairclough 2003, Stibbe 2015, Flowerdew and Richardson 2017), but in this case, the focus is on whether, and how, these features establish positive ecocultural identities.

The following sections examine the linguistic devices which perform ecocultural identities, including the social and ecological aspects which make identities ecocultural.

Inclusion in social groups

There are many lexical, grammatical and cognitive devices which build social identities in Luther Standing Bear's *Land of the Spotted Eagle* and the following is an example:

> The medicine-man was a true benefactor of his people in that his work was founded upon and promoted the Indian ideal of brotherhood, and all service rendered to fellow beings was for the good of the tribe (p.203)

In this example, the family frame triggered by the word 'brotherhood' goes beyond the literal family to include others. People are described as 'fellow beings', placing others within the same category as self, and the word 'tribe' subsumes the individual into a collective social entity to be respected in its own right. Another example which establishes social identities and responsibilities to a group is the following:

> the child will be devoted…to the service and welfare of other members of his band (p.28)

This creates a part-whole relationship between the band as whole, and a series of 'members' that constitute it. The 'child' is represented as one of these members in a relationship of identity with all other members (i.e., all are identical insofar as being members of the band).

A potential downside to a strong focus on social identities is that the individual is erased and the good of minorities is sacrificed for the good of all. However, Standing Bear still gives salience to the individual through explicit reference to *individuals* and being *individualised:*

> To the Lakota every other individual in the tribe was as important as himself and it was his duty to preserve the identity of the tribe. (p. 67)

> There must be no hungry individuals; so long as one had food, all would have food. (p. 69)

> Though each person became individualized— could be as truthful, as honest, as generous, as industrious, or as brave as he wished— could even go to battle upon his own initiative, he could not consider himself as separate from the band or nation. (p. 124)

While respecting the individual in these examples, Standing Bear simultaneously reinforces the social identity through placing the individual with 'the tribe', 'band', 'nation' or 'all'.

There are examples of this linguistic building of social identity and solidarity throughout the book, and these provide an important counter-story to industrial civilisations' atomistic representation of humans as selfish individuals concerned only with their own advancement and material accumulation. However, social identities are only part of ecocultural identities, which by definition extend beyond the human world to consider the wider community of life.

Inclusion in the wider community of life

The Social Identity Approach (Hogg 2016) describes how people perceive the world to be split into groups, and gain a sense of pride and belonging from seeing themselves as part of a group. Members of the group will therefore tend to represent their own group positively, while representing other groups negatively, since any enhancement to the status of the group is an enhancement of the individual. However, taken to the extreme, this can lead to one group damaging the chances and prospects of another group, or, in cases of genocide, even attempting to destroy them.

Language plays a key role in this process because it can separate the complex world into a series of groups, focus attention on a particular group, assign members to the group and represent one group as superior to all others (Van Dijk 2008). This is a very familiar process when it comes to the classic sociological distinctions of race, gender, class and sexuality, but is also a key factor in ecological issues. If the world is divided into humans in one group, and all non-human life in another group, then there is a danger that humans are seen as superior and the natural world as exploitable and expendable.

The question that this section explores is how the language in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* instantiates ecologically inclusive identities, that is, identities where humans are seen as equal members of groups that include both humans and other members of the wider community of life. An example is the following:

> The character of the Indian's emotion left little room in his heart for antagonism toward his fellow ***creatures*** (p. 195) [emphasis added]

The word 'fellow' establishes a relationship of hyponymy (i.e., category/member of category), where 'the Indian' (referring to Native Americans in general) is represented as a member of a category 'creatures' which includes beings from the more-than-human world. In doing so, humans are made identical to other species, identical that is, as far as being creatures.

The following are further examples:

> By acknowledging the virtues of other ***beings*** the Lakota came to possess them for himself (p. 204)

In order to place himself in communication with the other **earth entities** the Lakota submitted to a purification ceremony (p. 204)

The acceptance of a kinship with other **orders of life** was the first step towards humanisation (p. 202)

To sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other **lives** about him (p. 192)

[Lakota] appreciated that life was more than mere human manifestation, that it was expressed in a multitude of **forms**. (p. 195) [emphasis added in each case]

From these examples we can see that humans are placed in categories that contain more than just humans through the use of the terms 'too', 'more than', 'other', and 'fellow'. The superordinate terms, i.e., the names of the categories, are 'creatures', 'beings', 'earth entities', 'orders of life', 'lives', and 'forms'. If other species are part of the same group as humans (i.e., the in-group) then this makes it more difficult for ethical duties, such as care, to be overlooked.

