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WITHIN THESE FOUR WALLS: THE PERILOUSNESS OF ELUSIVE GUARD RAILS AND IMPERMANENCE OF SAFETY

Abstract: *Cognition for better or worse does appear to reside at the feet of spatiality, which in turn constitutes one of the more ossified keystones of reality-carving perception mechanisms the humanoid-coded cohort is invariably endowed with, and it bears repeating that this constellation of epistemic mechanics abides in no small measure owing to societal and culturally-tinted mores incessantly reiterated to the brink of relegation to a metanoia contrived in a borderline ad nauseum fashion. Therein lies the hindrance to one-to-one or at the very least easily elicited correspondence in the transposition and limpid demarcation between structurally inherited and transgenerationally mooted and affirmed cognitive devices garnered from a relatively unbiased source and telegraphed with a gloss of fear into a more pliant and individuated target domain.*

The unremitting character of moulding an intertextual and ostensibly erroneous meaning-sensitive system is equal parts the north star and a murky nor'easter blanketing the way forward and out. The paper, notwithstanding said constraints, posits an amalgamated theoretical and analytical matrix attuned to the "what works principle" and at the same intent lays the groundwork for a dry-run approach to decipherment at large. This hybridised analytical tool is provisionally put on a metaphorical beta blocker and remains to be further expatiated on and deployed in force on a more comprehensive corpus, however the paper shines a light on cognition, culture and along with grammaring as the "fifth" skill and brings it into synchronous orbit. It would not be misleading to say that this is a spark plug teasing an upcoming in-depth volume.

It follows that since the unequivocal assertions concerning cultural and cognitive negotiations populating the domain at the heart of both cogitation and consequent

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meaningful and workable output show no signs of abating, this zetetic line ought to be further pursued and hopefully illuminated. The propositions were put to the test in an empirically attested and cogently targeted sample study of media-propelled and licenced messaging armature. Last and by no means least, this analytical amalgam seeks to broach the through line of safety, health and wellbeing perpendicular to the shielding tools meant to safeguard their sustained preservation.

Keywords: *cognition, spatiality, perception, source, target, cognitive negotiations, media-propelled armature, safety, health, safeguards.*

1. Prolegomenon in name and naming: the medicamentous power of metanarratives of containment, confinement and force fields in fiction and reality

The public and private media-spheres of the extant and moderately post-Covid day-to-day routine have been systematically and designedly inundated with cautionary discourse. These preferred and strategised rhetorical blueprints are easily identifiable in the prevalent output promulgated by mainstream outlets. This paper centers around the salient facets of the conceptually propaedeutic domains of safety and salubrious behavioural predilections underscored with a view to ministering to the hypothesised communal welfare. Specific framing strategies are believed to have been employed to channel metaphorically-tailored communiqués for the purpose of delineating a new ideological pathway and overarching cultural re-coupling. The process of enkindling correspondences between two or more domains bulks large in creativity and ensuing perceptual matrices. These practices are part of the more general process of framing or/and domain-setting[2].

Consequently, domains are construed as cognitive entities, representational spaces, conceptual complexes of varying levels of intricacy and organisation. Medically-suffused parlance steadily and markedly morphs into a pervasive communicative pattern asserting itself as an integral part of common culture. The volte-face towards what used to be relegated discourse begs the question as to the tendencies and extent of these ongoing processes.

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[2] Over the course of time, too long even to be a polite question, many a conference was attended and not all yielded a paper. Therefore, in this particular iteration, some of the ideas previously communicated in verbal form and others never even committed to paper floating in thought, have been retooled and put to adequate use so as to lend a helpingly incentivising hand to the author in and at need. Credit should be given to all the preceding years of discussion and fruitful debate at various symposia and seminars that now do come in exceedingly handy and inspiring.

Having the down-at-heel Latinate adage of what is intended to be an almost self-help lath ham-fistedly plastered in the greater mosaic of the industry of happiness in mind, namely that repetition is the mother of learning, one most luckily happens upon two intersecting theories reinforcing the duende and allure of reiteration. Hebbian theory firms up the underpinnings of cognitive linguistics, especially the facets pertaining to the human neural network and conceptualisation, which looms ineluctably large in metaphor and metonymy of the cognitivist provenance. In a fleeting nutshell, the main tenet reads that 'neurons that fire together, wire together'. This explication was introduced by Donald Hebb in his 1949 book The Organization of Behavior. Axons, dendrites and synapses carrying a signal from one neuron to the next depend on the 'persistence[3]' of the exchange so as to facilitate 'synaptic strength[4]'. In other words, repetition is required for hypothetical engrams to form and persist in due course.

The other opposite number in this conjoined twin alloy hails from the literary-semantic neck of the woods: isotopy. Isotopically speaking, the crux of it is, unsurprisingly, a form of repetition of a basic meaning property or trait. This is also referred to as a seme, with a meticulous distinction made between a seme and a sememe, but for the purpose of this research, the multifaceted building blocks of isotopy shall not be further elaborated upon as this remains part and parcel of the more extensive project already prefigured.

