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'In Countries so Unciviliz'd as Those?': The Language of Incivility and the British Experience of the World

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'Civilisation', wrote Arnold J. Toynbee in the 1950s, 'is a movement, not a condition; it is a voyage, not a harbour.'¹ In a similar vein, the ways in which peoples and nations have thought others to be civilised, or uncivilised, have altered and changed over time. This development is true particularly of the contact over the past 1,000 years between the British and those they thought to be, and deemed, 'uncivilised'. The ways in which British writers represented and constructed these 'uncivilised' peoples in their factual narratives and explanations, and the extent to which those writers engaged with shifting and changing conceptions of such people, allow an insight into the reactions and attitudes of the British towards those they encountered through imperial expansions and travel abroad. This chapter therefore seeks to analyse the ways in which the English-speaking peoples have sought to conceptualise those deemed uncivil, through an investigation into the word choices which scholars now know were available to them at each stage in the evolution of the English language.

This chapter therefore demonstrates the ways in which speakers of English have adapted their conceptualisations of 'incivility' through travel and contact with the outside world. We aim to trace in linguistic history the cultural, political and social attitudes towards the concept as it developed over time. As a result, we are able to see the shifts in the way in which Britons and other speakers of English termed people deemed uncivil, from giving them rough, animalistic characteristics (for example, 'crude' or 'rough') towards the later significance of the relationship between the person and the state (for example, the overarching modern term 'uncivil'). Through this type of research a researcher can for the first time see longer-term shifts in attitudes using evidence scattered around the historical record. The concept of civility is an excellent

illustrative example of this; it details a contentious and shifting conceptualisation which has developed as the British and other English-speaking peoples have come into contact, through travel, exploration and imperial conquest, with other peoples and cultures. This analysis is now possible following the publication of the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary (HTOED)* in 2009.² Its systematic categorisation of all of the words available to the speakers of English throughout their history allows historians to be able for the first time to analyse the development of ideas through the options available to a writer to realise their conceptualisation of the world. It therefore reveals information about social and cultural change which is otherwise locked within the alphabetical arrangement of dictionaries and encyclopaedias.³ Based on a semantic rearrangement of the contents of the 20 volumes of the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*,⁴ supplemented by a range of other materials, the *HTOED* contains all of the recorded words in the English language, alongside dates of known usage, in hierarchical semantic fields. Therefore all of the words for a particular concept, such as the adjectives used to mean 'uncivilised', are arranged together in a category which sits next to other words concerned with civilisation and its absence. Such categories are important because lists of words for the same concept reveal a form of recategorisation on the part of English speakers across time, where the coining of a new term reflects a shift in the understanding of, or attitudes towards, a particular concept. Key here is the notion that speakers of a language do not develop new words meaning precisely the same thing as existing words; for there to be enough benefit to speakers to learn and spread a newly coined word, it must have a distinct contribution to make to the language.⁵ Teasing apart such differentiations in the field of uncivilised persons is the aim of this chapter.

This approach to the study of history is beneficial in a number of ways. It allows scholars to comprehensively see the development of ideas and concepts over broad ranges of time, as their associated terms developed. We can therefore now investigate the full range of options available to any given speaker in history for them to describe concepts (in the present case, incivility); and in so doing we are also able to better use the citations and usage evidence stored in the *OED* and other linguistic corpora. This approach enables us to investigate not only the broader shifts in the attitude of the English-speaking peoples but also areas of particular change or of focused word innovation. These alterations or additions to the collective vocabulary can be used by the historian as a means to understand social and political developments through their implicit, rather than their explicit, discussion.

This type of focus takes into consideration some of the 'controversies about the nature of textual interpretation',⁶ and it furthers the 'linguistic turn' in historiography while noting the central significance of word choice in understanding the cultures and politics of past discussions.⁷ The approach here used takes both an essentialist and a selectionist approach to understanding word meaning. It argues therefore that word meanings in and of themselves are important but disagrees with full essentialist views that 'the context in which the word appears is irrelevant' by emphasising the importance of wider historical context.⁸ This chapter seeks to contribute to the understanding of the role played by 'meaning' in historical investigation and understanding,⁹ by providing analysis and description of the ways in which meaning shifts over time. This type of

work allows us to overcome some of the issues inherent in the study of the past with regard to misinterpretations of meaning, intention or context, and it works to further our appreciation of the argument that ‘there are in fact no such time-less concepts, but only the various different concepts which have gone with various different societies’.¹⁰

The chapter is an approach to social and political history using the new data and approaches available, but built on historiographical tradition. Writing in 1990, Geof Eley noted Hobsbawm’s main thoughts on social history as it then was, commenting:

In his 1971 essay, Hobsbawm suggested that most interesting social history was clustered around six complexes of questions:

1. Demography and kinship
2. Urban studies in so far as these fall within our field [social history]
3. Classes and social groups
4. The history of ‘mentalities’, or collective consciousness, or of ‘culture’ in the anthropologist’s sense
5. The transformation of societies (for example, modernisation or industrialisation)
6. Social movements and phenomena of social protest.¹¹

This present work seeks to engage with a number of these points in social history at once, providing commentary on the ways in which a particular social concept – in this case, incivility – developed and changed over time. As such, the research engages with several of Hobsbawm’s key themes above, notably those of classes and social groups, the history of mentalities, the transformation of societies and societal movements.