Kinship beyond the human world

Family are usually the people we care about most, and the ones we are most likely to protect from harm. And being a member of a family (a mother, father, uncle or sister) is often one of the strongest identities that people have. In *The Land of the Spotted Eagle,* Standing Bear uses the explicit term 'kinship' to place humans within a family that includes other living beings who are not human: 'kinship with other orders of life' (p.202), 'kinship to other lives' (p.192), 'all things were kindred' (p.193), 'kinship with all creatures of the earth' (p.193) and 'kinship and unity of life' (p.186 - 187). This builds ecocultural identities through including humans firmly and directly within the larger community of life.

Another way that ecocultural identities are built is through metaphor, where the target domain (i.e., the area of life that is being talked about) is *the Earth* or *animals*, and the source frame (i.e., the area of life which words are being drawn from) is *a family*. In these examples I've highlighted the words which trigger the source frame (i.e., bring the source frame into the mind of readers to establish the metaphor):

The Indian, as well as all other creatures that were given birth and grew, were sustained by the common *mother* — earth. He was therefore *kin* to all living things and he gave to all creatures equal rights with himself. Everything of Earth was loved and reverenced. (p. 166)

In talking to children, Lakota would place a hand on the ground and explain "We sit in the lap of our *Mother*. From her, we, and all other living things, come…" (p.195)

For the animal and bird world there existed a **brotherly** feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them. And so close did some of the Lakotas come to their feathered and furred friends that in true **brotherhood** they spoke a common tongue. (p. 193)

When metaphors are triggered then particular elements of the source frame map onto (i.e., correspond to) elements of the target domain. Within the first example, the Earth maps on to the mother (i.e., the Earth, and both *The Indian* and *other creatures* map onto children. This not only places humans directly within the same category as other creatures, but also makes them siblings. The third example represents this explicitly with the term *brotherhood* applied to the Lakota, animals and birds, while the first two examples extend the siblinghood to all living things. There is an important entailment of this, which is explicitly drawn out in the first example: that if all living things are siblings then we must love, revere and protect them.

Friendship with other species

When the Earth or non-human beings are described using the family terms of *brother* or *mother* then this is clearly a metaphorical framing, since the Earth did not literally give birth to people. However, the use of friendship is a literal framing, since humans can be described literally as friends with other creatures.

Standing Bear explicitly applies the framing of *friend* not only to other humans but to horses, buffaloes, birds, animals, feathered beings, furred beings, spiders, and foxes, bestowing on them not only personhood but, at the same time, respect. Sometimes the respect is reinforced by adjectives such as *noble*, *immemorial*, and *trusted*.

So down went the Black Forest and to death went the last buffalo, noble animal and immemorial friend of the Lakota. (p. 44)

The horse was the Lakota man's most trusted friend in the animal kingdom (p.22)

If other creatures are friends or family then an important entailment (i.e., logical consequence of using the metaphor) is that they are seen as deserving of consideration, respect and protection. In the following example, this entailment is explicitly drawn out:

> If a man could prove to some bird or animal that he was a worthy friend, it would share with him precious secrets and there would be formed bonds of loyalty never to be broken; the man would protect the rights and life of the animal, and the animal would share with the man his power, skill and wisdom. In this manner was the great brotherhood of mutual helpfulness formed, adding to reverence for life orders other than man (p.204)

The trigger words for the framing are 'friend', 'bonds', and 'brotherhood', and the entailments are that humans would protect the rights and life of animals and feel reverence for other orders of life.

Commonality with the more-than-human world

The story of human exceptionalism is one of the most dominant ways of imagining the world in industrialised countries. According to this story (for it is just a story), the essence of being human lies in those things that are said to distinguish humans from other animals: language, rationality, religion, literature, music, and the sophisticated use of tools. In these differences lie not only human separation from the animal world but also human superiority.

It is possible to tell a different story, however: that the essence of being human lies not only in those things that distinguish us from other animals, but also in what we share: bodies, emotions, social bonds, and a dependence on ecosystems for our survival. In this alternative story, self-respect comes from respecting all life rather than from a feeling of superiority to other forms of life. It can help challenge what Kingsnorth and Hine (2009) call the most dangerous story of all: 'the story of human centrality, of a species destined to be lord of all it surveys, unconfined by the limits that apply to other, lesser creatures'.

