

Imprisoned in English is an heroic attempt to truly understand “others” as subjects rather than objects without assimilating their understandings to one’s own. The book summarizes the author’s influential and monumental plan for a great escape from ethnocentrism and conceptual parochialism in the humanities and social sciences.”

RICHARD A. SHWEDER

Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago

“This book is the latest outstanding product of Anna Wierzbicka’s research, driven by her cross-cultural approach and theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM). Wierzbicka is excellent in showing how much we are imprisoned in culture-specific English concepts. The book is powerful, and recommended for everyone who is interested in languages.”

ISTVAN KECSKES

Founding Editor, *Intercultural Pragmatics*

In *Imprisoned in English*, Anna Wierzbicka argues that in the present English-dominated world, millions of people—including academics, lawyers, diplomats, and writers—can become “prisoners of English”, unable to think outside English. In particular, social sciences and the humanities are now increasingly locked in a conceptual framework grounded in English. To most scholars in these fields, treating English as a default language seems a natural thing to do.

The book’s approach is interdisciplinary, and its themes range over areas of central interest to anthropology, psychology, and sociology, among others. The linguistic material is drawn from languages of America, Australia, the Pacific, South-East Asia and Europe. Wierzbicka argues that it is time for human sciences to take advantage of English as a global lingua franca while at the same time transcending the limitations of the historically-shaped conceptual vocabulary of English. And she shows how this can be done.

ANNA WIERZBICKA is Professor of Linguistics at the Australian National University. She is the author of numerous books spanning anthropology, psychology, cognitive science, philosophy, and religious studies, as well as linguistics.