Fusing these two theoretical cogs in an interdisciplinary pro tempore wheel sticks the landing just in time for the main scaffolding to be installed. Cognitive linguistics takes great pride in the structural metaphorical mapping of space viz. container, confinement and boundedness in generously broad strokes. This should come as no surprise seeing as cognitive science in language implacably and unfailingly adorns itself in life-related garbs making sure enough distance can be observed between its humanistic panache as opposed to the modular and semantically empty Chomskyan paradigms. This is of course well-thumbed and regurgitated fodder George Lakoff himself discussed on, perhaps, too many occasions, and the author pledges allegiance to no side in this 'great linguistic schism'. Nonetheless, the connectivity point stands as regards inherited phenomena objectively identified, cognitivist closer-to-home approach and utility of already readily accessible disciplines found at the fount of human creativity.

For that human-bound creativity to thrive, or more accurately, for humans and human-capable communicators to endure, protection is direly needed and

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[3] In Hebb's words.

[4] Ibid.

ceaselessly sought out and ever so after. At this stage a metaphorical elucidation is in order:

> HUMAN BEINGS ARE VESSELS
> VESSELS HAVE INTEGRITY
> INTEGRITY IS ESSENTIAL FOR SURVIVAL
> INTEGRITY MUST BE PROTECTED
> PROTECTION IS LIFE
> LACK OF PROTECTION IS LIFELESSNESS

2. Discursus and ratiocination: serving the entrée of liminality

The aforementioned lexical and more importantly conceptual constructs have never seen an isotopic respite. Human beings live in a perpetual state of fear of their ipseity being compromised and that one way or another they might find themselves in harm's way. In a paradoxical sense, humans thirst for more time, but the fact of the matter is, we are oftentimes self-portrayed as time-poor mendicants on their knees for more. Therefore, UP IS (notionally and nominally) GOOD. This mapping does not work quite as simply and faultlessly all the time, but it does underscore the deep-seated emotional nexus giving rise to the specific mindset and coding almost all natural human language communicators are prone to.

In order to assuage the fears of loss and insufficiency, be it sustenance or other life-giving resources, various and it should be noted ingenious systems of protection have been put in its proverbial place. To tread carefully towards the neighbourhood of the chief tenor behind this survey, a thesaurus is consulted to provide a list of synonymous lemmata denoting (or connoting) the idea of protection. The first port of call is the lemma "wall" and these are some of the similar-meaning entries given[5]:

> fence, barrier, barricade, obstacle, hedge, block, chain, bumper, hurdle, obstruction, rampart, interference, impediment, curb, let, roadblock, pale, paling, bar, inhibition, deterrent, hindrance, dam, stumbling block, handicap, stop, clog, fender, trammel, cushion, encumbrance, embarrassment, buffer, restraint, crimp, snag, constraint, bulwark, pad, shackle(s), drag, manacle, hobble, fetter

The wall is doubtless held up quite organically as the genuine article of natural defense, hence the decision to take a deep dive in the pond of this, in layman's terms,

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[5] Dictionary and thesaurus consulted for all three lemmata: https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus

word. It may appear a figurative mile wide and an inch deep, but the sheer semantic potentiality propping up the lexical instantiations cannot be overstated. The is no clear blue water between the lemma wall and our next destination – "shield":

> defense, protection, safeguard, ammunition, wall, weapon, armor, screen, guard, security, buckler, aegis, ward, cover, egis, armament, weaponry, arm, fortress, munitions, stronghold, fort, palisade, fastness

It bears emphasising that these lexemes are real life based and the list is by no means comprehensive as there are cultural and language-specific criteria to bear in mind when collating synonymised items. The weight is attached to English and the relative Anglosphere. The last lemma parsed by means of a thesaurus is "safety":

> security, protection, safeness, defense, refuge, shelter, shield, guardianship, safeguard, ward, screen, guard, asylum, retreat, aegis, inviolability, cover, invulnerability, harbor, invincibility, haven, egis, impregnability, invincibleness, inviolableness, impregnableness, invulnerableness

From a cursory perspective, it can be surmised that there are bound to be certain repeat offenders, so to speak, or more technically, items that occur in all three list for the very simple reason moored in the incontrovertible proof of conceptuality and metanarrativity. It indeed is a time-worn platitude that concepts supersede their exponents or in this case variously christened as lemmata, lexemes, words, entries or items. Semantically speaking, a line of unarguable differentiation can aptly be drawn between these labels, but, yet again, that regrettably orbits far off the mark regarding the centrality of this paper's topic. Our gaze now turns towards the world of fiction and to that end, here is a limited list of fictional protective mechanisms found in popular culture:

> Mithril – the Lord of the Rings mythos[6]
> Adamantium – the Marvel universe[7]
> Amazonium – the DC mythos[8]
> Duranium, Tritanium, and Gold-pressed Latinum – Star Trek[9]
> Cortosis and beskar – Star Wars lore and canon[10]
> Unobtanium – Avatar[11]