Standing Bear draws out and gives salience to commonalities between humans in the following examples:

The world was a library and its books were the stones, leaves, grass, brooks and the birds and animals that shared, ***alike with*** us, the storms and blessings of the earth (p.194)

From Wakan Tanka there came a great unifying life force that flowed in and ***through all*** things – the flowers of the plains, blowing winds, rocks, trees, birds, animals – and was ***the same*** force that had been breathed into the first man. Thus all things were kindred and brought together by ***the same*** Great Mystery (p.193)

[there is] a place ***for all*** things in the scheme of existence with equal importance ***for all***. The Lakota could despise no creature ***for all*** were ***of one*** blood, made by ***the same*** hand, and filled with the essence of the Great Mystery. (p.193) [emphasis added in each example]

The commonalities are given salience through the words 'the same', 'alike with', 'through all', 'for all' and 'of one'. These examples are notable because they locate commonalities not just between humans and other animals, but also between humans and flowers, winds, rocks, trees, stones, leaves, grass, and brooks. Emphasising commonality in this way helps to expand the moral sphere to encompass all life and aspects of the physical environment. The third example explicitly draws out the entailment that sharing a morally relevant commonality entails equal treatment for other beings, that all beings have a place in the scheme of existence, and that there are no grounds for despising them.

In the first example above, the pronoun use of 'us' in the expression 'animals that shared, alike with ***us***, the storms and blessings of the earth' places humans in an in-group of 'us' and implies that 'animals' are an out-group (because they are not 'us'). However, simultaneously, the expression creates a superordinate group that both animals and humans belong to. This group does not have a name such as *living beings* – it is, instead, an ad-hoc category (Barsalou 1983). The category is a group of entities who have in common that they are subject to 'the storms and blessings of the earth'.

The other examples above also set up ad-hoc categories. The second example is a group of entities who all share a life-force flowing in and through them and the third is a group of beings who share one blood and were made by the same hand. In this way, the language initially separates humans from other species, but emphasises commonalities rather than differences and subtlety includes humans and other species within higher, ad-hoc categories.

While this section has discussed commonality, the next section discusses how vertical metaphors can be used to place one group above, below or at the same level as another

group. The relative levels of groups of humans and other groups from the wider community of life are key indicators of ecological identity.

Spatial metaphors

There are two conditions that need to apply for discrimination to take place. The first is that two groups are represented as different from each other. The second is that one group is represented as better than the other. Spatial metaphors (Cian 2017) are often used to convey both difference (far, distant) and quality (superior, higher). In the following examples, Standing Bear uses spatial metaphors to point out and resist the discrimination of 'the white man' or 'the Caucasian', and replaces this discrimination with a story of equality. I've highlighted the expressions which trigger spatial metaphors:

> The Indian and the white man sense things differently because the white man has put **distance** between himself and nature; and assuming a **lofty** place in the scheme of order of things has lost for him both reverence and understanding. (p.196)

> But the old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart, **away from** nature, becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to a lack of respect for humans, too. So he kept his youth **close** to its softening influence (p.197)

> Everything of earth was loved and reverenced. The philosophy of the Caucasian was, 'Things of the earth, earthy'— to be belittled and despised. Bestowing upon himself the position and title of a **superior** creature, others in the scheme were, in the natural order of things, of **inferior** position and title; and this attitude dominated his actions toward all things. (p. 166)

Here 'distance' from nature, being 'away from' nature, considering oneself 'lofty' in the scheme of things or a 'superior' creature are represented negatively. This is achieved by associating them with a loss of reverence and understanding, a lack of respect, and generally being associated with the 'white man' (which in the context is not a positive appraising item). The negative story is replaced with the explicit story that it is better to keep nature close, and better to see oneself as equal rather than superior.

Vertical metaphors can therefore be seen as performing positive ecocultural identities when there is an *appraisal pattern* (Martin and White 2005) of linguistic devices which represent

humans *being close or at the same level* as other species as positive, and *far or above* as negative.

Personhood

It is hard to harm a person. In genocides, massacres, and executions the victims are often represented as monsters, objects, or an undifferentiated horde or mob – anything to deny individual personhood. There is a continuous discursive struggle to define and redefine the boundaries of the category of *person*, with interested parties placing those they want to protect within the category and excluding others, often through subtle linguistic means such as metaphor or pronoun use. The US Government states that 'Person includes a natural person…a corporation, a partnership, an unincorporated association…' (Congress 2006: 18:1349), which has served to increase corporate power by giving corporations rights usually associated with humans. On the other hand, in New Zealand, the Whanganui River has recently been recognised as a person under domestic law, with full human rights, and the Ganges and Yamuna rivers in India have received similar recognition.