In order to do this the present chapter takes as its starting point those adjectives which have been recorded in English to refer to the concept of being uncivilised. Of the 42 words in the main *uncivilised* category in *HTOED* (see Figure 1), the vast majority follow a particular path of lexicalisation which we describe below, with new terms reflecting the shifting conceptualisation of the uncivil throughout the times when they were coined. To best analyse this shift, and relate it to the contexts within which each term was used, this chapter uses the term ‘sense-families’ to describe those groups of words which fit into similar conceptualisations and which have similar metaphorical roots. For each family we provide citations of their use in a range of different periods, with these examples being used to describe the changing concept and also to relate it to the English-speaking peoples’ shifting conception of the wider world.

While discussing each conceptual movement in turn, the chapter will focus mainly on the colonial and post-colonial periods, and on British sources where possible. Although the *HTOED* covers the full history of English, including its roots in the Old English (OE) period from 700 to 1150 CE, the OE material is not discussed in detail here.¹² The examples given as evidence will be taken from *OED* citation files, the House of Commons recorded debates in *Hansard*, major linguistic corpora and sundry other relevant primary sources.

03.01.03.02.01 (adj.) *Uncivilized*
 bærbære OE · elreord OE · elreordig OE · hæþen OE · ungerad OE · wild<wilde OE; *at*1300- · wildern *at*1300 · fremd *at*1374 · bestial *at*1400-1816 · savage *at*1420/30- · savagine *at*1430-1430/40 · rude 1483- · barbaric 1490-1513; *at*1837- · barbar 1535-*at*1726 · barbarous 1538- · Scythical 1559-1602 · barbarious 1570-1762 · raw 1577; 1847; 1865 · incivil 1586 · barbarian 1591- · uncivilized 1607- · negerous 1609 · savaged 1611 · mountainous 1613-1703 · ruvid 1632(2) · ruvidous 1632 · incivilized 1647 · inhumane *at*1680 · tramontane 1739-1832 · semi-barbarous 1798- · irreclaimed 1814 · semi-savage 1833- · semi-ferine 1854-1858 (*rare*) · warrigal 1855 (*Austral.*)-1890 · sloven 1856 (*US*)-1882/3 · semi-barbaric 1864 · wild and woolly 1884- · woolly 1891- · jungle 1908- · medieval 1917- (*colloq.*) · jungli 1920- · pre-civilised 1953- **01** and *unsubdued* untamed OE **02** *without intelligible language* ungeroord OE **03** *specifically of persons* uncivil 1553-1644 · savage 1588- **04** *pertaining to uncivilized people* savage 1614- **05** *acting/speaking as uncivilized* barbarizing 1662; 1855- **06** *rendering uncivilized* barbarized 1602; 1839 · barbarizing 1809- · decivilized 1831-1892 · barbarianized 1885 · decivilizing 1889 **07** *becoming uncivilized* barbarianizing 1859 **08** *absence of accepted social standards/values* anomic 1950-

Figure 1 'Uncivilised' in *HTOED* (p.1235 of Kay et al., 2009)

Sense-families 1 and 2: *Wild* and *Crude*

The first two sense-families both arise in the Middle English period, and, although evidence for the first pre-dates the second, at this stage of the recorded language it is best to treat both as contemporaneous. The first family is that of *wildness* and *savagery*, wherein foreign persons were considered untamed and beast-like, and the second is *roughness*, where those without civilisation were somehow unfinished, lacking smoothness or a 'finish' (such as education). These two provide the groundwork from which the later families grow. The first emphasises the way in which not being part of society is akin to being animalistic, a frequent conceptualisation found in many Western societies, while the second mirrors this with a particular emphasis on what the person (or people) in question does not have. These two ideas, of emphasising and exaggerating the negative features of a certain group of others, and of emphasising what it is that they lack, are a consistent starting place for most privative concepts in *HTOED*.

The first family, then, begins with *wild*, which has a reflex term in OE, and as well as being the oldest term in the category is still in frequent modern use. Its primary and oldest sense refers to the undomesticated state of animals, and so constitutes one of the earliest beast-to-man metaphors recorded in English. Its early use stretches from the early fourteenth-century *Cursor Mundi* through Scottish poetry of the fifteenth century ('Scotland ... set through with our ennemys wilde').¹³ It continues in the same sense to the present day; – for example, George Hadfield, MP for Sheffield, used it in 1860 to