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[6] Home - The Tolkien Estate

[7] Explore the Marvel Universe | Marvel

[8] Comics | DC

[9] Star Trek | Official Site

[10] StarWars.com | The Official Star Wars Website

[11] Avatar.com | The Official Avatar Website for Avatar News

Based in, on or around reality or completely contrived and fictional existing merely as an echo of an (over)zealous imagination, all the above concepts and hypothetical referents serve one palladium purpose: preservation of the corporeal and noetic integrity and acumen of human beings. In even simpler terms, these are physical, conceptual and narrative mechanisms to thwart, foil or at least delay the finality and liminality of human existence. The wall, shield and safety at the heart of the matter convey a conceptual vulnerability and uncertainty of life and life path. The wall and the shied particular in effect serve as deterrents form liminality, unknowable transformation and transition and consequently provide a guard rail against transience, impermanence and inevitability.

3. A Chink in Conceptual Armor: Toeing the Line towards the Denouement

A preponderantly held belief that safeguards can be well-nigh miraculously put in proverbial place, either by dint of reality-orbiting and to an acceptable extent empirically substantiated parapets of safety or through the good offices of hyperactive imagination incontrovertibly, telegraphs the message of conceptually conventionalised modalities of sustaining and shielding both bodily and consequently cognitive integrity, thus seeding deep-rooted notions of what is implied by the very simple words: You're safe (here)? If cynicism coinhabits one's realm of all manner of thought processes, a question of that, more precisely cynically sardonic, description is easily beggared: Where is this ever so elusive "here"?

Given that this paper's author has half a mind to steer his cogitation along the more incredulous lines, we have trodden carefully and handled this possibly delicate subject with kid gloves so as to avoid the sheer dread of freewheeling scientific rudderlessness, an oft-arbitrary indictment all too readily levied, but equally the excessive sense of an overweeningly run-and-gun personalised authorial signet. This deposits us quite conveniently at the doorstep of theory, corpus and inevitably hypotheticals.

Having taken stock of the following theoretical devices, bearing in mind that the word device is used by design and not due to an oversight or an out-of-the-blue lapse, mutatis mutandis, this is a precis in short order. Hebbian Theory and Isotopy make a complementary duo that reaffirms the task at hand from multiple parallel-running angles. This multiperspectivisation is a safe harbor for any researcher facing a quandary or a knot adamantly resilient to being uncut. Conceptualisation and construal as key ingredients in any cognitive potpourri prove once more

their superordinate station in relation to the instantiated exponents in the form of lemmata. Although contrary to cognitive belief, innate programming such as fear-driven emotional nexus engendering the necessity for protection and safety is one of the quandaries. It could be hypothesised the source code was input in one set of circumstances and carried on uninterrupted for the better part of human civilisation spilling over into fiction in a seemingly futile attempt to rewrite the original design. The protective systems already discussed, and it is crucial to stress that this is a nugatory and limited set, provide little to no solace in the long run when it comes to the ineluctable liminal and transitional stages in human existence. The impermanence breeds fear and fear breeds irrationality. It is especially germane to note the confines and constraints of creativity, such as it is, for the creative self does not appear transcendent when compared to the cognisant persona in the kaleidoscope of our myriad personality traits. However, since repetition is a human safe bet to steer from a mere nodding acquaintance onto a more stable path of familiarity, perhaps, should we learn to reiterate a newly gleaned iota of knowledge, hope does spring eternal, for safety cannot be quantified, futility cannot be entirely neutralised and walls, force fields and safe spaces can only last so long. As we can surmise at the close, the way forward is the way out – out of the confines of one's own fears and the very walls built to protect us in the first place. There is some solace to be found in the unknown and the ever-unknowable far beyond these four walls.

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ČETIRI BEDEMA: NEUHVATLJIVA NIT SIGURNOSTI

Rezime

Rad posmatra multimodalne i interdisciplinarne mehanizme složenih pojava u pojmovnom kontekstu na prvom mjestu, a nakon toga se kreće u domen stvarnog i narativnog. Idejna vodilja je fenomen sigurnosti i osjećaja koji se konceptualnim sistemima evocira. Imajući na umu ograničenost dometa čovjekovog djelovanja na horizonte van mogućnosti percepcije, pogled je upućen na fiktivni dio naše kreativnosti u koju iz prvobitnog, zamalo, izvornog koda učitavamo matrice dobro utvrđene iskustvom koje je tipično za čovjekov um, život i sveopštu prirodu. Uz spoznaju da je jezik zapravo sve ono što čini čovjeka u intelektualnom i duhovnom smislu, rad je usmjeren upravo na ligvističke prakse kojima potvrđujemo, poništavamo ili pod znakom pitanja ostavljamo prvobitnu dilemu – da li je sigurnost uhvatljiva, u ili van četiri metaforička, pa i stvarna bedema.

▸ *Ključne riječi*: multimodalni i interdisciplinarni sistemi lingvističke analize, fenomen sigurnosti, iskustvo, percepcija, horizonti spoznaje, četiri metaforička bedema.