There are several linguistic techniques that Luther Standing Bear uses to give personhood to those who happen not to be human. Firstly, he accords personality to 'everything', not just humans: 'Everything was possessed of personality, differing only from us in form. (p.194)'. He also uses metaphor to personify aspects of nature:

> Wherever the Lakota went, he was with Mother Earth. No matter where he roamed by day or slept by night, he was safe with her. (p. 192)

> The rain fell in streams and the storm warriors threw their lightning sticks to earth and shook our tipis with their thunder…The mental reaction of the Lakota was one of unity with these tremendous forces [of nature] (p.42)

In the first example, the Earth is personified as a mother, while in the second, storms become warriors who act wilfully and violently. While this second example could have led to an entailment that the storms are an enemy, instead Standing Bear draws out the entailment that if storms are persons and so are the Lakota then they are unified.

In the following example, rain is personified through being referred to by a proper noun, Rain, with a capital 'R':

> I have seen a brave, without uttering a word, strip himself to breechclout and walk out into a rain falling so heavily in sheets that a few paces from the door his form was lost to sight. He went out to be alone with Rain. That is true love of Nature. (p.42)

The entailment that is drawn out here is that Rain is a valued and loved companion. The appreciation of rain and all forms of weather is a way of building ecological consciousness and a sense of belonging to the Earth, as described in Stibbe (2017b).

There are also more subtle ways that Standing Bear implicitly gives personhood to beings who are not human. A key aspect of being a person is agency, i.e., the carrying out of actions according to will. Linguistically this is signified through placing beings in the agent position of material processes, i.e., active processes of doing something in the world. As well as humans, Luther Standing Bear places a spider, birds, insects, animals, pines, buffalo and his horse in the position of agent:

> Even the spider came to the brave on the mountain top with a message of friendship. (p.26)

> birds, insects and animals filled the world with knowledge (p.196)

> the tall pines at the top of the cliff arched their boughs (p.43)

> There was one very beautiful and easy pass through which both buffalo and Lakota entered the hills (p.43)

> If we found deep water we [Luther Standing Bear and his horse] swam together, my hand clasping his mane (p.23)

The agent of 'entered' in the third example is not just 'buffalo' but also simultaneously 'Lakota'. Similarly, in the final example, the agent of the verb 'swam' is 'we', which includes both Standing Bear and his horse simultaneously. This sets up an equivalence in the agency of humans and other beings, highlighting their personhood.

Boundary Crossing

There is another kind of personification that occurs when Standing Bear describes traditional Lakota rituals where humans communicate with animal and stone spirits:

> Many songs were dreamer songs received while in communion with spirits of beings personified as humans. Some of the dreamers who brought songs to the people were Elk, Duck, Thunder, Hawk, Wolf, Spider, Fox, Crow and Stone. The wisdom of these beings was given to the dreamer in song and he in turn sang them to help his people. (p.214)

In this exerpt the terms *Elk, Duck, Thunder* etc. play a dual semantic role. Firstly, they refer to the 'dreamers', i.e., the humans, and then they refer to the 'beings', i.e., the nature spirits. This could be considered a constructive ambiguity since it blurs the boundary between humans and nature.

The spirits in the traditional rituals are represented actively ('activated' in the terminology of van Leeuwen 2008, p. 33) through their thematic roles, for example:

> The fox had knowledge of underground things hidden from human eyes, and this he shared with the dreamer, telling him of roots and herbs that were healing and curing (p.215)

Here the fox is the *senser* of an implied mental process of knowing, *agent* of the material process of sharing, and *sayer* of the verbal process of telling – these are all activated roles which give autonomy to the fox and implicitly convey personhood. Stones follow a similar syntactic pattern to the fox:

> The stones were possessed of extraordinary knowledge, for they were on the earth, in the earth, and in the sky visiting the sun and moon, so they taught the following song to the dreamer (p.216)

The people in communication with the spirits in these rituals are referred to with the compound terms Elk Dreamer, Fox Dreamer, Bear Dreamer and Stone Dreamer, mixing the human (dreamer) with the more-than-human. The dreamers dress in costumes and mimic the actions of the animals.

In this way the boundary between human and animal, and even human and stone, becomes blurred and elk, fox, bear and stone are personified by being channelled through the human. Of course, Standing Bear and many others mentioned in the text are named after animals or aspects of nature: Sorrel Horse, Rising Sun, White Hawk, Whirlwind, Little Thunder Spotted Bear, Fast Whirlwind, Bull Bear, White Blackbird, Conquering Bear. This again brings the human and more-than-human worlds together, dissolving boundaries.