refer to the native peoples of New Zealand, with a distinctly religious emphasis on their state of being: ‘The duty of the bishops and ecclesiastics was to instruct the wild people of the colony in Christian doctrines, and in the principles of morality.’¹⁴ A similar term is *fremd*, an OE term deriving from the earlier Germanic for *from*, originally referring to one who is a stranger,¹⁵ but later referring to not tame, as can be seen in Chaucer’s use ‘Al this world is blynd/In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.’¹⁶ The two other major terms here, both of which are from the fifteenth century and still in modern use, are *bestial* and *savage*, easily found in many sources to refer pejoratively to uncivilised persons (for example, in 1908 the Attorney General for Ireland protests in the House of Commons: ‘I never said that the people of Ireland were West African savages’; barely 40 years earlier, a Leicestershire MP expressed the opinion that ‘The tendency of Parliament to legislate as if the people of Ireland were a set of the most incapable and helpless savages was to him a matter of regret’, and another asked if ‘Her Majesty’s Government will take into consideration the advisability of discontinuing the use of [the dum-dum] bullet in wars with semi-civilised or savage people, as well as with those nations who are parties to the [First Hague] Conference’).¹⁷ Similarly, while travelling through South America in 1826, John Miers commented that ‘This post consists of three small huts, horribly filthy; the people were extremely miserable in their appearance, and little, if any, better than savages in their mode of life.’¹⁸ To travel abroad in this instance, and to come into contact with these apparently ‘savage’ peoples, invited hardship and hostility for the British; they sought to place these people in the context of being ‘horribly filthy’ and ‘savage’. Darwin commented similarly on the peoples he met while travelling on the *Beagle*:

They passed the night here; and it was impossible to conceive anything more wild and savage than the scene of their bivouac. Some drank till they were intoxicated; others swallowed the steaming blood of the cattle slaughtered for their suppers, and then, being sick from drunkenness, they cast it up again, and were besmeared with filth and gore.¹⁹

The image intended to be conveyed here, exaggerated or not, is clear: to be savage is to be beast-like, lacking in the control of Darwin and his contemporaries in manners, cleanliness and habits. The family is completed with a series of modified terms – *savagine* (c. 1430–30/40), *savaged* (1611) and *semi-savage* (1833–) – alongside one further term: an Australian Aboriginal borrowing *warrigal* (1855–10), originally meaning a wild dog. It is clear here that during their wide travels, Britons such as those quoted above came into contact with numerous people and practices that they viewed to be savage simply due to the fact that they did not conform to British social norms of the time; as in the way of thinking of this sense-family, the presence of those norms was identified with civilisation itself.

The second family is smaller but contains two major terms used from Middle English to the present day, alongside a third variant. The major terms are *rude* (1483) and *raw* (1577–), both used to indicate roughness or crudeness on the part of the uncivil. Of particular interest here is this sense-family’s habit, in attested use, of being employed to

highlight that which the uncivil lack in the eyes of the writer, so that in *OED* citation files we find:

1577 Harrison, *England in Holinshed Chronicles* (1587): Men, being as then but raw and void of civilitie.

1586 Hooker *Hist. Irel.* in Holinshed II. 141/2 The rude people he framed to a civilitie, & their maners he reformed and brought to the English order

1732 Berkeley *Alciph.* viii. §15 If we suppose rude mankind without the use of language.

Each of these highlight civility, manners and language as aspects of the uncivilised persons being referred to. These aspects are highlighted in detail in later sense-families which emerge (see 3 and 4 below). In particular, the British view of such persons is highlighted to the extreme in an example of the other term in this cluster: the English borrowing *ruvid* from Latin (meaning simply *rough*). This ideal example of *ruvid* in context comes from William Lithgow, a Scottish traveller of the seventeenth century, who expressed, in characteristically damning fashion, his opinion of the Arabian Peninsula:

The people generally are addicted to Theft, Rapine, and Robberies: hating all Sciences Mechanicall or Civill, they are commonly all of the second Stature, swift on foote, scelerate, and seditious, boysterous in speech, of colour Tauny, boasting much of their triball Antiquity, and noble Gentry: Notwithstanding their garments be borne with them from the bare Belly, their food also semblable, to their ruvid condition, and as savagiously tame (I protest) as the foure footed Citizens of Lybia: They are not valourous ... Their language extendeth it selfe farre both in Asia, and Affricke, in the former, through Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, even to the Mount Caucasus: In the latter, through Aegypt, Lybia, and all the Kingdomes of Barbary even to Morocco.²⁰

Lithgow's use of multiple terms for uncivilised persons here displays a range of harsh views concerning the inhabitants of the peninsula, and forms a marker of values and practices which were seen by him as appropriately civilised, and which the others whom Lithgow encountered on his travels seemingly lacked.

These two sense-families together, their roots in earlier Germanic expressions and metaphors, form a baseline for the ways in which English-speaking travellers and writers conceptualised those they encountered outside their contextual 'civilisation'. Their age makes them a consistent and stillcurrent measure of how speakers explore the identity of others whom they encounter and later discuss among themselves. The following sense-families, however, evolved during the history of English in different directions, and highlight other features which the British began to consider dominant.

Sense-family 3: *Barbar*

While the focus on the above, older families of categorisation of those thought uncivil was on their animalistic or simplistic traits, by the late Medieval period an alternative way of naming such others as a different 'type' of people had started to come to the fore in English. This approach adopted a much older racial method of classification from the Classical period; the word *barbaric* entered English in the late fifteenth century and was derived from the Greek term *βάρβαρος*, via Latin. This word was initially used to describe the ways in which those who did not speak Greek sounded; it worked, in other words, as a way of defining those who were, and those who were not, Hellenic.²¹ (In modern-day English, the equivalent might be the use of *blahblah* to signify meaningless and different-sounding speech.)

The concept behind this original meaning developed over time as it shifted from Greek to Latin to English, but it was the later use in English that gave the word its core meaning as savage or uncivil. The term *barbaric* originally was one of sounding foreign or different. William Bonde's use of this term in the *Pilgrimage of Perfection* illustrates the point perfectly, wherein he noted 'My wyt is grosse ... & my tong very barbarouse.'²² Similar discussions revolved around the use of Old French in law as early as the mid-sixteenth century ('To see al our law ... ryten in thys barbaiarase langage') and in the teaching of Latin.²³ The use of this family of words – the *barbar* family – to categorise those who spoke a foreign language (be it originally non-Hellenic, not Latin or not English) was used until the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century.

It is important to note that while the tongues used were foreign, it did not necessarily follow that they were uncivilised, brutish or inhumane, other than the author's pre-existing opinion of foreigners (although this is, of course, frequently negative). This distinction remained as late as 1814 and was used simply to determine the nature of the sounds being uttered. There could be an implied connection, perhaps, of a simpler or more rustic life, but there was no cruelty inherent in the description of 'barbaric sounds'. This led to, for example, the author and Anglican cleric Sydney Smith being able to write about his travels:

When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days I passed there amidst odious smells, *barbarous sounds*, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings.²⁴

From the author's point of view here there is no contradiction between 'barbarous sounds' and 'enlightened and cultivated understandings', even though it is surrounded by less than complimentary physical descriptions of Scotland. Yet to a modern-day audience this description may appear contradictory in terms. Only in the context of the sorts of data presented here are we able to see such instances of sense-shifting; and only with an appreciation of the historical uses of terms are we able to gain a full appreciation of the subtler shades of meaning.

Over time, however, this concept behind what it means to be barbaric altered and the meaning of incivility began to become intricately connected, so that by the seventeenth century the word had adopted its current-day definition. Smith, above, was even by his

time – and probably knowingly – using or punning on an older sense of the word when he discussed the civil barbarity of the Scots. Instead it became increasingly the case that those who were not Christian were deemed barbaric and outlandish: ‘Let vs come to Lawes; for euen the barbarousest people had of them.’²⁵ This religious definition relied on the older interpretation of those who were, and were not, Latin (or Latinised) and reinforced the relationship between barbarity and incivility. As such, Shakespeare, for example, juxtaposed barbarousness and manners when Olivia dismisses Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, saying he is fit only for the ‘Barbarous Cauces, Where manners nere were preach’d’.²⁶

Writing in the 1850s regarding his times in Africa, David Livingstone drew a comparison between the peoples he met in Africa and non-Western Europeans. The Austrians and Russians were used as a point of comparison for readers to understand the supposed barbarity of African tribal society, and the ways in which non-British Europeans held onto unpalatable character traits:

It is noticeable that the system of espionage is as well developed among the savage tribes as in Austria or Russia. It is a proof of barbarism. Every man in a tribe feels himself bound to tell the chief every thing that comes to his knowledge, and, when questioned by a stranger, either gives answers which exhibit the utmost stupidity, or such as he knows will be agreeable to his chief.²⁷

Similarly, this new attitude towards barbarism – the one which still holds currency in the modern world – as something from which we might escape, into civilisation, through concentrated effort was exemplified by the *Washington Post*, which reported an uncomplimentary 1930s remark by an unknown Frenchman as ‘Americans are the only race which passed directly from barbarism to decadence without knowing civilisation.’²⁸

With this shift in the nature of the meaning of the word, there came a number of variations along the *barbar* theme. The word *barbar* was in recorded use from 1535 to just before 1726. *Barbarious* was used from 1570 to describe ‘barbarious and miserable creatures’,²⁹ to 1762, where it described ‘barbarious nations’.³⁰ *Barbarian* similarly entered the language in 1591 and was initially used to discuss the ‘broad barbarian sound’ but increasingly became a method of discussing lacking civility.³¹

However, by the late eighteenth century a further shift occurred in the classification of barbarity. Qualifiers began to be applied to the depth or extent of barbarity through words such as *semi-barbarous* (in recorded use from 1798 onwards) and *semi-barbaric* (1864). This method of classification denoted a sense of being only part savage, or of being on a path towards full civility. The now-civilised peoples of Britain were classified as ‘semi-barbarous’ in their past in 1798 (‘The ancient Britons were as little acquainted with the art of writing, as any of the rude and semi-barbarous nations of those times’) but had, importantly, the chance or ability to move towards full civility.³² This type of part-civility is one which will be discussed further below.

The idea of barbarity, then, was originally born of the need to classify those by the sounds they made. To be barbaric was not in the beginning to be cruel, inhumane or

savage in its core sense, merely to be foreign. However, as the concept developed alongside the other sense-families under discussion here – as, for example, the British peoples came increasingly into contact with those they deemed to be uncivilised – the meaning shifted to encompass a greater degree of negative and judgmental ideology. This pattern is one which is reflected in the final two sense-families.

Sense-family 4: *Civility*

While the above sense-families all relied on definitions based around the characteristics of people, the idea of (un)civilness revolves around, and is based upon, our relationship with the state and what we would now deem ‘civil society’. The development of these ideas mirrors the growth in the concept of the state from the fifteenth century onwards. That is to say, with the birth of the modern age came a new understanding of what it meant to be (un)civil in terms of one’s position within a state’s society.