This is an interesting form of personification because it is different from anthropomorphism – the animals are becoming human in a way, but at the same time the humans are, to use Abram's (2010) expression, *becoming animal*. Either way, it is done with the greatest of respect and reverence for beings from the more-than-human world, and brings them into the heart of the human community.

Conclusion: identities within and beyond the human world

This chapter has discussed positive ecocultural identity as an identity performance which considers and shows care for the more-than-human world, social groups, and individuals. Individual identities are essential in recognising the intrinsic worth of everyone – after all, as Eisenstein (2011) points out, sacredness lies in recognition of uniqueness and irreplaceability. Exactly who is recognised as an individual is determined by discursive struggle, with some humans represented as more individual and special than others (Machin and Mayr 2012, p. 100). However, if the individual is all that there is, then there is a danger of building a society that focuses on selfishly pleasing consumers at the expense of others and the environment. The discourse of neoclassical economics takes this to the extreme, and is one of the discourses at the heart of industrialised civilisations (Stibbe 2015, p. 35).

Social identities see individual humans as part of larger social groups, where there is cooperation towards the common good, and are essential for building a caring and sharing society. However, if the groups are just groups of humans then the many other beings who are leading their lives in their own way according to their nature are excluded. The danger of excluding these others is firstly that harm could come to them if they are seen as members of the outgroup and their lives treated as secondary and subordinate to human lives. Secondly there is potential harm to everyone since all life is interconnected in a delicate web (to borrow a metaphor discussed above), and disregarding and destroying part of the web destroys us all.

Building identity is a discursive act. The world does not come pre-divided into individuals, in-groups, out-groups, superior beings or inferior beings – these are created in a complex interaction of language, performance, cognition and the physical world. So, the key question

for this chapter was *what linguistic techniques can help create positive ecocultural identities?*

Examining Luther Standing Bear's *Land of the Spotted Eagle* provided some ideas towards a grammar of positive ecocultural identity. There are linguistic devices within the book which respect humans as individuals but simultaneously, and firmly, place individuals within larger groups where all work cooperatively towards the common good. And most importantly, there are devices which place humans within the larger life community. Some of the linguistic devices discussed in the chapter are illustrated in Table 2.

Linguistic device	*Example*
Metaphor	Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it.
social group name	band; tribe; community; nation
semantic inclusion (other/fellow)	fellow creatures; other beings; other earth entities; other orders of life; other lives
kinship (explicit)	kinship with other orders of life; all things were kindred; kinship with all creatures of the earth
kinship (family framing)	for the animal and bird world there existed a brotherly feeling; Wherever the Lakota went, he was with Mother Earth
friendship framing	feathered and furred friends; bonds of loyalty
commonalities	birds and animals that shared, alike with us, the storms and blessings of the earth
personhood (personification)	He went out to be alone with Rain. That is true love of Nature.
personhood (agency)	birds, insects and animals filled the world with knowledge
personhood (sayer)	[the fox was] telling him of roots and herbs that were healing and curing
shared agency	There was one very beautiful and easy pass through which both buffalo and Lakota entered the hills
pronoun use (inclusive 'we')	If we found deep water we [Luther Standing Bear and his horse] swam together
pronoun use (he/she rather than it)	my hand clasping his mane
names from the more-than human world	Sorrel Horse, Rising Sun, White Hawk, Whirlwind (as human names)
spatial metaphors	he kept his youth **close** to [nature's] softening influence; [the white man] bestowed upon himself the position and title of a

	superior creature

Table 2: Linguistic devices that build ecocultural identity. All examples are from *Land of the Spotted Eagle* except for the first which is from Chief Seattle.

This is just a small selection of features, and there is much more to be said about each of them. However, it would be useful for future research to critically examine a great diversity of other sources from traditional cultures across the world and build up a large library of resources for constructing positive ecocultural identity in a number of languages. These resources could then be drawn on for all kinds of genres: nature poetry, novels, non-fiction, natural history programmes, biology textbooks, children's teaching materials, news reports, even economics books to inspire respect and care within, and beyond, the human world. Perhaps one day, the dominant story of industrial civilisations will have moved beyond the model of individual humans selfishly trying to accumulate as much as possible, and instead towards a more generous view of humans as altruistic beings working towards the good of their community and the larger community of life that they are part of.

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