This definition of incivility is based in large part on acting contrary to accepted civil norms, and being defined outside society as a result. The first use of this term was in 1568 – in the word *incivil* – and spoke of ‘Tamburlaine, that sturdy Scythian thief That ... Daily commits incivil outrages.’³³ These uses of the basis of civil society can be found in the contemporary political and philosophical writings; the development, in the British Isles primarily with Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, of the state of nature and social contract correspond directly with the development of this sense-category. Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government* (published in 1689)³⁴ detailed the nature of the relationship between the state and its citizens, but also worked to emphasise the importance of those outside the state. The relationship was, thought Locke, one of mutual obligation tied into the idea of a sovereignless state;³⁵ countries/peoples where this relationship was deemed to function were ‘civilised’, whereas those not following the European pattern of state formation in this period were deemed uncivil. In other words, according to Locke, in the initial stages of mankind’s social development, people lived ‘together as free and equal individuals, without any relations of political authority, governed only by the rules and principles of natural law’, while in the modern, civilised era, mankind ‘relate to one another in a framework of political institutions – legislatures, courts, socially sanctioned property arrangements, and so on – institutions which articulate the natural rules and principles in the clear and determinate form of positive law’.³⁶ It was with this understanding of the concept of civility that Locke was able to say, for example: ‘and amongst those who are counted the civilised part of mankind, who have made and multiplied positive laws to determine property’.³⁷ It was only with the recent pairing of the concept of civility and the development of the understanding of the relationships between states and citizens that Locke was able to describe people as being civilised in this way.

To be *uncivilised* entered the language in 1607 and developed alongside the other categories here available. Although a later entry into the categorisation of incivility, it has become embedded in our understanding of what it means to be civilised or not. It allowed for descriptions of peoples, and countries, as being uncivilised, as shown in Abraham Cowley's poem from 1647:

Either by savages possest, Or
wild and uninhabited?
What joy couldst take, or what repose, In
countries so unciviliz'd as those?³⁸

As a result, James Cook was able to, for example, describe the apparently uncivilised manners in which the Pacific communities with which he came into contact lived and worked. He commented in 1777 that 'They show as much ingenuity both in invention and execution as most unciviliz'd nations under the same circumstances.'³⁹ In this eighteenth-century period of colonisation and exploration, Cook reported that

The beads and iron that were found among the people of the coast must undoubtedly have been derived from some civilised nation: and yet there was reason to believe that our English navigators were the first Europeans with whom the natives had ever held a direct communication.

We see here Cook's surprise at finding the 'people of the coast' with forms of civility which he would have thought to have belonged only to European peoples. The text continues to explain that these people – in North America – must have gained the tools of civility through trade and contact with 'the more inland tribes'. This approach to civility characterises the early modern attitude towards civility: only Europeans can be truly civilised, while the 'savage' peoples can gain civilisation only through the adoption of European norms.⁴⁰ This type of attitude continued until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The noted traveller and whaler Henry Theodore Cheever commented, for example, in his 1855 work on his travels around the Pacific Islands, that over time and contact with Europeans the Pacific Islanders would 'acquire habits of diligence, order, and the improvement of their time, in which Hawaiians, like all uncivilised people every where, are lamentably deficient'.⁴¹

This colonial expansion, and the increasing contact with non-European societies and peoples, led to movements towards what has since been called a civilising mission.⁴² Such attempts to civilise others have been discussed with regard to their successes (or lack thereof); it is a result of this concept that to be *irreclaimed* (1814), or to have slipped back towards 'savagery', began to come to the fore at the start of the nineteenth century ('If the brute Multitude ... Wild as their savage ancestors, Go irreclaim'd the while').⁴³ This concept has similarly been taken further, as mentioned above, in the concept of what it means to be *pre-civilised*. Here, as with *semi-barbarous*, writers are operating on the belief that people can move out of incivility into civility. As such,

authors were able by the late nineteenth century to discuss the ways in which other peoples could travel along the path from barbarity to civilisation, such as Richard F. Burton's observation that 'the land of the Pharaohs is becoming civilised, and unpleasantly so: nothing can be more uncomfortable than its present middle state, between barbarism and the reverse'.⁴⁴

No longer was barbarity or civility an on or off state; rather, in the views of such authors, the less civilised people were on a path towards full civility, a path which might sometimes be 'unpleasant'. This concept came particularly to the fore in the period of decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s as the British Empire, and the other great European empires, were dismantled. It marked a change in perception of the outside world in some respects: no longer were vast swathes of the globe uncivilised, wild, savage lands; instead they were viewed as semicivilised societies moving towards full civility.

This concept of making steps towards full civility developed alongside the post-colonial shift in ideas, where it became increasingly unlikely to find descriptions of peoples as being 'uncivilised' owing to their ethnic, cultural or social background. No longer were peoples classed as 'uncivilised', and the language instead turned to describing characteristics of lands and climates, as something untouched by mankind: 'here is an atmosphere of nature at its untamed, uncivilised best. The wilderness stands on its own: free, not propped by access roads, park rangers, interpretative centres, and regulation on use'.⁴⁵ Here, to be uncivilised is to be untouched by man and left to nature in the positive, Romantic light of simplistic non-interference.

This sense-family, while late to the discussion of incivility, is central to our understanding of what it means to be uncivilised. Our modern-day conception of this term – to be without civil society or without the state – has developed hand in hand with political and philosophical debates about the role played by society and its relationship with the state. While this is the predominant conception we now use to judge those thought to be uncivilised, it is important to note that this sense-family is later than others developed earlier. As such, conceptions of civility were before this point based on differing approaches to classifying the 'Other', as is shown above.

Sense-family 5: *The Other*

'There is', said Eric Hobsbawm, 'no more effective way of bonding together the disparate sections of restless peoples than to unite them against outsiders'.⁴⁶ In the case of Britain, as Linda Colley has so effectively shown, this was in the creation of a British Protestant identity in contrast with the Catholic (primarily French) 'Other'. British men and women, according to Colley,

came to define themselves as Britons – in addition to defining themselves in many other ways – because circumstances impressed them with the belief that they were different from those beyond their shores, and in particular different from their prime enemy, the French. Not so much consensus or homogeneity or centralisation at home, as a strong sense of dissimilarity from those without proved to be the essential

While the French were the main focus of Otherness in the development of Britishness from the eighteenth century, the term has also been used extensively in describing those thought to be uncivil. The concept of Otherness is naturally much older than British identity itself, and as a result the first term used in English to describe uncivilised Others was brought in from abroad. *Scythical* (in recorded use from 1559 to 1602) came from the Greek description of an ancient nomadic people from present-day Iran. These people were classed as barbarous savages by the Greeks who fought them, leading to the conception of them as providing ‘Such Schythicall ... torturing and massacring of Men.’⁴⁸ This classification applied also to race; to be *negerous* at the start of the seventeenth century (1609) implied savage barbarity. This description, a direct connection between being of African race and uncivilised, has left few recorded traces in the English language but demonstrates the importance of the growing Atlantic slave-trade at this time, and the increasingly large role played by Britons in the business.

In addition to categorising others as racially or ethnically different, descriptions of incivility in English have focused on where members of groups inhabit. To be *mountainous* (1613–1851) describes a condition where, as Bacon established, there ‘are commonly Ignorant and Mountainous People, that can giue [*sic*] no Account, of the Time past’.⁴⁹ These peoples need not necessarily be truly remote from the metropolitan centre to be considered mountainous. Indeed, at the turn of the eighteenth century amid concerns over the relationship(s) between the Scots and English and with shifting conceptions of Britishness, commentators could write of ‘England ... bounded on the North by a poor mountainous People call’d Scots’, while by the twentieth century the mountainous regions had shifted to Ethiopia where it was described that the country was ‘by the end of the nineteenth century ... a difficult country to conquer, as its mountainous people were very well armed’.⁵⁰ This type of description could also be used to describe a situation lacking refinement or poise; to be *tramontane* (1739–1832) implied a sense not of wild or barbaric incivility, but instead of being uncouth and unfashionable: ‘I beg ... if these can be your real sentiments, that you will keep them as private as possible. They are totally tramontane in this part of the world.’⁵¹

By the twentieth century the perception of there being only a few truly ‘untouched’ or ‘uncivilised’ places left on earth became reflected in the choice of words available. From 1908, *jungle* came to mean uncivilised or savage (‘Torn by the savage jungle-cries of the elemental passions’)⁵² and it has continued to be an acceptable way to describe something which is untamed or savage. *Jungli* (in recorded use from 1920 onwards) has similar connotations. People can in this case be *jungli*, which includes many of the traits discussed above. As with many of the later ideas of civility, there is an implied sense of movement out of barbarity and into civility in this term, and it shows the continuing fascination with a civilising mission in British imperial attitudes: ‘already he ceases to be jungli. Note: Wild and boorish, a clodhopper or uneducated peasant.’⁵³ Finally, the lack of uncivilised places to be found in the modern age is reflected in the colloquial use of *medieval* from 1917, reflecting a view of the past as severe and brutal.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the above discussion, the ways in which Britons have conceptualised what it means to be uncivilised has gone through five distinct phases and has produced the sense-families discussed above. Rather than a static belief in what deemed one to be civilised or not, the concept shifted as the British explored and travelled the world, and as they developed their understanding of the relationship between the citizen and the state. Such contacts with others created specific and divergent attitudes towards incivility, and they demonstrate the ways in which modern-day conceptions of what it means to be uncivilised are not the same as the ways in which past societies categorised the world around them.

This analysis of the cultural approach of Britons towards others deemed barbaric uses what can be called the 'deficit model' of civilisation, where being uncivilised is a state which exists before one is civilised. Therefore a person or a people can become 'finished' somehow by making the movement from one to another. For the earlier models this was constantly implicit (one who is wild can become tamed, one who is unfinished can be finished, a barbarian can learn another language, or one can learn to enter civil society). In the later examples, with the onset of modernity and the post-colonial period, a less overtly judgemental attitude is found (of people being 'precivilised' or 'semi-barbarian'), reflecting the changing attitudes of Britons towards the world around them.

Making use of new data such as that provided by the *HTOED*, alongside established historical and historiographical sources, gives a key point of reference for social and cultural research, by identifying and classifying those ways in which past societies themselves identified and classified the world around them. In the examples above, it has been possible for the first time to show one of the ways in which, over a broad range of time, Britons – as travellers, explorers, philosophers, colonisers and tourists – reacted to the societies that they came in touch with, and the ways in which these foreigners were classified and judged. This research displays in a comprehensive manner the shift towards modern conceptions of societal relations, and makes use of the linguistic history left to us from the colonial and post-colonial experiences of Britons abroad.

Notes

1. A.J. Toynbee (October 1958) in *Reader's Digest*.
2. C.J. Kay, J.A. Roberts, M.L. Samuels and I.A.W. Wotherspoon (2009) *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
3. M.L. Samuels (1972) *Linguistic Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 180.
4. J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner (2000–) *OED Online*. 3rd edn, rev. J.A. Simpson and others of Murray, J.A.H., and others (eds.) (1989) *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, compiled by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 20 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, <http://www.oed.com>).
5. See, *inter alia*, J. Lyons (1995) *Linguistic Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); A. Verhagen (2007) 'Construal and Perspectivization', in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, D. Geeraerts and H. Cuyckens (eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 48–81; and J.R. Taylor (2003) *Linguistic Categorisation*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
6. M. Dobson and B. Ziemann (2009) *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth – and Twentieth-Century History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 2.

7. See, *inter alia*, Q. Skinner (1969) 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory*, 8, 3–53.
8. R. Moxley (1997) 'Skinner: From Essentialist to Selectionist Meaning', *Behavior and Philosophy*, 25:2, 96.
9. See *inter alia*, T. Jones (2004) 'Uncovering 'Cultural Meaning': Problems and Solutions', *Behavior and Philosophy*, 32:2, 247–68; and C. Geertz (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books).
10. Q. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understand in the History of Ideas', 53.
11. G. Eley (1990) 'Is all the World a Text? From Social History to the History of Society two Decades Later', in G. M. Spiegel (ed.) (2005) *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn* (London: Routledge), p. 38. See also E. Hobsbawm (Winter 1971) 'From Social History to the History of Society' in *Daedalus, Historical Studies Today*, 100:1, 20–45.
12. This is for a number of reasons, the most significant of which is that the nature of OE vocabulary makes comparison of it with modern English, in the methodology used throughout this chapter, somewhat problematic. For example, the OE term *barbære* can be defined as 'barbarous', as is done in John R. Clark Hall's *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. However, it would be difficult to argue from this that it indicates a perception of a category of 'barbarous' persons, as is argued in section three, due to the nature and distribution of those OE texts which survive to the present day. The *Thesaurus of Old English*, a child project of *HTOED*, marks *barbære* as a rare glossarial term, and a search of the *Toronto Old English Corpus* finds only one use of this term, in glosses to the *Canterbury Psalter* (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. R.17.1), which is a trilingual psalter with many overwritings and erasures in its Anglo-Norman and OE glosses (see Gibson, Heslop and Pfaff 1992). Deciding from this single use whether an OE term is appropriate to use as the basis of a sense-family in this chapter is highly problematic, given the limited surviving OE corpus, and without the benefit of scholarship and investigation taken by editors of the *OED* over the last century to mark obsolete or rare words and provide contextual evidence from a range of times. It is hoped that the completion of the comprehensive and authoritative *Toronto Dictionary of Old English*, alongside the *Thesaurus of Old English*, will help in this area. For now, this chapter restricts itself to the Middle English period onwards.
13. B. Harry; J. Moir (ed) ([1475]1889) *The Acts and Deidis of Schir William Wallace, Knicht of Ellerslie* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society).
14. *Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, 21 August 1860, vol. 160, c. 1642.
15. For more information about this concept in earlier Indo-European languages, see '19.55 Stranger' in C.D. Buck (ed) (1949) *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.1349–50.
16. G. Chaucer, L.D. Benson (eds) (1988) *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 520 (*Troilus and Criseyde*, 3.529). Showing the close relation between these two words, although the *Riverside* uses *fremede*, there are five MSS which have 'wild(e) and tame' in the same place, and some editors (including Caxton) use the same. Chaucer earlier in *Troilus* has 'Lat be to me your fremde maner speche' (2.248), which mirrors sense-family 3.2 below.
17. *Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, Mr Richard Cherry (Attorney-General of Ireland), 20 March 1908 vol. 186 c988; Lord John Manners, 1 April 1870 vol. 200 cc1070–1; Mr Francis Channing, 5 June 1899 vol. 72 c302.
18. J. Miers (1826) *Travels in Chile and La Plata, Including Accounts Respecting the Geography, Geology, Statistics, Government, Finances, Agriculture, Manners and Customs, and the Mining Operations in Chile. Collected during a Residence of Several Years in These Countries*, Vol. I (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy), p. 39.
19. C. Darwin (1839) *Journal and Remarks: The Voyage of the Beagle* (London), chapter 5.

20. W. Lithgow ([1632]1906) *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures, Painefull Peregrinations of long Nineteene Yeares Travayles from Scotland to the most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affrica* [*The Rare Adventures of William Lithgow*] (Glasgow: Glasgow University Press), p. 261.
21. On the subject of the onomatopoeia of barbar, Liddell and Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon* points to the passage in Strabo's *Geography* (7 BCE 23 CE) where, in the Harvard translation,

the word 'barbarian' was at first uttered onomatopoeically in reference to people who enunciated words only with difficulty and talked harshly and raucously ... those they called barbarians in the special sense of the term, at first derisively, meaning that they pronounced words thickly or harshly; and then we misused the word as a general ethnic term, thus making a logical distinction between the Greeks and all other races (Strabo 14.2.28).
22. W. Bonde (1526) *Here begynneth a deuout treatyse in Englysshe, called the Pylgrimage of Perfection*, 1st edn, in 'barbarous, adj.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press (accessed: 17 May 2011). <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15397> (accessed: 17 May 2011).
23. T. Starkey (1538) *Dialogue Pole & Lupset*, in 'barbarous, adj.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15397> (accessed: 17 May 2011).
24. Sydney Smith to Francis Jeffrey (27 March 1814). Our italics. In 'barbarous, adj.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press (accessed: 17 May 2011). <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15397> (accessed: 17 May 2011).
25. P. De Mornay (1587) *A Woorke Concerning the Trewnesse of the Christian Religion*, 1st edn, in 'barbarous, adj.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15397> (accessed: 17 May 2011).
26. W. Shakespeare (1623) *Twelfth Night*, IV.1.
27. D. Livingstone (2004) *Travels and Researches in Southern Africa* (London: Kessinger), pp. 25–6.
28. 'Herriot Admits Pact Not Aimed at Debt to U.S.' *Washington Post*, 16 July 1932, p. 1. The quote has been variously and erroneously attributed to Wilde, Churchill, Georges Clemenceau, Bernard Shaw and others.
29. R. Holinshed (1570) *Scottish Chronicles*, in '† barbarious, adj.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15387> (accessed: 17 May 2011).
30. O. Goldsmith (1762) *The Citizen of the World*, 1st book edn, 2 vols, in '† barbarious, adj.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15387> (accessed: 17 May 2011).
31. J. Dryden (1700) *Fables Ancient and Modern*, 1st edn, in 'barbarian, n. and adj.' *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15380> (accessed: 17 May 2011).
32. A.F.M. Willich (1798) *Elements of the Critical Philosophy: Containing a Concise Account of Its Origin and Tendency; a View of All the Works Published by Its Founder*, in 'semi-barbarian, n.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/175600> (accessed 17 May 2011).
33. '† incivil, adj.'. *OED* online. June 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/93531> (accessed 17 May 2011).
34. J. Locke (1689) *Two Treatises of Government: In the Former, the False Principles and Foundation of Sir Robert Filmer, And His Followers, Are Detected and Overthrown. The Latter Is an Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil-Government* (London).
35. J. Scott (September 2000) 'The Sovereignless State and Locke's Language of Obligation', *American Political Science Review*, 94:3, 547; and J. Waldron (Winter 1989) 'John Locke:

- Social Contract versus Political Anthropology', *The Review of Politics*, 51:1, 3–28.
36. Waldron, 'John Locke', 4–5.
 37. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Vol. II, p. 219.
 38. A. Cowley (1647) *The Welcome (The Mistress)*.
 39. 'uncivilised, adj.'. *OED* online. June 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/210392?redirectedFrom=uncivilised> (accessed 17 May 2011).
 40. A. Kipps (1840) *Narrative of the Voyages Round The World, Performed by Captain James Cook* (London: Richardson), p. 312.
 41. H.T. Cheever (1855) *The Island World of the Pacific: Being A Travel Through the Sandwich or Hawaiian Islands and Other Parts of Polynesia* (New York: Harper and Brothers), p. 359.
 42. See, for example, H. Fischer and M. Mann (2004) *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (London: Anthem); and A. Twells (2009) *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792–1850: The 'Heathen' at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
 43. R. Southey (1814) *Carmina Aulica*, vii. ii.
 44. R. Burton (ed. I. Burton) (1893) *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah* (London: Tylston & Edwards), p. 17.
 45. United States Department of the Interior (1988) *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness Review, and Wild River Plans*.
 46. E. Hobsbawm (1990) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 91.
 47. L. Colley (1992, 2003) *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (London: Pimlico), p. 17.
 48. Francis Herring (1602) *J. Oberndoerffer's Anatomies of the True Physition and Counterfeit Mounte-Banke*.
 49. 'mountainous, adj.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122904> (accessed: 14 June 2011).
 50. *Ibid.*
 51. This term is originally from Italian, where it referred to outsiders living beyond the Alps. See also Blackwood's (October 1817–1905) *Edinburgh Magazine*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell and W. Davis), in 'tramontane, adj. and n.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/204513> (accessed: 14 June 2011).
 52. Alfred Noyes (1908) *William Morris*, in 'jungle, n.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/102075> (accessed: 14 June 2011)
 53. *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature* (7th series vols. 1–21, 3 December 1910–28 November 1931), 'jungli, adj. and n.'. *OED* online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/102079> (accessed: 14 June 2011).